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THE PRIZE STYLE OF ROBERT BURTON

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION: THE PROBLEM OF STYLE

In every age appear certain shibboleths which seem to characterize and explain its preoccupations and goals. Surely in the English Renaissance, a time which saw itself as an active participant in traditional culture, an honored phrase was "Nosce teipsum." From many sources, Greek, Hebraic, continental, men sought knowledge of themselves and the world outside reflecting them. It often seems surprising to us that the Renaissance man, so often praised for his exuberant hedonism and rebellious ways, should have consciously sought instruction of various kinds within literature. Jestbooks, plays, and lyric poetry existed not merely to delight: useful instruction accompanied and even amplified the pleasure. The purpose of longer epics and meditative poems aimed to inculcate self-knowledge and right living. And the giant mirrors of man--the encyclopedias of science, the courtiers' training books, the Anatomy of Melancholy--reflected the image of man and reflected back into man the image of what he was and what he could become.

Because the purpose of Robert Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy is so unmistakably a serious one--to effect a change within the reader--



it would be worthwhile to consider the ways by which he hoped to effect that change. He had a conception of what knowledge was; to see how this theory of knowledge helped control his way of writing about it should open some doors into Renaissance ideas about how man learned and how that learning was seen to affect man writing.

One of the clichés about the Seventeenth Century which is nonetheless true is that it was a time of change, of transition. Certainly that is true when we begin to consider what theories about knowledge were available to Burton. The schoolboys' definition of the shift as that between induction and deduction, between why and how as the characterizing questions contains much truth. Hooker near the first part of the century epitomizes the orthodox, medieval reliance upon authority, the belief that language and rhetorical investigation could help one reach the truth, which was already stored in an ancient storehouse; Hobbes later is testimony to the newer belief that truth can still be discovered, that ways of knowing are changing. The change from older to modern science is not merely that physicians, philosophers, and others who were interested stopped believing in the vital spirits and switched over to accepting the theory of the circulation of the blood. Behind such external shifts lay changing modes of viewing what man's mind could accommodate.

MLA 8 (1988), 97-100; George W. S. Hooper, *The English Renaissance: A Study in Prose Form from Bacon to Collier* (Chicago, 1911).

And Burton, living during that time of change the Seventeenth Century, was in many ways bound by orthodox beliefs. But at the same time he was aware of some of the changes being made in both macrocosm and microcosm.

Many problems face one who attempts to relate Burton's view to precise matters of style--to diction, sentence structure, and the like. It is one thing to abstract from his work his conception of the world and the role which knowledge plays in it. It is another thing to describe the quality of his diction, to judge the sorts of rhetorical devices he uses, the syntactical construction of his sentences, and the structure of the Anatomy as a whole--to pursue the sort of descriptive analysis which Morris Croll, R. F. Jones, and George Williamson have done in such an illuminating fashion.<sup>1</sup> To put the two together is yet another task.

Unfortunately, past scholarship and criticism provide little help. Williamson places him in the Senecan camp; Gamaliel Bradford

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<sup>1</sup> Among the several works done by the three on prose style these are recommended: Morris Croll, "'Attic Prose' in the Seventeenth Century," Studies in Philology, XVIII (1921), 79-129; Croll, "Muret and the History of 'Attic Prose,'" PMLA, XXXIX (1924), 254-309; Croll, "The Baroque Style in Prose," in Studies in English Philology: A Miscellany in Honor of F. Klaeber, (ed.) K. Malone and Martin Ruud (Minneapolis, 1929); Richard F. Jones, "Science and English Prose Style in the Third Quarter of the Seventeenth Century," PMLA, XLV (1930), 977-1009; George Williamson, The Senecan Amble: A Study in Prose Form from Bacon to Collier (Chicago, 1951).

represents a typical school who simply talk about his robustness, or manliness, or other qualities unsubstantiated by proof. Recent scholarship has been concerned with his utopia, or with inclusion of motifs common to other contemporaries. Only Leonard Goldstein has attempted to relate his thought to his way of expressing it--and his conclusion, that Burton's style is a "confused lump," still seems to beg the question.<sup>1</sup>

Nonetheless, such a relationship can be made, not with the buoyant rashness of a Wylie Sypher, who would suggest that Jacobean statecraft caused Bacon to leave out coordinate conjunctions, but by approaching the matter with better tools of logic, and answering more concretely the question of how a man's outlook toward his subject governs the way he writes about it. Perhaps the relationship is not so patently causative as reflective. It is therefore necessary to define with clarity the relationship between view and style. Fortunately, with Burton the task may be put on a valid basis because of his own

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<sup>1</sup>Representing the various scholarly and critical approaches to Burton are the following articles: Gamaliel Bradford, "A Quaint Old Treatise of Love," Sewanee Review, XIX (1911), 172-84; J. Max Patrick, "Robert Burton's Utopia," Philological Quarterly, XXVII (1948), 340-48; Merritt Y. Hughes, "Burton on Spenser," PMLA, XLI (1926), 545-67; and Leonard Goldstein, "Science and Literary Style in Robert Burton's 'Cento out of Divers Writers,'" Journal of the Rutgers University Library, XXI (1957), 55-68.

statements of purpose: "Democritus Junior to the Reader" provides us with a convenient starting point. In this introduction, for example, he allies himself with the Senecans, who eschewed Ciceronian emptiness for a search for truth in the form of the period itself. Here he shows his respect for "matter, not words"--a thorny statement which I believe reflects his Janus-like nature in seeming to point toward Sprat's later championing of a more denotative language but also reflecting the traditional view of the special power of the word itself. He makes clear that his own massive accumulation of knowledge is not vain but is instead intended for the eminently "practical" purpose of helping his reader regain that first fine innocence and health of his grand parents.

But how does one see the way in which his vision is fused with his style? That a final comprehension of his vision grows from sensitivity to his style is a critical truism. But what is style itself? Before we continue to anatomize Burton, it is imperative that we, like Burton, digress briefly upon this first concern: seeing what style means. Such a digression is, as for Burton, not a cul de sac so much as a way station. Once we see in general what we are studying, we can look at Burton in particular more clearly.

Of the terms in that apothecary's shop, the language of literary criticism, the term style is among the most elusive. That the word

itself is a dead metaphor, meaning originally a writing instrument, a "pointed object, bone or metal, for inscribing wax"<sup>1</sup> hardly clears the confusion in critical and scholarly writing. On the one hand there is an Arthur Quiller-Couch assuming that everybody can simply sense that "style" is synonymous with "the art of writing well"; on another side is an F. L. Lucas, who distinguishes between a "way of writing" and a "good way of writing,"<sup>2</sup> but is still concerned with exercising one's talents well enough so as to impose a good style upon one's letters and inter-office memos. And recently arriving on the scene have been a number of scholars, primarily linguists, who would say that in the study of style, value judgments are somewhat irrelevant: that every statement as an artifact necessarily embodies a unique style.<sup>3</sup>

It is clear, then, that before one can study the style of any single author it will be necessary to examine various definitions of this slippery conception, discarding some and adopting the ideas of others which seem most fruitful. Among those definitions which,

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<sup>1</sup> F. L. Lucas, Style (New York, 1955), p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Lucas, p. 391.

<sup>3</sup> Helmut Hatzfeld, "Stylistic Criticism as Artminded Philology," Yale French Studies, II (1949), 62.

though spirited, lack substance, are those of W. C. Brownell, who equates "style" with something roughly like "flair" and of Arthur Quiller-Couch, who simply lets the reader prove upon his pulses the presence of that desirable and somewhat mysterious thing, style. Nor are the often-quoted dictums of Sprat, "So many things, almost an equal number of words"; of Swift, "Proper words in proper places"; and of Buffon, "The style is the man himself" very helpful, though each contains in obliquely suggestive ways important keystones of some definitions of style and styles.

Since neither mere enthusiasm nor motto can suffice in the preliminary task of defining style, we must look to more responsible conceptions. John Middleton Murry, for instance, has summed up the three key meanings of the term as "personal idiosyncrasy of expression," the "technique of expression," and the highest achievement of literature--"a quality which transcends all personal idiosyncrasy, yet needs--or seems to need--personal idiosyncrasy in order to be manifested. Style, in this absolute sense, is a complete fusion of the personal and the universal." Finally, Murry concludes, "A discussion of the word Style, if it were pursued with only a

W. C. Brownell, Jr., The French Style of Samuel Johnson (New Haven, 1911), p. 1.

Quiller-Couch, In Company, in Winsett, p. 2.

fraction of the rigour of a scientific investigation, would inevitably cover the whole of literary aesthetics and the theory of criticism."<sup>1</sup>

Historically, the ruling notion was that of style as a gilded garment upon the body of thought beneath. W. K. Wimsatt considers representative of this point of view the entire discussion of rhetorical figures in Quintilian's Institutes.<sup>2</sup> And in De Oratore Cicero shows this belief in the separation of thought and style when he says, "Betwixt the formation of words and that of thought there is this difference: that that of words is destroyed if you change them, that of the thoughts remains, whatever words you think proper to use."<sup>3</sup> It is easy to see how this conception would remain regnant so long: even in writing a grocery list or memorandum, one is conscious that as the ideas become born and take shape in words on a page there is somehow a

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<sup>1</sup>See W. C. Brownell, The Genius of Style (New York, 1924); Arthur Quiller-Couch, The Art of Writing (New York, 1961); Thomas Sprat, History of the Royal Society (London, 1702); Jonathan Swift, A Letter to a Young Clergyman, Lately Entered into Holy Orders, 1721, Prose Works, ed. Temple Scott (London, 1898), III, 200-201; Buffon, An Address Delivered Before the French Academy [generally known as the Discours sur le Style] 1753, in Lane Cooper, Theories of Style (New York, 1907), p. 171; and John Middleton Murry, The Problem of Style (London, 1922), pp. 3, 7.

