THE SHOEMAKER'S HOLIDAY: A DOCUMENT IN EGALITARIANISM

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PREFACE

The Shoemaker's Holiday stands among the best of Elizabethan comedies; it is rollicking joviality frozen in the black ink of words. And it is more. This play is a statement for the practice of, and the truth in, egalitarianism. I have endeavored here to illustrate that Thomas Dekker was not merely the merriest of hack writers but rather a man who believed deeply in the individuality of people and, even more important, one who believed in the right to practice and express such individuality.

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And to Ahmed Barrada, who has endured a myriad things as I scurried hither and yon, gathering the loose threads of an old life, I pledge all the love of the new one.

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THE SHOEMAKER'S HOLIDAY: A DOCUMENT IN EGALITARIANISM

Traditionally English society has been divided into various social stations. Laws have even been passed to regiment the degrees of society. The Sumptuary Laws, for example, made individuals subject to fines if they did not dress in accordance with their social degrees.[1] By Elizabethan times there was a belief that each degree not only had but should keep its place. Thomas Dekker does not altogether disagree with such a belief but, even though he acknowledges the degrees of society, he does not accept the rigid categorization of a person. He does not view social classes as static and neither does he believe that membership in a particular class necessarily imparts certain qualities or attributes to the individual. Dekker aptly supports such beliefs in an early work entitled The Shoemaker's Holiday.

Dekker's critics, however, appear almost universally unimaginative on this point. Although they may be charmed and entertained by Dekker's effervescent, bubbling characterizations, most critics find The Shoemaker's Holiday offensively unoriginal. Muriel Bradbrook declares Dekker to be "the most traditional of Elizabethan writers" who "shows

only the happy, the faithful and the generous" in his plays.[2] L. C. Knights quite unfairly pits Dekker, a good playwright, against the superlative. "Shakespeare," writes Knights, "took popular elements and transformed them into his own purposes; Dekker gives us an amalgam of all that popular taste demanded."[3] Of the play itself he writes that "It called for no effort of readjustment or reorganization . . . but simply reinforced a prevalent social attitude."[4] But James H. Conover, perhaps the most sympathetic of Dekker critics, does not agree with Knights, for he devotes an entire work to "an attempt . . . to re-evaluate Thomas Dekker as a play-craftsman, to subject some of his plays to structural analysis."[5] Conover gives a great deal of insight into Dekker's creative processes and, in so doing, appears to be the only critic seriously to consider that much of Dekker's work is more than cheerful platitudes and stereotyped characters. Much research has failed to uncover another critic who views Dekker as a possible champion of the individual, regardless of his station in life.

To understand Dekker's attitude it is important to remember that he lived in a time of social and political change. Social structure was still rigid, but the increasing importance of the middle class was causing more fluidity of movement between groups. Political thought was being scrutinized and evaluated. People were beginning to question the system of monarchy and, because of such things, many of the ideas which eventually led to a more democratic

government were definitely being formed. Most Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists favored keeping both social and political power in the hands of the gently born. It is certainly understandable that most would write in this vein since their livelihood often depended upon the patronage of noble persons. Thomas Dekker, however, was not such a playwright: he believed in egalitarianism. Egalitarianism is defined as the "belief that all men are equal in intrinsic worth and are entitled to equal access to the rights and privileges of their society." In a specific and much narrower sense, egalitarianism is "a social philosophy advocating the leveling of social, political, and economic inequalities."[6] To anyone who has read a variety of Dekker's plays, tracts, and pamphlets, it is obvious that he does not, in any sense, advocate the complete leveling of society. An ardent Londoner, Dekker loves his city and her people. "In the City that he knows," writes E. D. Pendry, "he glimpses a half-realized way of life in which people work hard side by side in harmony and happiness, proud of their skills, content with their stations, fond of one another."[7] But it is the "half-realization" of his idealistic view of the world that sometimes makes Dekker a tough and bitter critic. Although his tracts and pamphlets are usually the most bitter of his works, sometimes he voices his disenchantment with the world in his plays; Patient Grissil is such a one.[8] Here Dekker writes, "Oh what is this world, but a confused throng / Of fooles and mad men, crowding in a thrust / To

shoulder out the wise, trip downe the just" (III.i.157-59). But however cynical or satirical Dekker sometimes may be, he is basically a humanitarian with an optimistic faith in mankind. In The Shoemaker's Holiday he displays an ebullient spirit and belief that the dissolution, at least in part, of the inequalities in London society would lead to a more harmonious, and thus happier, way of life. In this play Dekker manifests an egalitarian attitude that people of all classes are equal in intrinsic worth and that they should, therefore, be entitled to equal treatment and opportunities in society, business, and politics.

Such an egalitarian attitude becomes apparent when one considers the ways in which Dekker alters ideas and characters from the original source for the play. Dekker does what many Elizabethan dramatists did: he incorporates a borrowed plot into a London setting.[9] It is generally accepted that this rollicking play in which a cobbler rises to the position of Lord Mayor of London is based on Thomas Deloney's novel The Gentle Craft, Part I, a work registered in 1597, but with the earliest extant copy dated 1637.[10] Deloney's book is a compilation of three legends, two of which deal with the stories of St. Hugh and St. Crispin, and one that relates the career of Simon Eyre, an actual inhabitant of London who was historically, a woolen-draper and not a cobbler. Dekker takes only three elements from the saints' lives for his play: that both are princes; that they assume the identity of shoemakers; and that Crispine

wins Ursula's affections while fitting her for a pair of shoes. Dekker borrows most of Deloney's story concerning Simon Eyre, but Dekker's changes in social rank are significant. Deloney's serving girl becomes Dekker's Jane and her two lower-class suitors in The Gentle Craft, Part I, become the wealthy citizen Hammon and the cobbler-soldier Rafe. Deloney's two princes become Dekker's Hammon and the noble Lacy, who at times disguises himself as the shoemaker Hans. Such contrasts in social rank and the competitions they create help to further Dekker's egalitarian philosophy. Dekker also changes the character of Simon Eyre to a large degree. Deloney's Eyre has a sense of humor but is much graver than Dekker's boisterous fellow. Dekker keeps the good qualities of the original Eyre, especially those of diligence and generosity, but he also gives him a robust sense of humor, an awareness of his own idiosyncrasies and more honesty and business integrity than Deloney's Eyre. Confronted with an unexpected opportunity to gain wealth and uncertain of how to make use of it, Deloney's Eyre agrees passively to carry out the dishonest schemings proposed by his wife Margery. Nowhere in Dekker's characterization of Eyre is there evidence that he would ever be so dishonest and he certainly would not so spinelessly buckle under to his wife's desire to gain wealth and social rank through illegal transactions. Dekker's Margery most likely would not stoop to such means, possibly because she would never think of it. Dekker completely changes Deloney's ambitious,

plotting Mistress Eyre to the stock character of a prattling wife; only their love and loyalty toward their husbands is the same.

Also much altered by Dekker are Deloney's master-servant relationships. Exchanges between masters and servants are far more egalitarian than Deloney's. In The Gentle Craft, Part I, the servants obey Eyre without question the few times that they appear in scenes with their master. Deloney usually separates scenes involving the servants from those with Eyre, his wife, or the aldermen of the city, thus curtailing any development of master-servant relationships. By contrast, the servants in Dekker's play constitute almost half of the action and they certainly are not meekly obedient. Dekker has them speak their thoughts just as openly as do Eyre and the King.

The King, it is important to note, is Dekker's own creation. Deloney ends his novel with Eyre's feasting of London's apprentices and there is no mention of a sovereign attending. Dekker, however, creates a king who, perhaps as much as Eyre, espouses an egalitarian attitude toward others. Though graver and thoroughly lacking the Lord Mayor's rambunctious joviality, the King is very much like Eyre. Both are concerned with justice and fairness, regardless of class lines; both do not particularly follow protocol or the outward trappings of office; and both make the most of life for the moment. Indeed, Dekker makes it quite clear that, while Eyre and the King each acknowledges the other's position in

society, they respect each other and they are men who, regardless of class, are striving for the same things.

The idea that Simon Eyre is possibly as "noble" as the King permeates the play.[11] Nowhere does Dekker more blatantly illustrate his egalitarian attitude than in Eyre's eloquent catch-phrase, "Prince am I none, yet I am Princely borne" (III.ii.38-39). According to W. F. McNeir, Thomas Dekker borrows the idea for the phrase from Deloney's work but actually patterns the phrase after Orlando's statement, "I am no king, yet I am princely born," in Robert Greene's The Historie of Orlando Furioso.[12] That the phrase, in general, existed in Renaissance literature then is known. Dekker, however, seems to imply something more than just that Eyre is of the same trade as the saintly and noble shoemakers St. Crispin and St. Hugh or that he considers birth something that all men, beggars and kings alike, experience. The word "borne" could mean "carried" and Eyre definitely believes his bearing, carriage, and actions to be as good as any nobleman's.[13] There is, though, stronger evidence that Eyre thinks he is innately as good as any king. At the beginning of the last act Eyre is making ready to feast both the apprentices and the King and to intercede on behalf of the marriage of Rose to Lacy. Margery reminds her husband to be a "friend [to Lacy] in what thing you may" (V.i.10). Eyre replies that he certainly will, for he owes all his opportunity for wealth to his friend and former employee Lacy. Eyre answers his wife:

> Why my sweete lady Madgy, thincke you Simon Eyre can forget his fine dutch Journeyman. No vah. Fie I scorne it, it shall neuer be cast in my teeth, that I was vnthankeful. . . . Simon Eyre has neuer walkte in a redde petticoate, nor wore a chaine of golde, but for my fine Iourney-mans portigues, and shall I leaue him? No: Prince am I none, yet beare a princely minde (V.i.11-19).

It seems unlikely that Dekker would suddenly, in the very last act, change the wording of Eyre's catch-phrase without reason. Here is a passage that strikingly speaks of the outward finery symbolic of both wealth and political rank, yet Dekker illustrates through the careful changing of a single word that the true value of a man is not in his clothes or his birth.[14] A combination of the facts that the word "borne" can mean "carried" and that Dekker changes "yet I am princely born" (III.ii.38-39) to "yet [I] beare a princely minde" (V.ii.11-19) clearly points out Dekker's intent. He uses the catch-phrase to emphasize one of his main egalitarian concepts in the play: that the value of a man lies in his thoughts and the actions that proceed from them; his birth alone does not make him virtuous or good.

Just as Dekker illustrates through Eyre's possession of "vertues of the minde" that an elevation in social status does not have to change the basic values within a man, so, too, does he show in Lacy that a decline in social status does not change the man in basic worth; it may, in fact, help to give him a new perspective.[15] Lacy's characterization as a noble-cobbler more than likely generates from a

combining of part of the story of a servant in Deloney's Eyre story with his version of the legends of St. Hugh and St. Crispin. While in prison, St. Hugh sings a song in which the description of himself fits Lacy perfectly:

> A Prince by Birth I am indeed,
> The which for Love forsooke this Land:
> And when I was in extreme need,
> I took the Gentle Craft in hand,
> And by the Gentle Craft alone,
> Long time I liv'd, being still unknowne.[16]

Like St. Hugh, Lacy adopts the disguise of a shoemaker and, because this is for him a drop in social status, he is able "to lodge in London with al secresie" (I.i.112) and thus escape "many a jealous eie" (I.i.114) that might disclose him to Lincoln, his uncle. Dekker shows Lacy to be a man who, although noble by birth, is not afraid of work. Lacy himself had taken the initiative to learn the cobbling trade while in Wittenberg when, according to his uncle, he had spent all of his allowance before even half of his journey had been accomplished and was "Asham'd to show his bankrupt presence here" (I.i.28). Lacy, like Deloney's two princes Crispin and Crispianus, has true ability as a craftsman and is, in his guise as Hans, accepted by the men in Eyre's shop for his merit as a cobbler and as a man--not for his nobility. Such acceptance by his employer Eyre and his fellow shoemakers is important in underscoring Dekker's egalitarian statement here: the baseborn cobblers realize the true character of Lacy but Lincoln, his own uncle and a noble,

neither loves nor accepts him. Ironically, what blinds Lincoln to his nephew's good qualities is the fact of his nobility itself. Lincoln considers Lacy's colonelcy, which he himself conveniently arranged for his nephew, as a means not only to interrupt Lacy's courtship of Rose but also as a way to win honors and increase family prestige. The Earl of Lincoln threatens Lacy with disinheritance if he does not succeed in his "noble" obligations:

> I pray thee do thou so, remember coze,
> What honourable fortunes wayt on thee,
> Increase the king's loue which so brightly shine,
> And gilds thy hopes, I haue no heire but thee:
> And yet not thee, if with a wayward spirit,
> Thou start from the true byas of my loss.
> (I.i.80-86)

It is apparent, then, that although Lincoln may be gentle by birth, he does not always exhibit the qualities of such.[17] Gentle of birth but selfish and cold toward his fellowman, Lincoln acts rather like a foil to the baseborn but loving and generous character of Simon Eyre. Dekker's contrasting of the two is but a theatrical enactment of the views of a contemporary, John Rastell:

> The thyng that makyth a gentylman to be
> ys but vertew and gentyll codycyons
> whych aswell in pore men oft tymys we se
> As in men of grete byrth or hye degre
> And also vycious and churlyish codycyons
> May be in men born to grete possessyons[18]

In the characters of Lincoln and Eyre Dekker essentially reiterates his own idea that gentle birth, or the lack of it,

is not the sole criterion for a virtuous person.

Another point obviously in keeping with Dekker's egalitarianism is that Lincoln does not understand Lacy, but the shoemakers and King do. These people, because they have excellence of character and not necessarily quality of social station, recognize "that noblenes apprehended by proper merit, is far more excellent then the gentlenes of linage and bloud, not beautifyed with vertue."[19] Lincoln, evidently believing Lacy to lack "proper merit," accuses his nephew of being a traitor and then he, along with Sir Roger Otley, tries to have the marriage between Lacy and Rose dissolved. To the nobles' chagrin, however, the King pardons Lacy and sanctions the marriage:

> Dost thou not know, that loue respects the bloud?
> Cares not for difference of birth, or state,
> The maide is yong, wel borne, faire, vertuous,
> A worthy bride for any gentleman:
> Besides, your nephew for her sake did stoope
> To bare necessitie: and as I heare,
> Forgetting honors, and all courtly pleasures,
> To gaine her loue, became a shooemaker.
> As for the honor which he lost in France,
> Thus I redeeme it: Lacie, kneele thee downe,
> Arise sir Rowland Lacie: Tell me now,
> Tell me now in earnest Otley, canst thou chide,
> Seeing thy Rose a ladie and bryde? (V.v.104-15)