<sup>2</sup>W. K. Wimsatt, Jr., The Prose Style of Samuel Johnson (New Haven, 1941), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Cicero, De Oratore, in Wimsatt, p. 2.

difference in the form between that first faint glimmering within the mind and the jottings upon the paper--and, concomitantly, that there are a number of ways in which any simple notion could be expressed, each differing yet meaning roughly the same.

It is that very roughness of approximation of the initial notions, though, that is a key to seeing what is now almost a critical dogma--not the schism between idea and expression, content and form, but rather the uniqueness of each version of the statement. Yet this very view of the uniqueness of the individual sentence as artifact, appealingly dogmatic though it may be, could undercut the study of style itself. If, as Croce suggests, each utterance is different from each other, then the study of style could degenerate into meaningless relativism, into a world comprised of an infinity of discrete particles. As Richard Ohmann has asked, "If style does not have to do with ways of saying something, just as style in tennis has to do with ways of hitting a ball, is there any thing at all which is worth naming style?"<sup>1</sup> Or, if we say with Andrews Wanning that "style is part of what we

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<sup>1</sup>Richard M. Ohmann, "Prolegomena to the Analysis of Prose Style," in Style in Prose Fiction (English Institute Essays), ed. Harold C. Martin (New York, 1959), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>Andrews Wanning, Some Changes in the Prose Style of the Nineteenth Century, unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Cambridge University, 1938, p. 26. Cited in Ohmann.



ordinarily call meaning,"<sup>1</sup> then we have stepped into yet another thorn bush: what is the meaning of meaning, and what is the particular place of style in the larger province of meaning?

The answers to these questions are not so easy to come by as one might wish. Fortunately, Ohmann--who dared to criticize the truism of the fusion of content and form in the first place--has provided a way out of the selva oscura that allows us to see thought and style as one but also allows the study of style to remain as a possible activity grounded upon a firm basis. He begins first by attacking one answer that has been advanced--that of I. A. Richards, who would allow the clothing of similar "thought-forms" in a variety of patterns. Richards would say, for example, that "Socrates is wise" and "Wisdom belongs to Socrates" are but two word patterns into which one "thought-form"--in this instance, predicating a characteristic of Socrates--can be molded. But as Ohmann points out, these two are not exactly the same ideas--congruent, but not identical. Consequently, Richards' notion of "thought-forms" leads ultimately to the same impasse as Croce's: there would be an equal number of sentences as "thought-forms."

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<sup>1</sup> Andrews Wanning, Some Changes in the Prose Style of the Seventeenth Century, (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Cambridge University, 1938), p. 20. Cited in Ohmann.

The major weakness of Richards' position, as Ohmann sees it, is in the notion of thought-forms as somehow separate from the thinker. And it is here that he begins to formulate the basis of style:

Neither the external world, then, nor our "experience" of it offers any ready-made forms of thought to the analyst who wishes to see style as the way in which ideas get into words. What nature does offer to experience, however, and experience to language, is a constant formlessness. Just as, in the existentialist view, man is confronted in his search for ethical order by the indifference of the universe, man in his search for perceptual order faces a chaotic world-stuff which gives no hints as to the proper method of sorting. But Camus calls the world's moral anarchy benign, in that it allows us to consider man the maker of his own morality, and the chaos pictured by modern psychologists has a parallel advantage: the perceiver, according to this theory, shapes the world by choosing from it whatever perceptual forms are most useful to him--though most often the choice is unconscious and inevitable. The unfriendly behavior of tigers may, to be sure, coerce him in his perceptual sorting, and his choice of perceptual forms largely governs his choice of linguistic categories, but the selections are initially free, in an important sense.<sup>1</sup>

It is the way in which the writer freely chooses, breaks up and manipulates the "Heraclitian flux" that is the beginning of style.

The stream of experience is the background against which 'choice' is a meaningful concept, in terms of which the phrase 'way of saying it' makes sense, though 'it' is no longer a variable. Form and content are truly separate if 'content' is not bodiless ideas, but the formless world-stuff. And if such a hypothesis carries forward the

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<sup>1</sup> Ohmann, pp. 8, 9.

help transmit conceptions and emotional responses from author to reader. But in another sense, an author's style is a way of creating meaning as the writer confronts the flux of experience and controls it with words. In some ways his private meaning is his and his alone, incommunicable. But nonetheless there is some exchange of meanings; or at least we must act upon that assumption; and thus the meaning created by the writer can be sensed and analyzed by a reader.

Within that act of meaningful confrontation, however, certain patterns begin to emerge. Most writers do not set down pages of gibberish: they usually attempt to make sense to themselves and, secondarily, to others. Though the range of choices is enormous, it is still limited: certain words and sentence patterns tend to recur. A writer's style then can be considered an expressive system (to use Amado Alonzo's term) with certain meaningful characteristics.

Just as the act of communicating is a complex action, even more so is the attempt to assess the style of a given work, since style is, according to R. F. Jones, "the most complex phenomenon in literature . . . the resultant of all forces, known and unknown, underlying literary development," and, according to T. E. Hulme, it is "forced by the coming together of many different thoughts and generated by their contact. Fire struck between stones." How is the critic then to go about judging this "fire struck between stones"

without becoming burnt himself? The Spanish scholar Alonzo has provided one mode of attack: since stylistics is concerned with the expressive system--which embraces everything--the critic must see each part, "as, in painting, the form, the harmony, the thing changes if, for example, the painter places stone in front of red velvet rather than flesh. Furthermore, all parts are but smaller expressions of a deeper 'thought' of a poetic nature: an intuitional vision of the world and of life, felt, lived, and objectified in the poetic creation." For those who would judge this aspect of Alonzo's approach too emotional, requiring powers to which most of us do not have access, R. A. Sayce sees a way out of the difficulty by using the word style "as a convenient designation of the linguistic structure which underlies and indeed constitutes a work of literature."<sup>1</sup> In the final effect, however, Sayce's book on French prose meets Alonzo's prescriptions: through working with concrete units--nouns, epithets, clichés--he is able to show how the ordering of language of individual writers does embody their world view. What is appealing about his approach, then, is his lack of pretension and his lucid attack.

<sup>1</sup>Richard F. Jones, "Science and English Prose Style," p. 977; Thomas Ernest Hulme, Notes on Language and Style, University of Washington Chapbooks, ed. Herbert Read, XXV (Seattle, 1929), p. 13; Amado Alonzo, "The Stylistic Interpretation of Literary Texts," Modern Language Notes, LVII (1942), 492; R. A. Sayce, Style in French Prose (Oxford, 1953), p. 1.

Style can be defined as an author's "expressive system,"<sup>1</sup> though this term seems to substitute for vagueness the connotation of greater concreteness, that is unfortunately not so. This term, too, is a metaphor. Style is not a system in the same way that a dynamo is. However, style in general and style in particular do have certain collocations of qualities that can be named, defined, and limited. Not all the characteristics in Sir Thomas Browne's style appear in Robert Burton's, for example, and for discoverable reasons. The term set used in the same way that mathematicians and linguists use the term is thus a helpful concept. Just as a grammarian of the Chomsky persuasion would hesitate to define a verb in one or two words but would gladly describe the several ways in which a verb can operate--and cannot operate--so too can stylistics, the "art-minded philology,"<sup>1</sup> describe the set of considerations which are the province of style in general and particular, all of which comprise the artist's "expressive system." In many ways the concerns will overlap fields long studied and not regarded as necessarily the province of stylistics--the writer's place in the history of ideas, even his schooling--nonetheless all these must be

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<sup>1</sup>Hatzfeld, p. 62.

<sup>1</sup>Hatzfeld, p. 62.

considered as helping to form the set of qualities which expresses his personal vision and his style--which is, as D. W. Rannie holds, "the critic's primary concern."<sup>1</sup>

The student of literature writing today can be grateful for the light cast upon the nature of style from a variety of sources. When considering possible modes of attack upon style, however, he is faced by such a plethora of opposing schools and contradictory ideas that he is inclined to be less than grateful for this Gods' plenty. Some battle over the rightful province of style and stylistics, others over the problem of the relationship of langue and parole to literary study.

Among those who battle over the boundaries of style and stylistics are Charles Bally, who believes that style pursues an esthetic end, stylistics a scientific one, and Marcel Cressot, who believes the relation not one of exclusion but inclusion. To him, style is a department of stylistics, transcending it on a nonverbal level. From these two definitions we can draw the conclusion that style is a personal quality, the thing studied, and stylistics the science of that study. Once we have named the approaches, though, how should we study style? Leo Spitzer "starts from the observation of a linguistic detail which in some way diverges from the normal";

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<sup>1</sup>Hatzfeld, p. 62.

Marouzeau and Cressot would study an individual writer's work chiefly as a representative of the entire language.<sup>1</sup> For the latter approach we need chiefly linguistic data, for Spitzer's approach the power of divination.

If we become too much concerned with this battle, or with the battle over langue and parole, we might neglect seeing style as a perceivable quality. Burton differs from Browne not merely in his preference for certain kinds of clauses but in quality as well--one which seems somehow greater than the sum of its linguistic parts. We might neglect the characteristic of style as a personal statement which embodies the emotional and intellectual contours of the man speaking; we might not consider style as a way of seeing, a mode of apprehension. By metaphor, by punctuation, by word order both reader and writer come to know through style. Style, then, links the reader and writer. The words, symbols, devices such as irony--all these reflect common experience and help create an experience; they mediate between the author and his audience.

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<sup>1</sup>See Sister Clare Eileen Craddock, Style Theories as Found in Stylistic Studies of Romance Scholars (1900-1950) (Washington, D.C., 1952), pp. 15-16, and Sayce, pp. 1, 3.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas Munro, "Style in the Arts: A Method of Stylistic Analysis," Journal of Theoretical and Art Criticism, 7 (1938), 123-128.

In order to apprehend these links, what sorts of methods should a student of style use? Is it even possible to describe a literary style with any degree of surety? Here the methods used by students of style in the plastic arts can help those working with literature. One answer, for instance, has been provided by Thomas Munro in an essay outlining a highly developed method for the study of style in architecture, painting, and other forms. The answer that he reaches is that a style is a combination of traits: that, for example, a limitable set of characteristics--pointed arches, flying buttresses, etc.--combine to form the Gothic style in architecture. That notion of a set of characteristics could just as easily be applied to literary style-study, as it indeed has been done with Wölfflin's system of categories--closed-open, linear-painterly--defining Baroque. Munro does make clear that not all trait-complexes are necessarily styles, however; sometimes a particular combination occurs only once.<sup>1</sup> It is easier to establish such combinations in the plastic arts, since most traits are quantitatively measurable, and because the materials of literature, words, slip and slide elusively. Nonetheless, certain qualities of words are measurable; one feels that ultimately a fairly complete description can be made.

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Munro, "Style in the Arts: A Method of Stylistic Analysis," Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, V (1946), 128-158.



What are the necessary components of this finite set of characteristics which we call a style? Some years ago Herbert Read in English Prose Style outlined one system. Though in many ways a limited book it does provide a concrete basis. He begins with what he calls diction, which includes the basic linguistic units of which a style is comprised, covering words, epithets, and metaphors under this rubric. He then builds upward with sentence structure, the paragraph, and a variety of types of arrangement. In addition to these tangible units, he would have the student of prose style consider intangibles: fancy, imagination, impressionism, expressionism, eloquence, and unity, as well as the modes of exposition and narrative.<sup>1</sup>

Read's mode of attack is perhaps the best known in English. Scholars in the Romance languages also have contributed greatly to the methodology of dealing with style--and have contributed numerous contradictory techniques, as well. Alonzo holds that the science of style of describing adequately an author's "expressive system," must deal with the following: the ways in which the "form" of the poem developed through the creative process, the poet's rational thoughts as transformed into poetry, order, the poet's exploitation

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<sup>1</sup> Herbert Read, English Prose Style (New York, 1928), pp. v-vii.

of the possibilities of his own idiom, the expressive intentions with which he has filled out and renewed common syntactical formulae, the expressive procedure to which he has subjected the meaning of words and phrases, and rhythm.<sup>1</sup> The student must consider these matters also: the world view, the effect upon the reader, the "modus operandi of the psychic forces which form the composition of the work" in order to come close to a final appraisal of the work and its style--which is not just a collection of external, separable characteristics but the expressive system of the entire work.<sup>2</sup> As Sister Clare Eileen Craddock's study of the work in stylistics of scholars in the Romance languages points out, Alonzo's manifesto is among the best of current stylists': it anchors itself firmly in the work itself and allows for the imponderables--which are, of course, the most difficult to assess "scientifically." The thinking of most other scholars follows Alonzo's; nearly all agree that primary attention must be paid to language and linguistic matters, for language, as Helmut Hatzfeld makes clear, "in the widest sense comprising the whole structure of a work, is literary style."<sup>3</sup> René Wellek and

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<sup>1</sup> Alonzo, p. 494.

<sup>2</sup> Alonzo, p. 493.

<sup>3</sup> Hatzfeld, p. 62.

Hatzfeld, p. 62.

Austin Warren would agree: "Stylistics, conceived in this wide sense, investigates all devices which aim at some specific expressive end and thus embraces far more than literature or even rhetoric. All devices for securing emphasis or explicitness can be classed under stylistics: metaphors, which permeate all languages, even of the most primitive type; all rhetorical figures; syntactical patterns. Nearly every linguistic utterance can be studied from the point of view of its expressive value."<sup>1</sup>

However, despite the wide areas of agreement, there are several significant differences. As Hatzfeld says, one moot point is the role of the author. Leo Spitzer, for instance, would very nearly psychoanalyze the author; to Amado Alonzo, on the other hand, the author is almost irrelevant.<sup>2</sup> But in sum, though there is a measure of disagreement, nearly all critics working today would agree that stylistic study should cover these matters: the linguistic basis of the work, the writer's place in a historical context, the demands of the genre, the structure of the work, and certain intangible qualities such as tone, atmosphere, and world view. And most would make clear that here, as in any criticism of literature, to focus

<sup>1</sup> René Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature (New York, 1949), p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> Hatzfeld, p. 63.

upon only one aspect is somewhat false. Rhythm and tone spring from tropes and diction; all are governed by structure. Thus, abstraction is only temporary; in a literary work, all interact to create style.

Before outlining the major concerns of this study, it is necessary to point out that most of these theorists are still working within the framework of the Indo-European languages; many of the older critics were thus quite unaware that certain conceptions which they held--time, space, causation--are not necessarily "true." Bound by Western languages, they simply did not know what we know today after seeing the contributions of contemporary linguists who, analyzing the structure of other quite different languages, have pointed out that we see things certain ways not necessarily because they are "true" but because our language causes us to see them that way. It would be impossible to cover all the territory being mapped by contemporary linguists, but I do think that we in this age are fortunate to come to know better how our language operates: seeing how Hopi deals with tense, we can see better how English deals with conceptions of time. Consequently, whenever possible, the work of such men as Whorf, Sapir, and their colleagues will be brought in to show something of the behavior of English--in ways of which Herbert Read and Robert Burton were unaware but which can shed much light on our study.

And thanks to the contribution of linguists, we have better-refined tools for working with style. No longer must one compile lists of subordinate clauses in order to do a respectable job; instead, as the brilliant studies of W. K. Wimsatt upon Samuel Johnson and Jonas Barish on John Lyly have proved,<sup>1</sup> it is possible to work with concrete linguistic units--and to see that they are genuine reflectors of the authors' views of the world. Despite the work of such men as Barish and Wimsatt, though, falsely scientific, overly statistical studies have been made.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>W. K. Wimsatt, Jr., The Prose Style of Samuel Johnson (New Haven, 1941), and Jonas Barish, "The Prose Style of John Lyly," Journal of English Literary History, XXIII (1956), 14-35.

<sup>2</sup>Such a study is "The History of Certain Aspects of the Structure of the English Sentence," by Robert Roy Aurner [Philological Quarterly, II (1923), 187-208]. Although he has compiled numerous charts and statistics, he has dealt with external characteristics, attempting critical judgments hardly more perceptive than saying that Dryden has "an increase of structural complexity" and that Lyly's style has a "prevailing formlessness." Then, too, Zilpha Chandler's study [An Analysis of the Stylistic Techniques of Addison, Johnson, Hazlitt, and Pater, University of Iowa Humanistic Studies, Vol. IV, No. 3 (Iowa City, 1928)] has a very elaborate statistical apparatus based upon diction, sentence length, phrases, and sentence structure, but the conclusions are subjective and, I think, often wrong. It seems unfair to adjure the reader of "The Vision of Mirzah" or "The Vision of Justice": "But we must remember that Addison made no attempt to be strong and forceful." "See also footnote on p. 136.

To follow through completely with the injunctions of Alonzo, Read, and other theorists would require several lifetimes. In studies of a more limited scope, as this one must necessarily be, one must choose among the tools available those most fitted to the task. This study of Burton, then, will proceed according to the following order: First, we will place Burton in the context of the historical view of language, rhetoric, and style to which he belonged. Such an initial placement is necessary because his views of language as a channel for knowledge differed somewhat from ours and must be judged accordingly. His views affect consciously and unconsciously what he, as a student of literature himself, thought he was doing with the language. To define his conceptions, we will consider his own explicit statements as well as a number of recent studies--W. S. Howell's, Perry Miller's, Sister Miriam Joseph's.

We need to complete one more circle before we descend to work with more concrete matters of language. That second, narrower circle is the point of view, the persona, from which Burton is writing. One important control, after all, is the mask of Democritus which he dons; and this, I think, is an important consideration. It is required by one of the many generic bases of the work--satire; it influences the tone; and it reveals his fundamentally Christian humanistic world view.

From here the study will circle downward to the most concrete concern of all--the words Burton uses. Prime considerations will include source, the parts of speech, and placement in context. Models for this sort of study exist, in Sayce's study of French prose and F. E. Ekfelt's essay on Milton.<sup>1</sup> In fact, a pronouncement of Sayce's is that "The literary study of language must be founded on a detailed examination of single words and their variations of meaning." Obstacles, though, face us immediately: words do not stand still. Chameleonlike, their meaning changes historically and with their surroundings and with the observer. "They are like Proust's characters, whose nature is radically transformed not only in time but in the opinions of those with whom they come in contact." But, chameleons though they may be, they still contain two elements: stability and variability: "Stable because a common response is possible, because communication does take place; variable because each word is slightly different whenever it is used, depending for its effect on the speaker or writer, the hearer or reader, the verbal context, the general context."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>F. E. Ekfelt, "The Graphic Diction of Milton's Prose," *Philological Quarterly*, XXV (1946), 46-69.

<sup>2</sup>Sayce, p. 127.

Closely connected to an examination of diction is that of images--not just words themselves but words invested with meanings beyond the immediate context because they are common symbols or because the author, through repetition, makes them so. What Burton does with the motif of food and eating in "Democritus Junior to the Reader" is, for example, a source of humor and a crystallization of his purpose--to make the reader know, by sensory means as well as intellectual.