Conover has noted this episode with disdain, stating that Lacy is knighted, ironically, for neglecting rather than fulfilling his duties.[20] It is, however, helpful to understand three issues here: that by 1600 the knight was no longer a chivalric figure on stage; that the knighting of Lacy benefitted Rose more than it did him; and that the

King's speech is primarily one about love and forgiveness, rather than honor and duty. An Elizabethan audience would have surely understood the knighting of Lacy to be symbolic and to mean little in actuality.[21] The egalitarian slant here is that, in Dekker's day, gentility was not necessarily a matter of blood; it was often a product of the pocketbook. By Elizabethan times almost anyone, noble or not, who had enough money could obtain "gentility" and a coat of arms. Dekker is here satirizing such a practice and making the point that the bestowing of titles does not improve one's virtue or erase one's past transgressions. Indeed, the purchase of nobility had become such a widespread practice that many writers openly condemned it. In 1586, John Ferne chided:

> . . . let not a Gentleman thinke it sufficient to the perfecting of his gentrye, to have the liuinges and coat-armour of his auncestor, except also he possess his vertues. Both which concurring, shall cloath him, with the rich vesture of perfect noblenes; and hee then may justly be called a gentleman, of a perfect coat; otherwise, it is but stayned.[22]

Because it had lost its prestige, knighthood was often lampooned by the theater companies of the time; Shakespeare's amusing but cowardly Falstaff made his stage debut only a year prior to the first performance of The Shoemaker's Holiday. With knights in such disrepute, it is likely then that Lacy would gain nothing but higher taxes or more social obligations. It would, though, bring his bride to the

higher social status of Lady. Dekker's point, of course, is that the utterance of a few words by the King has supposedly bettered Rose in even her own father's eyes. It is no doubt intentional that Dekker has in-laws Lincoln and Otley, both gentles, unable to understand what the noble King realizes: that the issue here is the power of love and not the obligations of duty. It is true that Lacy chooses love when duty and love conflicted and in so doing, he breaks the law. The King implies, however, that Lacy's nature is such that he will lead a noble, virtuous life after the source of emotional conflict has been removed. The King's statements and actions in this passage are indicative of Dekker's optimistic faith in man's nature. Dekker earlier provides a hopeful glimmer of Lacy's redemption when he has Otley, recalling that the impetuous Lacy was once a spendthrift, muse in an aside that ". . . Rowland might do well / Now he hath learn'd an occupation" (I.i.42-43). Because Dekker continually depicts Lacy as an industrious and sensible young gentleman, it is also possible that his actions could be considered reasonable. He and Rose desired to marry. Had Lacy been obedient and gone to war, it is likely that Sir Roger Otley, Rose's father, would have forced her to marry someone of his choice--a practice to which Dekker himself is vehemently opposed.[23] It could be said, then, that Lacy did act out of reason, for his only chance to gain Rose's hand was to remain behind.[24]

Rafe, however, cannot stay. At the beginning of the

play, before Lacy assumes the guise of a shoemaker that makes him temporarily Rafe's social and economic equal, both nobleman Lacy and cobbler Rafe are, in manner befitting their social stations, impressed for foreign service--Lacy to be an officer, Rafe to be a foot soldier.[25] When Simon Eyre, then Rafe's master, and a group of fellow workmen plead that Rafe be spared on the grounds that he is newly married, it is paradoxically Lacy who tells Eyre and Rafe's wife Jane that "He must go, / His countries quarrel sayes, it shall be so" (I.i.179-80). In other words, Lacy plans to avoid impressment and to marry Rose, yet it is he who tells Rafe to serve his country and to endure separation from his new bride. Those who have criticized Dekker here for a callous treatment of Rafe and the apparent approval of Lacy's actions have missed Dekker's skill as a playwright.[26] Such staging is by no means an accident: Dekker is making a strong statement against unjust privileges of the upper class. As further reinforcement of his point, Dekker later has Lacy forgiven and knighted but Rafe returns home crippled. Dekker does even more to underscore the political inequality of Lacy and Rafe that results from differing social status. He makes both of them, for a part of the play, socially and economically equal as shoemakers. As a member of the "gentle craft," Rafe is on par not only with Lacy but also with St. Hugh, a cobbler whose princely heritage "gentled" the craft.[27] While Lacy (Hans) and Rafe are socially equal in the shop, Lacy may actually have a lesser

economic standing, for he is the newest worker in the shop and is expected to do the "grosse worke" (II.iii.81). But the true significance of all this is that Rafe and Lacy become friends. They work together and make merry together with no thought of "differences." Here again Dekker shows that true merit and sincere kindness are not dependent upon birth.

Throughout the entire play Dekker makes it quite clear that shoemakers, whether "real" or "disguised," are admired and often helped on their merit as people. Lacy, as Hans, is hired by Eyre initially to humor Firk; he remains, however, because he is a very good cobbler. Lacy (Hans) wins the friendship of the whole shop and he, in turn, grows particularly fond of Simon Eyre. Out of respect and admiration for Eyre, Lacy (Hans) not only avails Eyre of an opportunity to grow rich but also advances him the necessary money for the downpayment on the entire cargo of a merchant ship. This transaction takes place friend-to-friend, with no mention of birth or rank. Dekker further enlarges upon the idea of shoemakers helping one another when he has a whole gang of them help Rafe regain his wife from the wealthy citizen Hammon. Group loyalty and friendship for Rafe ready his fellow craftsmen to use force and brute strength, if necessary, to rescue Jane and reunite her with her husband. No evidence of respect or deferment to class exists in Hodge's speech that rallies the crowd of cobblers.

> My masters, as we are the braue blouds of the shoemakers, heires apparant to saint Hugh, and perpetuall benefactors to all good fellowes, thou shalt haue no wrong: were Hammon a king of spades he should not delue in thy close without thy sufferaunce . . . (V.ii.1-5).

That Firk and Hodge, along with "fiue or sixe shooemakers, all with cudgels, or such weapons" (V.i.stage directions) cause the armed Hammon, Otley, and Lincoln who, as gentlemen should be skilled in sword and rapier, to back down and to eventually scatter, is proof enough that the "gentled" cobblers are an equal match for them.[28] This incident is merely a physical, and somewhat comic, enactment of an idea that Simon Eyre verbalizes throughout the entire play: that there is little difference in nobility by rank and the true, innate nobility of the gentle craft. In the same scene Jane, Rafe's wife, gives further evidence of Dekker's egalitarian attitudes. Here Dekker presents Rafe as both penniless and lame as a result of his having been pressed into service during the wartime, yet he is preferred by Jane to Hammon, even though the latter is rich and prominent in society. Jane voices a democratic view of love and also makes a small speech on the rights of the poor against the rich when she says that she wants to leave Hammon and to return to her husband Rafe:

> Whom should I choose: whom should my thought affect,
> But him whom heauen hath made to be my loue?
> Thou art my husband and these humble weedes,
> Makes thee more beautiful then all his wealth,
> Therefore I will but put off his attire,
> Returning it into the owners hand,

And after euer be thy constant wife.
(V.ii.53-59)

Jane's belief that a man is important for himself and not for his title or his ability to purchase finery was beginning to gain some acceptance in Elizabethan society.[29]