The words and images do not exist alone, however. They are all contained within the larger unit of the sentence. This next aspect of style provides a rich vein to be mined--historically, because of the battles over Senecan and Ciceronian styles--battles recorded by George Williamson, R. F. Jones, and Morris Croll in recent years. Still another aspect of historical importance in connection with these larger units of prose is Burton's use of the tropes, the colors of rhetoric. Though he disclaims in "Democritus Junior to the Reader" conscious use of zeugma, anaphora, or the like, he uses them all. Therefore, a student of seventeenth-century prose must consider the use of these traditional figures. Other concerns are Burton's apparent jaggedness of sentence structure, copiousness, pacing, timing, and tone within the sentence--for it is in this unit that we can see one of his chief aims: to reproduce the effect of the mind thinking.



Next, we will consider the total structure of the Anatomy--a formidable task, to be sure, draped as it is over innumerable sections and subsections, larded with digressions. Yet there is a logic to the order in which Burton placed his materials. Although he complains that, for lack of amanuenses, the book is not as perfect as he would wish it, it is obvious that a conscious artist trained in his tradition of rhetoric has some principles of control. The elaborate synopses of partitions appearing at the first of each of the major divisions is proof of his attention to each part--although digressions give a sense of freedom within that meticulous plan. It is, finally, a critical truism that the structure guides the tone, the quality, the style of the whole.<sup>1</sup>

Running throughout this examination of Burton, as a kind of ground bass, is a theme central to Burton's purpose: his attitude toward knowledge. It is central to his viewpoint concerning the

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<sup>1</sup>The text I have chosen is the Floyd Dell-Paul Jordan-Smith edition published by the Tudor Publishing Company in New York in 1927. It is not the standard edition; in fact, no edition can be said to be standard. The three-volume edition of the Reverend A. R. Shilleto (London, 1893), though usually considered the standard text, is filled with errors of fact. Based on the faulty seventh edition of the Anatomy, it contains spelling and punctuation that were not Burton's. The other modern edition, that done by Holbrook Jackson for Everyman's Library in 1932, rectifies some of Shilleto's flaws. But I have chosen the Dell-Jordan-Smith version because it is in one volume, because the Latin is translated, and because the index is particularly clear.

function of rhetoric, as I shall show in the next chapter. It is central to his use of the satiric mask of Democritus--a mask that is delightfully comic but also deadly serious. It is central to his choice of words and, most importantly, to the sentence order. And, finally, his conception of man's use of right reason as he attempts to make sense of himself and the world controls his choice of subject, structure, and world view.

...in a time when, crudely stated, most people thought that knowledge was one. At this time we will investigate the traditional viewpoints toward knowledge--what it was, how men got it, and what he did with it--and relevance of this concern to Burton's own place in the tradition, based on his own overt statements and later in more covert literary practices.

On the one hand he exemplifies the view that knowledge and techniques of investigation were fairly complete and that, consequently, a man's contribution to the sum of human knowledge lay chiefly in the thoroughness of rearrangement and reworking the materials--to create, as he says, something "not his own, and yet his own." With this conception, one which later in the century is to appear in the forefront in the activities of scientists and modernists, Burton often identified with the Christian humanists' viewpoint toward the state of man. Part of that complex set of assumptions was the idea

## CHAPTER II

### BURTON'S PLACE IN THE TRADITION OF RHETORIC

With all his varied and far-ranging erudition, Burton lived in a tradition of knowledge which is ours no longer--in a time when, crudely stated, most people thought that knowledge was one. At this time we will investigate the traditional viewpoints toward knowledge--what it was, how man got it, and what he did with it--and relevance of this concern to Burton's own place in the tradition, here to his own overt statements and later to more covert literary practices.

On the one hand he exemplifies the view that knowledge and techniques of investigation were fairly complete and that, consequently, a man's contribution to the sum of human knowledge lay chiefly in the rhetorical aim of rearrangement and reminding the audience--to create, as he says, something "not his own, and yet his own." With this conception, one which later in the century is to appear in the forefront in the skirmishes of ancients and moderns, Burton allies himself with the Christian humanists' viewpoint toward the state of man. Part of that complex set of assumptions was the idea

that fallen man could not hope for genuinely original contributions to thought. To return to the realms of truth, fallen man should refer to the ancients, to the ages nearer the golden times when man thought more clearly and truly. This, one of many classical and medieval holdovers, was particularly strong during Burton's time because of its relation to the theory of the decay of the world, a theory haunting Donne, Goodman, and others, and contributing to the fascination with melancholia.<sup>1</sup> Yet the traditional ways were changing. It is true that Ramus' highly "rebellious" method was chiefly a rearrangement of Cicero's prescriptions, but his changes still denote something of the profound change in the Seventeenth Century in man's conception of ways of investigating the truth. And Burton was living right in that time of controversy. Though Oxford was not the hotbed of Ramism that Cambridge was, it is inconceivable that he could not have been aware of that issue. And if he can resolve the question of a plurality of worlds in an "O altitudo," he is still aware of the major theories of cosmology available to him, though he does not seem to be completely aware of their implications for shattering the traditional

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<sup>1</sup> Among several articles dealing with this topic, these are typical: George Williamson, "Mutability, Decay, and Seventeenth-Century Melancholy," Journal of English Literary History (1935), 121-150, and D. C. Allen, "The Degeneration of Man and Renaissance Pessimism," Studies in Philology, XXXV (1938), 202-227.

view of the cosmos. To place Burton neatly in a camp labeled either "ancient" or "modern" is impossible. As one aware of so many contemporary controversies, he might--yet might not have--realized the implications of the changes. The last part of W. S. Howell's Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500-1700 outlines these changes but shows that they are spread out over a number of years: Howell regards some of Bacon's ideas as genuinely revolutionary.<sup>1</sup> And the Advancement of Learning predated the last edition of the Anatomy by almost half a century.

Let us first look at the traditional conceptions of knowledge before we begin to see in what ways Burton participated in the older forms. An individual style, in Edward Sapir's words, "not only incorporates [ the basic forms of the language ]; it builds on them."<sup>2</sup> We are talking not just about the words but about words and their world. And considering the traditions of knowledge and its formation in rhetorical modes during the Renaissance is a particularly exciting activity; the two were consciously considered as separable, but intertwined.

<sup>1</sup>W. S. Howell, Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500-1700 (Princeton, 1956), pp. 397-432.

<sup>2</sup>Edward Sapir, Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech (New York, 1949), p. 227.

The first step in establishing the main strands of the tradition of knowledge in which Burton was operating is to consider the construction of the world that a man could know. Those of us living in the second half of the Twentieth Century must make some great leaps of mind and imagination in order to realize the form of the world that Burton and countless others before him saw. Description of the traditional world picture--or pictures--available to Burton has been made unnecessary by the contributions of many scholars.<sup>1</sup> Suffice it to say here that the universe which men looked out upon for hundreds of years was a magnificently conceived one, a dynamic world in which physical and spiritual acted in linked harmony, in

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<sup>1</sup>We are indebted to E. M. W. Tillyard, whose Elizabethan World Picture (New York, 1944) is a key work explaining the chief metaphors of the cosmos--chain, correspondences, dance; to A. O. Lovejoy, whose The Great Chain of Being (New York, 1936) traces that conception from its inception through various forms; to Marjorie Nicolson, whose The Breaking of the Circle (New York, 1950) defines the ruling idea of the circle of perfection and the world's body. Numerous others have defined the world as pictured in men's minds: W. C. Curry in Chaucer and the Medieval Sciences (New York, 1926) has shown how Chaucer and his contemporaries believed the world was made. In his History of Magic and Experimental Science (New York, 1929-1941), Lynn Thorndike has amassed enormous amounts of material defining the outlook upon both the sensible and supersensible worlds held by the well-known and the obscure; and Kester Svendsen in Milton and Science (Cambridge, 1956) has shown how Milton, late in the Renaissance, utilized conceptions of the world held by classic medieval, and Renaissance men, outdated though they were to become.

which man as the nodal point contained and could apprehend matter from the lowest mineral to the highest Good. This ordered universe, meaningful for man in all its spheres, is an imaginative and logical creation which must cause us to see its maker as a paragon of animals apprehending like a god. Hiram Haydn has said that this traditional world view, inherited in the Renaissance from classical antiquity, Christianity, Platonism, and intelligent observation, is "rooted in order and law. It displays design and purpose in every part, and hence proclaims the unqualified rule of Mind, which has produced unity."<sup>1</sup>

Because this world was produced by a unifying Mind, men's source of knowledge about it came, they thought, from God. All questions--what is worth knowing? how do we know? why do we know?--were related back to the source of knowing, the logos, the Creating Word. On the first page of the first partition of the Anatomy Burton himself is completely orthodox when he considers God as not only the source of all things but also of man's knowledge about them. To Burton, God is the end of man's knowledge, as well. The first action which Burton attributes to Adam in Paradise is to know God.

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<sup>1</sup>Hiram Haydn, The Counter-Renaissance (New York, 1950), p. 133.

This conception of God as source and goal of man's knowledge we must keep in mind while exploring traditional theories of knowledge. Viewed literally, God is the ruler of the physical place, heaven, which man desires to reach after traversing the spheres. Viewed spiritually, God is final truth, but creator as well of human limitations. It is this aspect of God as limiter (though the orthodox Christian would not see it that way) that we must also remember when considering that apparently abhorrent notion of forbidden knowledge. We can see more clearly this conception of God as the source of knowledge in the following statement by Haydn. His working through contrast with later science helps us see the traditional idea--both because of what it is and what it is not:

The world system of Thomas Aquinas and his colleagues is pre-eminently concerned with the rational and theological Science of God; that blueprinted by Galileo and Descartes and Spinoza and Newton and Locke, with the rational and mathematical Science of Nature. The scientific aim of the Scholastics, unlike that of the later group, was not to discover the mathematical laws of operation of the universe, but rather to achieve a "comprehension of the meaning and significance of things, above all the chief end of man, the meaning of human life and of all creation related to it." They sought answers to the questions "what?" and "why?" as well as "how?"