Evidences of Thomas Dekker's own belief in the worthiness of an individual, regardless of his class or occupation, can be found in many of his plays, but it particularly is evident in The Shoemaker's Holiday.[30] Fully aware that in just his own lifetime the English middle classes were becoming very important to the livelihood of an increasingly commercial nation, Dekker often gives the common man an opportunity to express his awareness of his worth and the self-esteem it creates within him. For example, Simon Eyre talks freely with nobility even before he becomes Lord Mayor of London. At one point Eyre argues furiously with Askew, a nobleman, in an effort to free Rafe from military service. Eyre's workmen, too, display highly independent attitudes. Firk and the other apprentices in the Tower Street shop threaten to walk out if their demands to hire the Dutch shoemaker Hans (Lacy) are not met. Thomas Dekker's belief in social egalitarianism does not only erupt in forceful or angry speeches, however. Everyday conversations between servants and their masters are usually devoid of any references to any class distinction. Such are the dialogues between Rose and her maid Sybil. Sybil expresses her opinions freely and openly; Rose never appears to be upset

or even in the least disgruntled with her. When Sybil mildly accuses Rose, saying, "This is your fault mistris; loue him that loues not you; he thinkes scorne to do as he's done to, but if I were as you, Ide cry, go by Ieronimo, go by" (I.ii.39-42), Rose either does not notice the accusation or else chooses to ignore it. A few lines later Sybil interjects her opinion of Lacy's actions, ". . . by my troth he is a propper man, but he is proper that proper doth, / let him goe snick-vp yong mistris" (I.ii.40-50). If Rose has not grown to accept Sybil as a friend as well as a servant, then surely she would not tolerate such a statement about the man she loves. In addition to conversations between Rose and Sybil, discourses that involve Firk, one of Eyre's journeymen, also illustrate friendship and a disregard for class lines. For example, when Firk is awakened by Eyre's loud voice as his master enters the shop to open for the day's business, Firk addresses his master rather flippantly:

> O master, ist you that speake bandog and bedlam this morning, I was in a dreame, and mused what madde man was got into the street so earlie, haue you drunke this morning that your throate is so cleare? (I.iv.9-12)

With characteristic good humor Eyre merely replies, "Ah, well said, Firk: well said, Firk. To work, my fine knave, to work!" (I.iv.13-14). Although Margery, Eyre's wife, does become exasperated with the lusty journeyman at times, she, too, generally regards Firk's waspish tongue to be part of his personality and not necessarily a show of discourtesy.

At one point, she rather haughtily remarks to Firk that he has been a bit slow in running an errand. Without hesitation he replies, "O rare, your excellence is full of eloquence, how like a new cart wheele my dame speakes, and she lookes like an old musty ale-bottle going to scalding" (III.ii.9-11). To such personal insults she unflinchingly answers, "Nay, when? [willst thou run the errand] thou wilt make me melancholy" (III.ii.12). Neither here nor anywhere else in the play does Margery give indication that Firk's sharp tongue is out of keeping with his position as journeyman.

Just as Dekker shows honesty and frankness of speech between servants and master, he also incorporates the same egalitarian attitudes in conversations between the gentles and the non-gentle mercantile class, such as in the dialogue between Eyre and the King. Before the King arrives, Eyre is understandably a bit concerned about preparations for his sovereign's visit. He is soon satisfied, however, that everything has been properly readied and when, at the last minute, his wife Margery admonishes him with, "Good my lord, have a care what you speak to his grace" (V.iv.45), he reassures everyone of his natural confidence:

> Sim Eyre knowes how to speake to a Pope, to Sultan Solliman, to Tamburlaine and he were here: and shal I melt? shal I droope before my Soueraigne? no, come my Ladie Madgie, follow me Hauns, about your businesse my frolicke free-booters (V.iv.51-55).

In short, Eyre feels that he fits very well into his new

role in society and believes that although he is not a prince, that he is "princely borne." It is precisely this boldness and familiarity of manner that please the King most about the new Lord Mayor. Just before meeting Eyre, the King tells a nobleman that most men are grave and sober in his presence and implies that it would be refreshing to have Eyre "put on his wonted merriment" (V.iii.16). The nobleman praises Eyre, telling the King that he doubts that the King will be disappointed for Eyre is "one of the merriest madcaps in your land" (V.iii.2) and yet he says that Eyre is highly competent:

> In al his actions that concerne his state,
> He is as serious, prouident, and wise,
> As fell of grauitie amongst the graue,
> As any maior hath beene these many yeares.
> (V.iii.6-9)

Such a spirit of optimism and an appreciation of commoners is, by most Elizabethan standards, egalitarian.[31]

Eyre does not disappoint the King. Eyre greets him with the same jovial, unabashed spirit and sincere hospitality that he shows to his fellow tradesmen. Eyre sees no awkwardness or breach of social etiquette in the fact that he will entertain his apprentice friends and the King on the same day and at the same feast. The morning of the festivities he speaks of his anticipation of the day:

> Its a madde life to be a lords Mayor, its a stirring life, a fine life, a veluet life, a careful life. . . . soft, the King this day comes to dine with me, to see my new buildings,

> his majesty is welcome, he shal have good cheere. This day my fellow prentices of London come to dine with me too, they shall haue fine cheere, gentlemanlike cheere (V.i.37-43).

To Eyre, all his guests are socially equal. They all take pride in themselves; they all should be treated with respect. Eyre even serves the King the same food as he does the apprentices. Such a practice ordinarily would be unthinkable to Elizabethans. Even minor nobility, let alone Kings, did not eat the same foods as commoners, nor did they eat at the same times or at the same tables.[32] Any doubt of Dekker's egalitarianism here vanishes upon close scrutiny. Not only does Eyre offer the King the same food as he offers the working class but he feasts the King last, for most of the apprentices have already dined and departed (V.v.180-82). Dekker merely has Eyre host the King as one might any guest, in accordance with time of arrival and food available. And the King is a gracious guest; neither arrogant not proud, he evidently believes that creating a common bond of sharing between peoples is more important than observing rigid protocol and social etiquette. In this matter Dekker's King is no less egalitarian than is Eyre. When Simon Eyre entreats his sovereign to "Yet adde more honour to the Gentle Trade, / Taste of Eyre's banquet, Simon's happie made" (V.v.182-83), the King heartily accepts:

> Eyre, I wil tast of thy banquet, and wil say,
> I have not met more pleasure on a day,
> Friends of the Gentle Craft, thanks to you al,
> Thanks my kind Ladie Mistresse for our cheere,

Come Lordes, a while lets reuel . . . (V.v.185-89).

Nowhere does the King behave as if he is superior to his host. He is apologetic, in fact, for being so much trouble to Eyre. Never is the King condescending to the Lord Mayor or to anyone else. Dekker's King is plainly very egalitarian in his treatment of others. Such a spirit is again shown when the King sanctions the marriage of Lacy to Rose, a woman socially inferior to him. When Lacy's uncle protests that "Her bloud is too too base" (V.v.102), the King replies that true love is not always a respector of gentility or social rank. Dekker's King, contrary to most Elizabethan thought, seems to feel that stability of society depends on more than recognition of social stations. When he states twelve lines later that "Where there is much loue, all discord ends" (V.v.119), the King seems to place the responsibility for a harmonious society upon the individual rather than relying upon social categories and legalities. Perhaps it is the creation of such an egalitarian sovereign that makes Esther Gloe question how Dekker managed to escape a jail term for the writing of this play.[33] Dekker is going against prevailing attitudes--or at least professed attitudes--in creating such an egalitarian monarch. The general attitude of the times is emphatically stated by Louis B. Wright:

> [An] important fact [of Tudor England] is the general endorsement and justification of political and social inequality. On the political side it

> was the negation of the democratic principle. Democratic rule was indeed generally discredited everywhere in the sixteenth century, in all governments and all creeds, and those who advocated it were regarded very much as we in the West today regard Communists; and everywhere democratic advocates were persecuted.[34]

E. M. W. Tillyard, in explaining cosmic order and the chain of being, puts the idea this way:

> [If] the Elizabethans believed in an ideal order animating earthly order, they were terrified lest it should be upset, and appalled by the visible tokens of disorder that suggest its upsetting.[35]

Elizabethans believed, then, that God must intend such a division of men, for does He not create them unequal at birth in character and abilities? It was believed, too, that kings and cobblers and "Every degree of people in their vocation, calling and office hath appointed to them their duty and order."[36] Dekker does not seem to follow in this vein entirely, for it is not likely that revelling together at holiday banquets would be considered application of such stringent categorization.

Oddly enough, perhaps it is Dekker's breaking away from the ordinary and expected that muffled any loud conservative grumblings; for if there were any, none are known to be extant. Dekker's King is a bit of a fantasy king; he is the sovereign every Elizabethan might like to know, primarily because he is so thoroughly human. Dekker made him tangible. The King possesses all the qualities of a good person and a fair ruler. And it should be noted here,

too, that Dekker is most certainly no fool: The Shoemaker's Holiday is to debut before Queen Elizabeth at Christmastime of 1599. In creating a lovable and loving monarch in his play, Dekker flatters his notoriously vain and proud sovereign by painting an idealistic picture of royalty.[37] The King is well-liked by his subjects, concerned about his country and its people and, most of all, fair and just--all are characteristics usually attributed to Queen Elizabeth I, too.[38]

Just as Dekker tends to idealize the King, so he does somewhat in the creation of Simon Eyre. Simon Eyre, however, perhaps more than any other character in the play, best illustrates Dekker's optimism and egalitarianism. It is Dekker's belief that a commoner such as Eyre, although obviously born of low social standing, can have natural abilities great enough to permit him to rise to both social and political prominence.[39] Simon Eyre first appears as a rather typical Elizabethan craftsman: rugged, somewhat unrefined, but industrious and good-natured. In the course of the play, his common sense, clever business management, and perseverance, coupled with his ability to recognize an opportunity when it presents itself, result in his becoming a rich tradesman, a socially respectable person, and ultimately Lord Mayor of London.

Although it seems that Eyre is admired in trade circles for his skill in leathercrafting and his ability to please his clientele, he is not particularly noticed by the nobility

or the upper society of London until he achieves wealth in hiw own right. As is, this appears but a repetition of the age-old theme of wealth begetting political power. Observed, however, with similar ideas about money found in other works, an egalitarian attitude becomes evident. In Old Fortunatus, Fortunatus states that, "This age thinks better of a gilded fool, / Then of a threadbare Saint in wisdomes school" (I.i.266-67). He goes on to say that "A maske of Gold hides all deformities" (I.i.291). Dekker has Fortune grant his wish for wealth, but ultimately Fortunatus dies lonely, disillusioned with life. Gold brings him no happiness; rather, it is the beginning of all his woes. The use and misuse of money is also central to the plot of Dekker's If This Be Not A Good Play Then the Devil Is In It. Here Scumbroth observes the power of money on society, noting that "the world is changde: a beggar yesterday, and full of gold / to day: an asse to day, and a prow'd scab to morrow" (III.ii.138-39). In this play, too, is Bartervile. He is, without doubt, one of the most avaricious merchants and usurers in all Elizabethan drama. An unfeeling, cold man, Bartervile grasps and grabs money by any method that he can. He reveals one of his financial secrets to the demon Lurchall: "Hee that would grow damnd-Rich, yet liue secure, / Must keepe a case of faces, sometimes demure, / Sometimes a grum-surly sir, now play the Iewe" (IV.i.10-12). For riches, he notes that "all chaunge their honestie" (IV.i.8). Dekker paints Bartervile a thoroughly despicable

villain, a man who cheats even the poorest widows and orphans in order to fill his own already over-flowing coffers. But he pays dearly for his greed. The play ends with Bartervile in Hell, doomed to spend eternity in a "boyling Lake / Where molten Golde runnes" (V.iv.254-55). Such situations in his plays, along with his amusing but highly satirical The Gull's Hornbook, a book of advice to gallants and other popinjays on how to best use their money to promote themselves, make it obvious that Dekker believes money and finery in themselves neither increase virtue nor disguise faults. As Matheo in Dekker's The Honest Whore, Part II, bears out, the inner man remains the same, whatever amount of money in his purse or finery on his back; any change of character must come from the inside, in the heart and the mind. Nennio aptly expresses the idea when he writes of nobility of character:

> For it consisteth in the vertues of the mind, whether the Sight of our outward eies cannot pierce, and not in the linaments of the bodie.[40]

Although Dekker takes a harsh view toward people who either cannot or will not penetrate the facade that wealth sometimes creates, he in no way condemns riches or those who possess them if they use their money wisely and magnanimously. For Dekker, morality is, to some degree, the seemly use of money: he admires a lavishness of spirit and believes that virtue is, in part, the generous use of money. No doubt Dekker agrees with Giovanni Nenna's observations

about wealth:

> Riches do drive all sadness & sorrow from the mind: they expell all melancholie thoughts from the imagination: they keepe the bodie from wearisome labour: they increase sweete friendship: they cause in man waighters of honor and renowne, and finally they are the occasion of all high fame and glorie.[41]

Writing four years after Nenna, Dekker wistfully presents such ideas in his Old Fortunatus:

> Gold is the strength, the Sinnewes of the world,
> The Health, the soule, the beautie most divine,
> A maske of Gold hides all deformities;
> Gold is heavens phisicke, lifes restorative,
> Oh therefore make me rich: Not as the wretch,
> That onely serves leane banquets to his eye,
> Has Gold, yet starves: is famisht in his store:
> No, let me euer spend, be neuer poore.
> (I.i.289-96)

Andelocia, in the same play, echoes his father's ideas:

> Riches and knowledge are two gifts diuine.
> They that abuse them . . . . . .
> To shame, to beggerie, to hell must runne.
> (V.ii.173-75)

Here and elsewhere in his works Dekker's message is clear. In itself, the possession of money is nothing; it is one's use of wealth that matters. While it may do a great deal to promote the recognition of a newly rich man and elevate him to social and political positions that he could not have attained as a poor man, riches in themselves do not change the inner man.[42] It is important to recognize that Eyre, long before his rise to prominence of any kind, is

already characterized as a generous, caring individual who is concerned about his fellowman. The possession of money simply gives him a method to more tangibly show his magnanimity through such activities as feasting the apprentices and building Leadenhall. Dekker's character is not changed in any way as a result of his new wealth.

If one doubts Dekker's egalitarian approach to money--that all men are entitled to it but that the possession of it does not necessarily make a person noble or virtuous--he needs only to consider the character of Hammon. A wealthy citizen, Hammon has much money in his purse but little virtue in his soul. His ultimate contemptible gesture is his offer to buy Jane from her husband Rafe. In treating Jane as a piece of merchandise, to be bought and sold much as a common whore, Hammon not only reveals a selfish, unfeeling nature but, in addition, also illustrates what, for Dekker, is an improper use of money.[43] Lincoln, an earl, also fails to use money appropriately. He gives twenty portugueses to Lacy to help bribe him into fulfilling his military obligations, making it clear that this money is to help purchase further honor and fame for the family. Lincoln is concerned only with what money can acquire, he appears to have little scruples as to the method of acquisition.