Starting from accepted principles about the nature of God and God's universe, and employing a great linked and interlinked chain of reasoning, the Scholastics found their ultimate goal in the contemplation of what alone gave meaning and purpose to existence, of what alone constituted final truth for them--God. On the other hand, the seventeenth-century philosophers and scientists, also beginning with



hypotheses, but with mathematical ones, and checking their findings by experiment, concentrated upon ascertaining the character of mechanical operations, which they considered mechanical. The one group measured a "purposeful" nature qualitatively, the other a mechanical nature quantitatively. Hence, while one strove to reconcile its natural philosophy with fundamental theological premises, the other's most characteristic religious expression was radically rationalistic, in accordance with its scientific philosophy. Both systems are highly intellectualistic, but the older employed reason in the interests of the Christian religion; the more recent was inclined to exalt reason above the claims of any particular institutionalized religion--or at least to free its skirts of the clinging and hampering hands of creed and dogma.<sup>1</sup>

This is the traditional view of what the cosmos was shaped like--in other words, the scene of action for man; it is ruled by God, the source of all knowledge and hence the governor of man's province of knowledge. But what was the traditional view of knowledge? Obviously to Burton and those in his tradition knowledge meant much the same thing that it means to us-- an accumulation of material, a storehouse of fact and idea equipping us to act. However, several significant differences emerge. For one thing, right knowledge was not just an indiscriminate collection of facts about anything under the sun; instead, as a later discussion will show, certain vain speculations were definitely outside man's rightful sphere of concern:

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<sup>1</sup>Haydn, pp. 28, 29.

some knowledge was prompted by sinful curiosity; it was forbidden. The proper sort of knowledge to seek was therefore that which led to wisdom, which connoted man's reasoned use of brute fact without. And, according to the theory that man had fallen progressively farther away from the golden into the iron age, much of that wise knowledge upon which man's mind could work was the legacy of the past. In fact, Howell has pointed out that the traditional formula for invention (seeking out and developing knowledge) running through scholastic and Ramist schools was seen as "not the process of discovering what had been hitherto unknown, but as the process of establishing contact with the known, so that the storehouse of ancient wisdom would yield its treasures upon demand, and would bring the old truth to bear upon the new situation. The ten places of Ramus, and the ten categories of Aristotle as interpreted by the scholastics were devices for establishing contact between the new case and the old truth."<sup>1</sup>

What were the major concerns of this "old truth"? The concerns that reflected the rage for ordering man and the world--which Haydn defines as the emphases of the Renaissance Christian humanist or orthodox medieval world view: "a program which reconciled philosophy and religion, reason and faith, nature and grace."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Howell, p. 347.

<sup>2</sup> Haydn, p. 67.

Yet the kind of knowledge concerning man was not the mere weaving of old clothes for the Emperor: those within the tradition-- whether of Platonist, Christian, or even alchemical bent--stressed continuity and uniformity. It is those of us living after the circle had shattered, after the world's body had been dismembered, who separate spirit from sense, thought from extension. Despite minor rebellions along the way (the Nominalists, for example) the main stream of the tradition involves the conception that "knowledge (or truth) is one,"<sup>1</sup> that spirit and sense interpenetrate, that to pluck at one thread in the texture of truth is to cause all to move. For this reason an emblem upon a page represents the moral truth it illuminates; for this reason it is really adequate to explain that monkeys are named simia because of their similarity to human beings.<sup>2</sup> Erich Auerbach has shown that with Dante's view of reality, the allegorical mode is perfectly natural--indeed, inevitable;<sup>3</sup> Kester Svendsen, that the numerous encyclopedias, popularizations of traditional lore mingling acute observation with naïve superstition, demonstrate this same "impulse to synthesis." There might be skirmishes on the road;

<sup>1</sup> Haydn, p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> T. H. White, The Bestiary: A Book of Beasts (New York, 1960).

<sup>3</sup> Erich Auerbach, Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature (New York, 1957), pp. 151-177.

Ramus might be martyred, Roger Bacon scorned. But few would deny the unity of knowledge. To us Dante's numerology and Browne's exhilaration over the quincunx seem frankly silly; to them it was mystical proof, intellectually proved, of the unity of the world and time--and of man's knowledge of it.

The reasons that man desired to study arise from his sense of place in the world. According to orthodox Christian principle, buttressed by Boethius, man is a free agent. Yet his freedom is not so much a freedom from something as a freedom to become. Obviously this second kind of freedom implies something of a pre-ordered limit, an ordained set of values--fulfillments or limitations (depending upon one's point of view) built in to the Christian system. And man, as a free agent, desires the good. This natural impulsion, part of Aristotle's mechanics, was transmuted into a Christian spiritual principle. Marco Lombardo tells the traveler through Purgatory:

From his hands who fondly loves her ere she is in being,  
there issues, after the fashion of a little  
child that sports, now weeping, now laughing

The simple, tender soul, who knoweth naught save  
that, sprung from a joyous maker, willingly she  
turneth to that which delights her.

First she tastes the savour of a trifling good;  
there she is beguiled and runneth after it, if  
guide or curb turn not her love aside.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Dante Alighieri, The Purgatorio (London, 1956), p. 197.

Man, then, desires the good naturally. And, as Marco has said just before, the greater power ("maggior forza") which created man free created a mind within him. Man then learns, like the stone-cutters of cathedrals, for the greater glory of God--and for his own glory as a member of the Christian community. Yet he must exercise not just his mental powers of accumulation; he must use his judgment well. Marco himself points out that the goods so beguiling to the "simple, tender soul" are disastrously double-edged unless used temperately and wisely. Man freely desires to know; he learns for the glory of God. But he does so under certain important limitations. Mephistopheles claimed Faustus justly.

The figure of Faustus points to a crucial shift in the theory of knowledge especially important during the Seventeenth Century. Basil Willey has identified the shift as that one from why to how.<sup>1</sup> At first those interested in process rather than final value were able to justify it as for the greater glory of God; Browne's fascination with the multitudinous operations of "that universal and public manuscript," the virtuoso's firm belief that microscopy would prove still more strongly the splendors of God<sup>2</sup> are attitudes of this sort. But they

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<sup>1</sup>Basil Willey, The Seventeenth-Century Background: Studies in the Thought of the Age in Relation to Poetry and Religion (New York, 1942), p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Richard Westfall, Science and Religion in Seventeenth-Century England (New Haven, 1958).

are transitional. The shift from why to how is a shift from a fixed, teleological universe to an unsure one, mysterious and even malign because the old explanations just do not work. Burton was one who could ask both questions. But ultimately the "why's" were outdated.

Once we have seen the source of knowledge, its composition and reason for being, we have but opened the door to still another question we must ask in determining attitudes toward knowledge available to Burton: how does man get it? We could slough off this as one of the how questions with which traditional theorists were not concerned, but that would be to ignore one of the central problems of the study of style. And it is not to epistemologists that we must turn for an answer but rather to those most concerned with the transmission of knowledge: the rhetoricians, who accepted the theory of faculty psychology.

Both rhetoricians and philosophers used the explanations provided by what is called faculty psychology--a set of assumptions which may seem naïvely mechanical but which did explain by clear, if unaided, observations processes which we, with our far greater knowledge of nerves, body chemistry, and the like, are only slowly replacing.

Lawrence Buell, *Style in Prose: A Study of Robert Burton's*  
*Analysis of Memory* (Michigan State University Press, 1954).

Robert Burton, who, according to Lawrence Babb, preserves this tradition,<sup>1</sup> thought it necessary at the beginning of his first partition to anatomize man's body and soul; it is there that he gives us an epitome of the common conceptions concerning how man learns. Although he deals with the matter under the rubrics of "Of the Sensible Soul," "Of the Inward Senses," and "Of the Rational Soul," he makes very clear that the process of learning is not divorced from the physical. It is true that the vegetal soul (lowest faculty of all, corresponding to vegetal nature outside man) cannot learn, but it shares with the apprehending faculties the power of attraction and retention. The sensible soul (or sensible faculty) "Goes far beyond the other in dignity," chiefly because it is capable of judging and apprehending. Its controlling organ is the brain. One of the two parts that the sensible soul contains is the apprehensive power, by which "we perceive the species of sensible things, present or absent, and retain them as wax doth the print of a seal." It seems necessary to italicize the as in the preceding sentence: the process described is mysterious; he is not describing functions of the brain as though they were only so much sealing wax but is able to suggest that the process described is, after all, only metaphor.

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<sup>1</sup>Lawrence Babb, Sanity in Bedlam: A Study of Robert Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy (Michigan State University Press, 1959).

Just as the sensible soul contains two parts, so too does the apprehensive faculty contain two subdivisions, inward and outward. That knowledge is grounded in sensory action he makes clear by including the common list of five--touching, hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting. To this he adds wryly "Scaliger's sixth sense of titillation, if you please" as well as that of speech, "which is the sixth external sense according to Lullius." This latter sense is really the teasing one; we wish he had expanded his ideas further to make more clear his own view of the power of language. He might have granted speech (hearing of words, not just sounds) special dignity as a gleaner of impressions, or he might have said that not merely in listening to speech but in speaking himself man apprehends. But he does neither: such will have to remain speculation.

We can be assured that he does accord to hearing, that "most excellent outward sense," the handmaiden of speech, a high rank as a gatherer in of knowledge. Hearing is first a physical process, then an intellectual one: "To the sound, which is a collision of the air, three things are required: a body to strike, as the hand of a musician; the body stricken, which must be solid and able to resist, as a bell, lutestring, not wool, or sponge; the medium, the air, which is inward, or outward; the outward, being struck or collided by a solid body, still strikes the next air; until it comes to that



inward natural air, which, as an exquisite organ, is contained in a little skin formed like a drum-head, and struck upon by certain small instruments like drumsticks, conveys the sound, by a pair of nerves appropriated to that use, to the common sense, as to a judge of sounds.

Once received, the information is then transmitted to the inward senses--to common sense, "the judge or moderator of the rest, by whom we discern all differences of objects . . . the organs to bring the species to be censured"; to the phantasy, or imagination, "which doth more freely examine the species perceived by the common sense, of things present or absent, and keeps them longer, recalling them to mind again, or making new of his own"; to the memory, which "lays up all the species which the senses have brought in, and records them as a good register, that they may be forth-coming when they are called for by phantasy and reason."

From there knowledge can be worked upon by the understanding, a faculty of the rational soul (though where that is situated and what it can do are moot points). This power is uniquely man's: beasts can comprehend particularities relayed by the senses, but only man can comprehend universalities, can have innate notions, can reflect upon himself and judge his own actions. First moved by the corporeal, man's understanding moves toward the spiritual--"His

object is God, Ens, all nature, and whatsoever is to be understood." But it must be kept well in mind, especially for Burton's theory of language, that he states "there is nothing in the understanding, which was not first in the senses." There the actions of the understanding can take many forms; Burton cites a variety of systems of the modes of understanding. As a conclusion he synthesizes from the available theories what he considers the major functions of the understanding. Synteresis, the "purer part of the conscience . . . a conversation of the knowledge of the law of God and Nature, to know good or evil"; the dictamen rationis, which "doth admonish us to do good or evil"; and the conscience, "that which approves good or evil, justifying or condemning our actions."<sup>1</sup>

Our reception of this elaborate system must be to admire the genius of the description but to see its limits. We must grant, though, that--consciously or unconsciously--Burton states psychological phenomena in a way we might call science metaphorized. He does not refer to the brain or its functions by that notorious figure of a jelly full of holes; he makes his own position stronger--for us, at least--by regular use of simile: we retain the "species of sensible things . . . as wax doth the print of a seal." Still, the process itself is not

<sup>1</sup> Burton, pp. 135-148.

examined dispassionately, without reference to ultimate ends; the explanation of how is felt to exist to answer the questions of why we learn.

Bound up with the ideas about how we learn is the next question: what do we do with knowledge once we have accumulated it? Burton's last statements on the actions of the mind answer both questions. Man's mind contains the synteresis, dictamen rationis, and conscience: in the highest forms to which knowledge inevitably rises within the mind, man necessarily judges, chooses, "knows with" God. And although contemplation is a good, knowledge cannot exist without being a guide for action--not merely mental but physical, also. Here the tradition springs from classical antiquity, adjuring the pursuit of justice, wisdom, temperance, and fortitude, supplemented by Christian doctrines leading to virtuous behavior: faithful, hopeful, charitable. It would be mere recapitulation to present ancient and modern instances of this almost ecstatic faith in the powers of knowledge. Castiglione's Il Cortegiano, Elyot's Boke Named the Governour, and a host of other conduct books testify to the vitality and efficacy of this belief in the fundamental goodness of knowing the world, its maker, and its workings. And the benefits are not short-termed. Just as the traveler Dante had to be subjected to a stringent discipline over mind and body before he could enter the

garden atop Mt. Purgatory, so too did the tradition hold that the fruits of knowledge could ultimately be tasted in a regained Eden: "The end, then, of learning is, to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which, being united to the heavenly grace of faith, makes up the highest perfection."<sup>1</sup>

Yet the speckled tree of knowledge only grew next to, it was not, the tree of life within the garden, even in Renaissance depictions of gone Eden. Howard Schultz' book must then be taken to counteract the effects of the wares of popularizers who do not realize that one of the many strong medieval traditions carried over into the "boundlessly aspiring" Renaissance was this very theory that some knowledge was forbidden and that the reasons why--given the system of which the theory was a part--were perfectly logical. Indiscriminate hoarding of facts can be dangerous, Marco Lombardo warned the "tender, simple soul": dealt with in excess, any of the goods of the world can spoil themselves and the dealer with them. Burton's dismissal of various theories of cosmology is not the pique of a

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<sup>1</sup> John Milton, "Of Education," in The Works of John Milton, ed. Frank Allen Patterson (New York, 1931), XIV, 277.

<sup>2</sup> Howard Schultz, Milton and Forbidden Knowledge (New York, 1955).

crotchety old man: these speculations are vain; they do not help man live his life the better. And Christ's discounting of classical learning in Paradise Regained is also no bitter act of a disillusioned man.

What is at stake here is not just mere knowledge but rather Wisdom, that "vision of the highest good . . . reinforced by the allied and inseparable intuitions of temperance, justice, and fortitude."

Arnold Stein describes the heroic knowledge which Christ is in training to win: he is being tempered before he is able to become what he is. And here temperance is not mere abstinence, "but the strenuous discipline of subordination and superordination uniting in the individual the faculties and virtues under reason; but reason in the individual is not a self-contained end in itself; it points to action in the world, to duty toward neighbors, and it fulfills the larger harmony by pointing toward the source of reason in God." Satan the great rhetorician is dead wrong not because he seeks knowledge but because of the way he seeks it and the use he would subject it to. He is "the great empiric, the advocate of knowledge for power, knowledge derived externally from sense impressions, and worked up into patterns of practical reason reflecting human experience in the world, and among men." Christ's theory is Platonic: pure thought is inaccessible to the senses. But man's soul (Burton's con-science) can reflect light from above. Though Christ's Platonizing goes far beyond Burton's explicit

statements, there are large areas of agreement. Both would agree that the ultimate cause of thought is knowledge and the ultimate knowledge is the knowledge of God; they would believe that "if truth is one and the same thing, then it must be available, theoretically at least, by the same means to every man."<sup>1</sup>

Seen from this general point of view, the theory of forbidden knowledge is not negative but rather supremely positive. Given the framework in which the ultimate wisdom is the knowledge of God, in which the act of uniting the self with its source in the highest truth is the greatest good, then certain petty restrictions are really quite unimportant. A freedom from something pales beside the Christian freedom to become.

But we are concerned with not only a theory of knowledge; we are concerned with its application, especially to one man working in the tradition of Christian humanism. That forms of knowledge are equated with forms of art was a common metaphor in the Renaissance--though not felt to be as metaphorical as we might take it. We think of Face and Subtle, or Prospero and Faustus--better able to create and even transform because of their access to kinds of magical knowledge (both black and white, to be sure).

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<sup>1</sup> Arnold Stein, Heroic Knowledge: An Interpretation of Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes (Minneapolis, 1957), pp. 34, 97, 102.

Within the tradition of rhetoric, then, man was trained to gain and transmit knowledge for both "practical" and "artful" purposes-- purposes, however, whose opposition stems more from our point of view than theirs. The system of rhetoric built up through many years and encompassing many other disciplines was the tool by which man could move himself toward his ultimate goal. Hardin Craig has shown how the rhetorical tradition, this handy tool enclosing both thought and ways of thinking and writing (what we separate into logic and rhetoric) served as a key to the tradition: "On one principle, however, practically all were agreed: the road to truth was ratiocination, not the free use of reason, but reason restricted to the discovery or re-discovery of a universe whose form and purpose were already known and whose laws were the legacy of a wiser past or the fiats of an unimpeachable God. Consultation of authority and the correct employment of logic, not the examination of phenomena, were the means by which truth would become known."<sup>1</sup>

The tradition of logic and rhetoric--Zeno's closed and open fist which we are now putting together again after its dismemberment for so many years--is thus predicated upon the assumption dealt with earlier: that knowledge was one. Craig has written that learning

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<sup>1</sup>Hardin Craig, The Enchanted Glass: The Renaissance Mind in English Literature (Oxford, 1936), p. 3.

did not become departmentalized throughout the Sixteenth Century. "There were no lines between science and literature except such as the individual chose to draw; the interrelations of all subjects were freely recognized, and the conception of learning was at once unified and encyclopedic." In a sequel to The Enchanted Glass he has added that the men of the Renaissance have the better of us in one respect: for them, "throughout the total environment truth is one." This commitment to the belief that human and superhuman activities--and man's knowledge of them--were not compartmentalized persisted even into the Eighteenth Century. To a man living as late as Samuel Johnson, wisdom, both physical and metaphysical, could be systematized into one body of truth.<sup>1</sup>

Yet there is one significant difference in late Eighteenth Century and earlier Renaissance and medieval conceptions of unified knowledge. Johnson believed that new truths could be discovered; in the earlier tradition, the conservative scholar did not pursue the truth through scientific experiment. "He was inclined to believe that the truth, insofar as it was any proper concern of man's, had already been ascertained and recorded."<sup>2</sup> He sought it, therefore,

<sup>1</sup>Craig, Glass, p. 101; Craig, New Lamps for Old: A Sequel to 'The Enchanted Glass' (Oxford, 1960); W. K. Wimsatt, Philosophic Words: A Study of Style and Meaning in the 'Rambler' and 'Dictionary' of Samuel Johnson (New Haven, 1948), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Babb, p. 57.



in the great thinkers of the past. This was then the general aim of the schools and universities and the teachers within them throughout the medieval period and the Renaissance. Summing up the tradition, Sir George Clark has identified the major function as "the transmission of a given body of knowledge, a body of which the outlines were closed by the requirements of a rigid orthodoxy, and by the belief that authority in the past had established the main principles of what was useful and true. In this respect little change had been effected by the great intellectual revolutions of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries. Humanism, with all its contempt for the scholastic philosophy, had not ousted it from education. It lasted on in the European universities in general throughout the Seventeenth Century."<sup>1</sup>

And this sense of the interpenetration of kinds of knowledge appeared not merely in theoretical statements but in the multitude of rhetorical forms produced by those educated within the tradition. Lawrence Babb has said that the Renaissance writer, whether compiling an encyclopedia or producing a cooling card for all fond lovers, "recognizes no sharp distinction between natural and moral philosophy and is very likely to offer moral wisdom along with factual knowledge."<sup>2</sup> And Harry Kitsun Russell believes that in that highly

<sup>1</sup>Sir George Clark, The Seventeenth Century (New York, 1961), p. 290.