It is no doubt skill and not coincidence that has Dekker create a cobbler-turned-Mayor and a nobleman-turned-cobbler (Lacy/Hans) who both use money in a more virtuous and magnanimous manner than the presumptuous nobility in this

play. In doing so, he is telling something about the nature of man, namely that nobility, either of character or of blood, is in no way related to the possession of wealth. It is interesting to observe how Dekker brings out this point in relation to the King. Curious here is the fact that Dekker avoids the subject of the King's wealth while at the same time endowing him with a kind heart and a generous spirit. Dekker emphasizes the humanness of the King, rather than his nobility or wealth. By deliberately avoiding references to kingly wealth and its fineries, Dekker creates a King that shines in nobility of character and not just in nobility of birth.

But Thomas Dekker does not always write so benevolently of the wealthy or the noble.[44] In fact, he often displays a somewhat contemptuous or sarcastic attitude toward the rich. It is likely that audience demand contributed to the cultivation of such attitudes in popular theater but Dekker's works are possibly biased somewhat due to his several terms in debtors' prison. Dekker's attitudes, whatever their origins, toward both the idle rich and the industrious craftsman are mirrored in Simon Eyre's advice to Otley's daughter Rose:

> Be rulde sweete Rose; th'are ripe for a man: marrie not with a boy, that has no more haire on his face than thou hast on thy cheekes: a courtier, wash go by, stand not uppon pisherie pasherie: those silken fellowes are but painted images, outsides, outsides, Rose, their inner linings are torne: no my fine mouse, marry me with a Gentleman Grocer like my Lord Maior your

> Father, a Grocer is a sweete trade . . . had I a sonne or Daughter should marrie out of the generation and bloud of the shoe-makers, he should packe (III.iii.38-46).

In spite of what he tells Rose, Simon Eyre does very much approve of her nobleman-fiance Lacy. This is surely in part due to the fact that Lacy has learned the cobbling trade and has worked for Eyre under the guise of a Dutchman named Hans. Although he may be rich and of good parentage, he is not idle, nor is he all "outsides."

Lacy, with his sincerity and caring, along with Rose and the good King, appear to be exceptions to an otherwise rather unsavory set of upperclass figures in this play. Rose, Lacy, and the King are exceptions precisely because Dekker gives them completely egalitarian views of life. Rose treats her maid Sybil as an individual rather than as a menial servant. Rose makes it clear that she wishes to marry Lacy because she loves him and not because the marriage will bring her prestige or position. Dekker even has Rose display a certain disregard for money and what it can buy while at the same time showing that Sybil is like most women in that she likes beautiful clothes; this happens when Rose promises Sybil several items such as "a cambricke apron, gloues, a paire of purple stockings, and a stomacher" (I.ii.58-59) in exchange for obtaining information about Lacy's supposed impressment to France. Here is one woman talking to another; never is there mention of class or social barriers. As for Lacy, he is much the same as Rose in his

generosity of character. Lacy truly enjoys the company of his cobbler friends, and he wants to help them in every way; his loan to Eyre stood to profit him nothing for himself. The good King enjoys people and lives life eagerly, without regard to protocol and established custom. In contrast to these three egalitarian figures, the other gentles are cast in varying degrees of unfavorable light. Sir Roger Otley and the Earl of Lincoln are not completely honest in their personal dealings with each other. While deception in certain matters was not a totally unacceptable Renaissance business practice, it does serve as a contrast to Simon Eyre and his plainspoken tradesmen.[45] Tactless as they are sometimes, the cobblers are not deceitful. Firk only once makes use of deception and he most likely would not have done so had not Lincoln and Otley already been responsible for the situation of Lacy and Rose having to elope. Sir Roger Otley, Rose's overbearing father, tries to force his daughter into a marriage with Hammon that she does not want and later he and Lincoln, Lacy's uncompromising uncle, try to keep the lovers apart. The two "gentlemen" do not even balk at possibly creating a public brawl in order to stop the marriage. As a result of Dekker's careful characterization, the sympathies of the audience are usually with Rose and Lacy, as they are with the two lovers Rafe and Jane, and the defeat of Lincoln and Otley at the hands of both the band of shoemakers and the King is not only amusing but welcome. Lincoln and Otley, in spite of all their upperclass

station and finery, are nothing more than gullible, selfish men. But however ignoble the actions of Lincoln and Otley may seem at times, it is Hammon who is Dekker's most ungentlemanly gentleman in this play. Hammon, presumably a rich merchant's son, comes close to seeming a ridiculous weakling. In addition to making Hammon a man of few moral scruples, Dekker takes care to emphasize his inability to be a gentle in a physical sense. He does this by having Rose's maid Sybil, with the aid of another servant, catch and kill a deer that has eluded Hammon in a woodsy area near Sir Otley's home (II.ii.2-9). Since leisured gentlemen were supposedly skilled hunters, this would be an insult that Elizabethan audiences would readily understand.[46] In addition to satirizing "noble" prowess, the incident also carries an additional egalitarian slant: it implies that servants, women as well as men, can be just as physically capable as gentles. Besides implying that Hammon lacks physical ability, Dekker also casts doubts as to his ethics and moral values. Hammon vacillates between wooing Rose and courting Jane. When Rose finally spurns him, he then earnestly pursues Jane. To his plea of "Let's play" she replies that she has to keep her needlework shop open. He then offers to buy her company for the evening (III.iv.30-35). When this ploy does not prove effective, Hammon apparently falsifies a letter that he shows to Jane, telling her that her husband Rafe was killed in the war. Believing him, Jane ultimately agrees to marry him. When Rafe returns home

from the war and confronts him just as the wedding is about to take place, Hammon offers "twentie pound . . . in fair gold" (V.ii.76) to purchase Jane from him. Rafe, as might be expected, is furious:

> Sirra Hammon Hammon, dost thou thinke a Shooe maker is so base, to bee a bawde to his owne wife for commoditie, take thy golde, choake with it, were I not lame, I would make thee eate thy words (V.ii.83-85).

Perhaps Hammon's only redeeming quality is that he considers both Rose and Jane socially acceptable; he is looking for a good and virtuous wife, not necessarily a noble one or a rich one. Whatever his attitudes, it is most certain that neither Hammon's riches nor his gentility aids him in his pursuit of either Rose or Jane. Dekker shows Hammon to be devoid of any of the virtues with which gentility supposedly endows a man.[47] In so characterizing the son of a wealthy merchant, Dekker echoes Richard Mulcaster's warning that, "for of all the means to make a gentleman, it is the most vile to be made for money."[48] Hammon, a product of the nouveau riche, has money and the social prestige that wealth can bring. He does not, however, like Eyre, possess the innate qualities of character to guide him to the proper use of money. He suffers from the delusion that money can buy him anything that he desires, even love and happiness. His wealth blinds him to the truth that he cares for no one but himself. When Rose spurns his attempts to win her affection, Hammon is rude and insulting, telling both Rose and her

father that he already has a love (Jane) and will return to her. His "unsuccessful courtship of Rose illustrates the failure of the unfaithful lover, despite his knowledge of all the conventional romantic devices."[49] Romantic and wealthy as he may be, Hammon does not succeed in winning Jane either. In the end, he leaves, his "twentie pound" tossed at Jane's feet. The same money with which he tried to buy her, he leaves as compensation for the hurt he has caused; he departs saying, ". . . in lieu / Of that great wrong I offered thy Jane, / To Jane and thee [Rafe] I giue that twentie pound" (V.ii.88-90). In every way, he views money as the solution to his problems. Because Hammon never seems to realize that others can see past his facade to his real character, he never understands why he is treated the way he is. He depends upon his money and his social position to bring him special treatment, but the egalitarian views of the other characters do not allow it.