<sup>2</sup>Babb., p. 77.

artful form the court masque the presence of what we would separate as material fit for the botany class on the one hand and the Sunday School on the other actually instructed the audience delightfully : science led joyously to wisdom.<sup>1</sup>

But certain kinds of lore from that "universal and public manuscript"--or from Pliny and Aristotle, closer to the Golden Age and therefore to be honored--did serve to read the ancients out of their previously immutable unassailability. The radical shift in viewpoint away from the wisdom of the ancients and toward the idea of future progress is something that must be bargained with. Yet, as always, the old ideas persisted. And some who were trained in the older view but at the same time saw some of the implications of the newer ones were able to ride both horses. Auerbach contends that for even that libertine Montaigne "the truth is one, however multiple its manifestations; he may contradict himself, but not truth."<sup>2</sup>

Because knowledge was seen as unified, because men felt that logic and rhetoric gave them the tools to allow their minds to work upon all sorts of matters with equal validity, the orthodox position was that a rightly reasoned use of rhetorical disciplines would enable

<sup>1</sup>Harry Kitsun Russell, "Tudor and Stuart Dramatizations of the Doctrines of Natural and Moral Philosophy," Studies in Philology, XXXI (1934), 1-27.

<sup>2</sup>Auerbach, p. 258.

them to achieve what W. S. Howell calls a "valid verbalization of reality."<sup>1</sup> This view, whose source Joel Spingarn attributes ultimately to Aristotle's notion of poetry as a "generalized representation of reality,"<sup>2</sup> changed radically in the later Seventeenth Century. Thomas Sprat, concerned with a "close, naked, natural way of speaking," as the proper sort of words for scientific places, was but one of many who began to realize the necessity for a new vocabulary for "natural philosophy." Though Swift might satirize the Laputans' bags of needments, Wilkins' claim for a language of unambiguous symbol has prevailed.

But for a time--even in a changing one--the older rhetorical tradition sufficed for men attempting to verbalize reality validly. Even Bacon, in so many ways a reformer, found within the older tradition a method for transmitting knowledge. He does not discount the magistral oratorical style, surely; but the probationary, the essay style he found admirably suited for his own theory: in such a style one can see the thought grow.<sup>3</sup> What did become the deciding point, then, was man's changing conception of reality. In the first

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<sup>1</sup>Howell, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Joel Spingarn, ed., Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century (Oxford, 1908), I, xi.

<sup>3</sup>George Williamson, "Senecan Style in the Seventeenth Century," Philological Quarterly, XV (1936), p. 330.

chapter of The Rise of the Novel Ian Watt has summed up what the ruling conception of reality was to become, chiefly in the direction of mundane materialism.<sup>1</sup> But even within the Seventeenth Century we can see the two streams begin to divide. R. F. Jones names them the "scientists" and the "Anti-Ciceronians." We might quibble with his terminology, but we must agree with his definition of the two attitudes. In both, Jones explains, "'reality' is emphasized, but with the scientists the term generally means a material reality, while the Anti-Ciceronians [of whom Burton is one] used it to refer much more widely to rationalistic explanations of human experience. Though in both 'things' are preferred to 'words,' the experimental philosophers had concrete objects in mind, while the others were thinking of intellectual or moral conceptions."<sup>2</sup> The scientists are new; the Anti-Ciceronians (though more Anti-Ciceronian than Anti-Cicero) are orthodox.

Reality, then, was conceived as an unbroken chain linking the humblest object to the mind of God. And the mind, which naturally seeks the good, could transmit its impressions by way of language arranged in a meaningful form. We are indebted to Rosemond Tuve's

<sup>1</sup> Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel (Berkeley, 1959).

<sup>2</sup> R. F. Jones, "Science and English Prose Style in the Third Quarter of the Seventeenth Century," PMLA, XLV (1930), 1005.

Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery for her extensive treatment showing how the rhetorical principle of stating the truth was accomplished. She makes clear that Renaissance makers of images aimed not for mere "sensuous particularity" but for a coherent and logical order to help man perceive a "universal reasonable order . . . the pattern in the mind of God."<sup>1</sup> Though many of Marlowe's or Spenser's images may seem to be little more than golden ornament to us, Miss Tuve shows that Marlowe and Spenser regarded their function in quite another way. To them images were enriched with intellectual treasure; gaining significance from their real relation with the supersensible world, images arranged in a coherent pattern represent not just a mere state of mind but a universal statement of truth. They could; in this reigning idea of the universe, things on one level belonged to--or partook of--another. Ultimately the presumed schism between art and nature was unimportant.<sup>2</sup>

Language in an artful form could then present universal ideas. This exalted function was reserved not just for poetry, however. Simply the process by which man searched for and developed his subject was an exercise in reaching for truth. W. S. Howell has

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<sup>1</sup>Rosemond Tuve, Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery: Renaissance Poetic and Twentieth-Century Critics (Chicago, 1947), p. 346.

<sup>2</sup>Tuve, p. 48.

shown that knowing the "places" of invention allowed man to connect his mind with the traditional wisdom of the race "and by allowing that contact to induce a flow of ideas from the general store into himself."<sup>1</sup> In Burton's time this belief was beginning to shift. Although medieval rhetoricians thought poetry could achieve a valid or effective statement of reality, at the highest revealing a universal element in nature, K. G. Hamilton regards the Seventeenth Century as the time when a new conception was being born. This shift he identifies as a shift from metaphysics to epistemology, "from a concern with nature and a verbalization of the truth to an interest in the way truth becomes known."<sup>2</sup> With this changing focus we will be particularly occupied later. Yet earlier and later notions about language as a means of presenting truth both retain singularly ennobling beliefs about language: truth is assumed, and language can embody it.

Reality could illuminate the humblest forms of language. Not the Word but words in general were considered adequate bearers of the truth. Burton, as a conservative, might not go as far as some roughly contemporary with him, but some consideration of theories

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<sup>1</sup>Howell, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup>K. G. Hamilton, The Two Harmonies: Poetry and Prose in the Seventeenth Century (Oxford, 1963), p. 177.

current with him might help us realize the climate of opinion about this part of style. Agrippa's doctrine of the passions was that they "derive their power over soul as well as body, by the means of the imagination." And the imagination is powered by words. Words, he believed, "have a magic power, since speech is the distinguishing gift of man. Adam, whose natural knowledge was perfect, named all things according to their natures."<sup>1</sup> "Great mysteries" were hidden in words according to another group, the Puritans. Ronald Paulson has cited Simon Patrick's statement that if the Anglicans sometimes put too much emphasis on a word, the Puritans went still farther: the Puritans were "much in love with new-minted words, in which they thought there were great Mysteries concealed."<sup>2</sup>

Though Burton has nothing but dispraise for the superstitious Enthusiasticks, their ideas can shed light on this view of words. Jackson Cope has said that the Quaker incantatory style is an epistemological tool: with the Puritans, Quakers such as Fox and Penington believed that the grace of God could actually invade man's soul through the vehicle of a sense impression, a word. This conception of the primitive power of the name was an attempt to break the

<sup>1</sup> Craig, Glass, p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Ronald Paulson, Theme and Structure in Swift's 'Tale of a Tub' (New Haven, 1960), p. 14.

boundary between conceptions and things, literalness and metaphor. One description of an actual trip made by Fox is, according to Cope, a peculiar merging of a real with a spiritual journey to create a "timeless dimension." This was precisely the goal: in the early part of their history--before rationalism prevailed among the group-- language was regarded as a key to the essence of proper reality. Isaac Pennington said "the end of words is to bring men to a knowledge of things beyond what words can utter."<sup>1</sup> For the Quakers, of course, the chief goal of knowledge was God. It would be difficult to say whether or not Burton held the mystical belief in the connection between word and thing; but certainly in such a statement as "words exist for things, not things for words," he shows respect for words rightly used as purveyors of higher truth, not as mere playthings. Rhetoric is the servant of a higher master; it is not itself the chief end of man.

But if one "abracadabra" is potent, more than one can be irresistible. It is in combination that individual words achieve their power. Even Agrippa held that "words are more potent in sentences and when written, for writing is the ultimate expression of mind."<sup>2</sup> Between the ideal and the reality always fell the shadow

<sup>1</sup>Jackson Cope, "Seventeenth-Century Quaker Style," PMLA, LXXI (1956), 725-54.

<sup>2</sup>Craig, Glass, p. 47.



of the difficulty of making the right choices to express the truth. One must go about, about before he could reach the kind of truth those in the Stoical-Aristotelian tradition had in mind--moral and inward. Morris Croll has described the search and its objects: "It was a reality not visible to the eye, but veiled from common observation, hidden in a shrine toward which one might win his way through a jostling, noisy mob of illusory appearances, by a series of partial initiations." Though they often settled for a depiction of the search, still they believed it possible to arrive at the truth by way of what Miss Tuve has identified as the "contemplating intellect which was thought to apprehend the true nature of things." And, furthermore, the writer within the tradition could do so. In De Doctrina Augustine, a prime Christian rhetorician, recalled the study to the purpose to which Aristotle and Cicero put it--to make truth prevail. Because of poetry's association with rhetoric, Sidney is able to declare forthrightly that the poet is "of all our Sciences . . . the Monarch." And he was so because he was regarded as a teacher. Seeing what the poet had seen, the audience could be changed. This effect stems from a theory of knowledge Helen C. White considers "responsible for far more of the theological literature of the time than is usually

realized, the theory that if men really knew the truth, they would act in accordance with it."<sup>1</sup>

So that, since art supplements and perfects the gifts of nature, according to contemporary theorist Richard Rainolde,<sup>2</sup> since what we have since split apart were then blended--the "language of poetry and of science was one when the world was one"<sup>3</sup>--then rhetoric, an organized pattern of words, was an instrument which contributed to the delivery of knowledge by illuminating what was to be transmitted. Even though he made several departures from earlier theory, Bacon used an older term to image his idea. He used the figure illustratio--shedding light to make knowledge visible and hence deliverable to an audience. His theory of communication "assigned to rhetoric the task of presenting the form of things so that they could be seen as if in a great light." Thus, Madelaine Doran: "to the Renaissance, rhetoric was a discipline, a tool, the expression of an ideal. It formed the core of humanistic education, it seemed to teach the means of moving

<sup>1</sup>Morris Croll, "'Attic Prose' in the Seventeenth Century," p. 112; Tuve, p. 387; Alexander H. Sackton, Rhetoric as a Dramatic Language in Ben Jonson (New York, 1948), p. 12; Hamilton, p. 94; Helen C. White, English Devotional Literature [Prose] 1600-1640 (Madison, 1931), p. 51.