Dekker's treatment of Hammon is most definitely a statement for equality of treatment on both social and economic levels; however, Dekker also believes in equality on legal and political planes as well. This is partly evident in Eyre's rise to political prominence and in Dekker's satirical juggling of the Rafe-Lacy impressment scenes. Evidence exists, too, that Dekker also does not think that degrees of society should influence either the creation of the law or its function. Dekker also opposes strictly mechanical application of the law because such administration

cannot take into consideration the power of the individual to redeem himself. In addition, he seems to fear that regimented legal action also leads to the abuse of power and, therefore, sometimes to corruptness in government.[50] Amid all the rollicking joviality of his play, there is a quiet statement that application of the law to the individual according to his character and not social status is best. Lacy's situation exemplifies this quite well. It is plain that Lacy commits treason when he ignores his orders to go to battle in France. The King realizes that Lacy is guilty of grave misconduct, for he answers Lincoln's accusation quite plainly, saying "I know how Lacie did neglect our loue, / Ranne himselfe deepely (in the highest degree) / Into vile treason" (V.v.49-51). However, in spite of Lacy's guilt the King forgives him, not because he is a nobleman and his family has political power but because Lacy appears truly repentant. It is clear that Lacy acts out of a belief that his action is truly the best course to pursue. It appears, then, that the King feels he can hardly condemn as a traitor a man who is simply acting in what he thinks are the best interests of all concerned.

The King also does not believe that he has the power to divorce couples who marry willingly and out of love for each other. He asks Rose and Lacy if they wish to remain married; they reply that they do. The King, much to the dismay of Lincoln and Otley, refuses to divorce them. Love, he reminds the in-laws, comes from high authority and

should not or cannot be legislated:

> Shall I diuorce them then? O be it farre,
> That any hand on earth should dare vntie,
> The sacred knot knit by Gods maiestie,
> I would not for my crowne disioyne their hands,
> That are conjoyned in holy nuptiall bands.
> (V.v.60-64)

He does not feel that he has the moral authority, or possibly the religious authority, to separate a couple who, out of love, marry in the sight of God. The King's actions, therefore, support Dekker's egalitarian attitude; people, not classes, marry.

Elsewhere in the play, too, the King shows that he is fully aware of his power and how his use of it can affect men's lives. For instance, the King is no less friendly or generous with Eyre or the feasting apprentices. He publicly praises Eyre's funding of Leadenhall, a new public meeting place and he graciously grants the cobblers' request "for vs to buy and sell leather there two dayes a weeke" (V.v.155). And, of course, the King accepts the invitation to dine with the shoemakers of London at this Shrove Tuesday feast. But, for some reason, Dekker has the King end the play on a bit of a serious note. On his way to join the merry cobblers at the banquet table, the King laments that, "When all our sports / and banquetings are done, / Warres must right wrongs which Frenchmen haue begun" (V.v.190-91). Dekker's attempt here could be to show patriotism or the King's concern for his people. But is it not possible that

Dekker chose the words "must right wrongs" for the specific purpose of showing the King's sense of fairness and equality? Dekker's King does not bellow for a gory fight or bloodthirsty war; instead, he speaks earnestly of justice. There is, perhaps, a feeling of sorrow in this last speech; this is the same man who only a few lines before reminded us that "Where there is much loue, all discord ends" (V.v.119).

This philosophy of the King, coupled with Eyre's statement that "a pound of care paies not a dram of debt: lets be merry whiles we are yong, olde age sacke and sugar will steale vpon vs ere we be aware" (III.iii.21-23) gives, in essence, Dekker's central philosophy in this play. Dekker believes life to be an experience worthy of enjoyment. Life is too precious to fill with cares, sorrow, silly social restrictions, categorical labels, and hatred. With such a philosophy as its core, it would be easy to dismiss The Sheomaker's Holiday as merely an idealistic comedy that promotes the interests of the English working class; in truth, it is much more than this. Thomas Dekker does not share the views of most Elizabethan dramatists. He is far more tolerant than most toward the increasing social, economic, and political mobility of his day, a fact that is partially supported by the manner in which he adapted Thomas Deloney's The Gentle Craft, Part II into a statement of praise for hard work, successful business ventures, and the many rewards they can bring. In addition to this, Dekker's belief in the potentiality of man, regardless of

his genealogy or social station, is most aptly shown in this play. Dekker lets Simon Eyre, a lowly shoemaker, rise to social and political prominence. He sanctions an unequal marriage between Rose and Lacy. He displays honesty in speech between master and servant, working man and nobleman. He illustrates true friendships between men of totally different social stations. He shows true love to be more powerful than wealth or family heritage. He creates a king who recognizes the value of all men, a sovereign who reigns with compassion and fairness. Dekker uses his characters to plainly show that birthright, wealth, and occupation are in no way the sole avenues to virtue or nobility of mind. All of this is evidence of Dekker's egalitarian attitude. It is clear that Dekker bears no real animosity toward those of wealth, position or power if they make proper use of these things. It is also apparent that Dekker does not view the fluidity of society with either anger or disapproval. He is far more interested in the individual man than in either types or classes. He believes no class is better than any other, for a class is composed of individuals. Thomas Dekker's The Shoemaker's Holiday is, then, a document that promotes egalitarianism.

NOTES

[1]Frances Elizabeth Baldwin, Sumptuary Legislation and Personal Regulation in England, Johns Hopkins University Studies, Ser. 44, No. 1 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1962), p. 49).

[2]Muriel C. Bradbrook, The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy (London: Chatto & Windus, 1955), p. 123.

[3]Lionel C. Bradbrook, Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1937), p. 232.

[4]Knights, p. 236.

[5]James H. Conover, Thomas Dekker: An Analysis of Dramatic Structure (The Hague: Mouton Press, 1969), p. 13.

[6]"Egalitarianism," Webster's Third New International Dictionary, 1976 ed.

[7]E. D. Pendry, ed. Thomas Dekker, Stratford-on-Avon Library Series, vol. 4 (London: Edward Arnold, Ltd., 1967), p. 12.

[8]Thomas Dekker, Patient Grissil, in The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker, ed. Fredson Bowers (London: Cambridge University Press, 1953), p. 245.
All quotations from this and other plays by Thomas Dekker are from this edition, and their locations will be cited and noted parenthetically in the text by act, scene, and line number.

[9]W. K. Chandler, "The Topography of The Shoemaker's Holiday," Studies in Philology, 26 (1929), 499.

[10]Thomas Deloney, The Novels of Thomas Deloney, ed. Merritt E. Lawliss. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961), p. 361.

[11]Oxford English Dictionary, Vol. 7, pp. 169-71. The word "noble" was in flux during Dekker's time. It was not used exclusively to denote birth or rank. It was beginning to be used to denote quality of mind and of character, rather than of birth.

[12]W. F. McNeir, "The Source of Simon Eyre's Catch-Phrase," Modern Language Notes, 53 (1938), 275-76.

[13]Oxford English Dictionary, Vol. 1, p. 1004.

[14]Giovanni Battista Nenna, Nennio or, a treatise of Nobility, 1595, sig. K^{2r}.

[15]Nenna, sig. K^{3r}. Nenna uses religion rather than clothes to impart the same idea. He writes, "Tell me I pray thee, if he that is borne of a christian, be straightwaies a christian? Surely no. . . . so it is not sufficient for a noble man, to come of Noble bloud, as a thing that maketh little or nothing in matter of Nobilitie: but that he observe that which is requisite for the attaining of perfit Nobilitie, to wit, that hee become Noble thorough the vertues of the minde."

[16]Deloney, p. 107, lines 19-24.

[17]"The Moral Code of the Gentleman" in Ruth Kelso's The Doctrine of the English Gentleman in the Sixteenth Century, University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, No. 14 (Urbana: Illinois University Press, 1929), pp. 70-110.

[18]John Rastell, Of Gentlenes and Nobylyte, 1525, p. 27.
In The Whore of Babylon (1606) Dekker writes "hee's noble that is good" (IV.ii.16).

[19]Sir John Ferne, The Blazon of Gentrie, 1586, p. 20.

[20]Conover, p. 43.

[21]Esther Mathilda Gloe, "The Influence of the English Work Laws on the Drama of the Period from 1563 to 1642," Diss. Oklahoma State University 1979, p. 178.

[22]Ferne, p. 26.

[23]Dekker often makes reference to marriages made unhappy by meddling parents or because the pair were made to marry. In Match Me in London (V.v.47-59) he equates forced marriages with treason and murder, for the only person severely punished here is a father who forces his daughter to betroth a man she loathes. All others, murderers and traitors included, are pardoned.

[24]E. M. W. Tillyard, The Elizabethan World Picture (New York: Macmillan, 1944), pp. 70-72.
To know oneself well enough to act out of reason rather than passion would, to Elizabethans, be commendable. Those who act out of reason would be closer to the angels

and, therefore, more like God.

[25]Lewis Einstein, Tudor Ideals (New York: Russell & Russell, Ltd., 1962), p. 173.

[26]Frederick M. Burelbach, "War and Peace in Shoemaker's Holiday," Tennessee Studies in Literature, 13 (1968), 105.

Gloe, p. 188.

[27]Deloney, p. 137.

[28]Kelso, pp. 100-01, 151-54.

[29]T. Marshe, The Institucion of a Gentleman, 1555, p. 13.

Nenna, sig. $I3^{r}$.

[30]Bellafont in The Honest Whore, Part I and Part II is a fine example of this concept. A reformed courtesan, she fully understands that her self-worth is the sum total of her personal virtues and refuses to turn whore again, even though her husband both physically and verbally abuses her to get her to do so.

[31]Einstein, p. 15.

[32]A. L. Rowse, The Elizabethan Renaissance: The Life of the Society (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), p. 145.

Elizabeth Burton, Elizabethans at Home (London: Secker & Warburg, 1958), p. 136-37.

[33]Gloe, p. 187.

[34]Louis B. Wright, ed., Life and Letters in Tudor and Stuart England (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1962), p. 484.

[35]Tillyard, p. 13.

[36]Wright, p. 484.

[37]This is the only one of the seven plays attributed wholly to Dekker to possess a lovable, friendly king who socializes with all types of people. Most of his kings are rather unsavory types.

In If This Be Not A Good Play, The Devil Is In It (1611) the king is weak and easily swayed by others. He is easy prey for the devil Lurchall, under whose influence he becomes corrupt, lecherous, and cruel. At the end of the play, however, he repents and vows to be a good

sovereign. But even in this play Dekker has a note of egalitarianism regarding royalty. In a discussion with his uncle, the king wishes that he did not have such weighty responsibilities for "Kings, Gods are, (I confesse) but Gods of clay, / Brittle as you are, you as good as they, / Onely in weight they differ . . . / Yet all [are] but flesh and bloud" (I.ii.20-23).

In Match Me in London (1620-23?) Dekker creates his worst king: an underhanded, deceitful, philandering man whose principal amusement appears to be the seduction of newly married young women. He abducts Tormiella, brings her to court, flaunts her in front of his wife, and pesters her to submit to him; in exchange, he promises to make her husband rich and powerful. At one of her many refusals, he chides her with the statement of a true opportunist: "Be wise, and when thou mayst (for lifting vp / Thine arme) plucke Starres, refuse them not" (II.ii.82-83). At the end of the play he does repent and promise to reform but he is so thoroughly despicable that one has to question his sincerity.

[38]Einstein, p. 30-36.

[39]Merritt E. Lawlis, Apology for the Middle Class: The Dramatic Novels of Thomas Deloney (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1960), p. 170.

[40]Nenna, sig. I^{3r}.

[41]Nenna, sig. G^{4r}.

[42]This idea is treated repeatedly by Dekker.

In Old Fortunatus (1599) Dekker shows that instant wealth in no way changes a naive and gullible old man.

In The Honest Whore, Part II (1605-07) Dekker weaves ideas about money throughout the entire work. Bellafont, a reformed whore, refuses to sell herself ever again, even though it is the way out of wretched poverty. Matheo, her husband, is a "gentleman" who gambles away any money he may have and beats his wife when she refuses to prostitute herself to get him more money to squander. Hippolito, son-in-law to the Duke of Milan, has both money and nobility; yet, after encouraging Bellafont to quit her "profession," he comes to her with money and jewels to seduce her once more. Poor, but proud and sincere, she refuses. Matheo's actions remind one of Valasco's statement in Match Me in London (1620-23?): "You haue the Courtiers dialect right, your tongue / Walkes ten miles from your heart" (III.i. 71-72).

In If This Be Not A Good Play, The Devil Is In It (1611), the king, though obviously of noble birth and monied, is a man of totally unethical character. Here, too, is the usurer Bartervile, with his cruelty to widows and orphans; the more money he gets, the more he desires. He even plans

to dupe the king out of part of a war-time loan.

[43]The Honest Whore, Part II (1605-07) can be viewed as a statement that the possession of money/wealth does not necessarily dictate the possession of virtue or goodness.

[44]The nobles in Dekker's plays are quite often weak men who use their power and positions as fronts for their own ineffectuality. The King in The Shoemaker's Holiday, with his strength of character and love of life, is truly unique among Dekker's upperclass characters.

[45]Einstein, p. 69.

[46]Kelso, p. 157.

[47]Francis Markham, The booke of honour: or five decads of epistles of honour, 1625, p. 51.

Ferne, p. 30.

Both of these authors state the four cardinal virtues to be prudence, justice, magnanimity, and temperance.

[48]Richard Mulcaster, Positions, Classics in Education, 44, abrgd. and introd. Richard DeMolen, p. 158.

[49]Burelbach, 103.

[50]Match Me in London (1620-23) contains numerous references to the misuse of power by a sovereign. Nor does Dekker let it stop with the king. Even his brother John is evil. He plans to offer the people justice and fairness in their king--after he murders his brother and takes over the kingdom. Nobles and their power are questioned (I.iii.40-43). Hypocrisy, too, is ridiculed when Cordolento, angry with the king, cries, "Great men make Lawes, that whosoe're drawes blood / Shall dye, but if they murder flockes 'tis good" (IV.i.67-68).

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