<sup>2</sup>Sister Miriam Joseph, Rhetoric in Shakespeare's Time: Literary Theory of Renaissance Europe (New York, 1947, 1962), p. 13.

<sup>3</sup>Nicolson, p. 124.

men to virtuous ends, it embodied an ideal of the dignity of man. For speech, as the manifestation of reason, was taken as the measure of man's difference from beasts." For some this theory never completely died.<sup>1</sup>

The rhetorical unit occasioning the greatest concern as men strove to express the truth was the sentence--or the period, a more flexible, nongrammatical unit. Whereas it is often thought that the major Seventeenth Century pattern of the uneven sentence was an innovation, it is thought so wrongly. Morris Croll has traced the history of the smoothly oratorical--Asiatic--and the sinewy meditative--Attic--styles as they have battled for the forefront throughout hundreds of years of rhetorical theory and practice. They seem radically different, but we must remember that, up until the late Seventeenth Century, both assumed that truth could be known and expressed; it was the paths to it that differed.

It is now almost a cliché that in the Seventeenth Century for a number of reasons--the Jacobean malaise, the influence of the new science--the assured magistral style of Hooker would work no more. To the new age, described by F. P. Wilson as "so often skeptical,

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<sup>1</sup>Howell, p. 371; Madeleine Doran, Endeavors of Art: A Study of Form in Elizabethan Drama (Madison, 1954), p. 26.

tentative, and self-conscious in its exploration of hidden motives, a new style was necessary, a style that could express the mind as it was in movement, could record the thought at the moment it arose."<sup>1</sup> And to express truth was the end of expression, by Browne, Bacon, and Burton. The focus upon the mental processes is the main point of distinction between the Ciceronian and the Senecan: the balance and sureness of Hooker express a truth already arrived at; the imbalance of Bacon is what George Williamson calls the "true mind-picture" in which truth is regarded as a "stirring of the soul, which reveals both what is taking place in the soul and the object which has caused this. . . . Thus, truth, the Stoic end of expression, becomes involved with the mind of the conceiver, and the vividness of any mental event becomes a measure of its persuasion."<sup>2</sup>

What assumptions did the Senecans share about the forms which the period should take and contain? The vogue of "strong lines" packed with metaphor and paradox gave the period an inner formal richness. K. G. Hamilton has shown that strong lines helped make language a "mode of thought," helped make it reflect and embody thought "without the intervention of elaborate artifice." The rhythm

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<sup>1</sup>F. P. Wilson, Seventeenth Century Prose: Five Lectures (Berkeley, 1960), p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>George Williamson, The Senecan Amble, p. 140.

of the Attic period differed from the Asiatic; as Croll says, persuasion was, for both, the aim of rhetoric, but it was accomplished by the sensuous appeal of oratorical rhythm for one and for the other what he characterizes as "athletic" rhythm: by portraying in one's style exactly those athletic movements of the mind by which it arrives at a sense of reality and the true knowledge of itself and the world. In an impressionistic reaction, Sypher has listed some of the salient qualities of the prose he calls Mannerist but we can associate with Senecan. The prose of Montaigne, Bacon, Browne, and Burton, he says, leaves out connectives and hence veers toward non-logicity; it is erratic, full of non sequiturs, exploratory. It strains sentences beyond the capacities of syntax. Burton especially abuses interpolation and parenthesis and consequently ends up with prose that is freakish, with "whimsical lardings of Latin." It is broken, eccentric, unsustained, and energetic; its accent is explosive, its experimental approach indecisive, its order of statement "hovering."<sup>1</sup>

Disagreement with Sypher on many points is almost a moral duty. But for now let us simply let him rest; his reactions are those intended by the writers because of their belief that truth was hard to

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<sup>1</sup>Hamilton, p. 173; Croll, "Attic Prose," p. 95; Wylie Sypher, Four Stages of Renaissance Style: Transformations in Art and Literature, 1400-1700 (New York, 1955), p. 128.

gain, that every question has two sides, that truth is poised between the affirmative and negative, a "shifting, elusive, debatable thing to be determined by dialectical acumen before it shines forth in rhetorical clarity by its own unassisted effulgence."<sup>1</sup> A passage from Lancelot Andrewes presents what Ronald Paulson calls the "process of learning . . . rather than the accomplished fact":

For, if this Childe be Immanuel, GOD with us; then without this Childe, this Immanuel, we be without GOD. Without Him, in this world (saith the Apostle;) And, if without him, in this, without Him, in the next; And, if without him there, if it be not Immanu-el, it will be Immanu-hel; and that, and no other place, will fall (I feare me) to our share. Without Him, this we are: What, with Him? Why, if we have Him; and GOD, by Him; we need no more: Immanu-el and Immanu-all. All that we can desire is, for us to be with Him, with GOD; and he to be with us. And we, from Him, or He from us, never to be parted.<sup>2</sup>

This passage exemplifies what Paulson considers the most important aims of the Senecan period: first, the "eccentric" sentence order presents the individual seeking self-knowledge through doors opened to him by the traditional mode of attack: etymology, Biblical exegesis, overt statement. Second, it is a presentation of the self to catch attention; the wit, the personal cry "I feare me" make us acutely conscious that a man is speaking. And, third, the order is a way of

<sup>1</sup>Craig, Glass, p. 157.

<sup>2</sup>Lancelot Andrewes, "IXth Nativity Sermon," in XCVI Sermons (London, 1629), 3rd ed. 1635, pp. 77-78; cited in Paulson, p. 13.

moving the audience; they share the quest with the speaker. They work not from a pre-ordained premise but find it with the speaker through the journey into the thickets within which truth resides.

Paulson, however, thinks that within the sentence ordered by the "mind thinking" there is "no ordering from without."<sup>1</sup> It is my contention rather that this is an effect aimed for. Planning a sentence depicting a mental journey in which each step along the way will carry an audience along, too, requires some careful stage-managing. The progress of "Immanuel-Immanu-hel--Immanu-all" gains precisely the effect Andrewes needs; but that sort of effect is not arrived at without great skill and planning. It seems immediate, just dashed off. As Roy Daniells has described for other manifestations of the Baroque spirit of surprise and immediacy, it is a trick.<sup>2</sup> And the trick is accomplished by command over rhetorical devices—paradox, climax, others we will investigate later.

Throughout the tradition, one principle remained inviolate. Whether the truth was expressed in Ciceronian circles or Senecan chains, the belief still held that if one man says something true, it will be so for others. This communion of man with men and with the

<sup>1</sup>Paulson, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>Roy Daniells, "Baroque Form in English Literature," University of Toronto Quarterly, XIV (1945), 397.

truth is a tenet that we scarcely hold to now. Miss Tuve has quoted Allen Tate's anti-didacticism in his praise of Emily Dickinson: "We are not told what to think; we are told to look at the situation." A key point of Burton's tradition was the contrary; the audience is told what to think, because the writer has found it true. Miss Tuve continues, "writers of the period have an incurable tendency to assume that if anyone indicates some pattern of particulars true, he also inescapably indicates that it would be a good idea for others to accept the ordering to which it bears witness."<sup>1</sup>

Within Burton's tradition the "utility" of rhetoric took on encompassing goals for its province. We can trace throughout several centuries statements of theorists who spoke thus about the purpose of rhetoric. Despite his many reservations about rhetoricians, Plato in the Phaedrus speaks of the duty and office of rhetoric (or persuasion) as that of applying Reason to Imagination for the better moving of the will. Shortly thereafter Aristotle classified Rhetoric as an offshoot of Dialectic and of Ethics; he defined its four uses, with first and last specifically tying in rhetoric with the functions of moving the will toward the truth. By rhetoric, he says first, truth and justice maintain their natural superiority. Recognizing the function of

<sup>1</sup>Tuve, p. 394.



rhetoric as mediator, he realistically defines its second advantage as suitability to popular audiences, since they cannot follow scientific demonstration. Pointing out the complexity of the issues the mind must work upon, he says, third, that rhetoric teaches us to see both sides of an argument. And the last result of rhetoric is its proper service: in the cause of truth and right. "To discover the genuine, and spurious, means of persuasion is the office of one and the same art." The conception of rhetoric remained not only this noble; its place was conceived as still more ennobling by a variety of medieval rhetoricians discussed by Ernst Curtius in European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages. He cites as typical John of Salisbury, who considered the essence and result of rhetoric to be "the beautiful and fruitful union between reason and expression. Through harmony, it holds human communities together."<sup>1</sup>

But how did rhetoric hold the human community together?

Among the few treatises upon literature that we have from the Renaissance, one principle stands out: that the use of rhetoric is, as Spenser (and Burton, according to Merritt Hughes) adjoined, "to

<sup>1</sup>Howell, p. 372; Lane Cooper, ed., The Rhetoric of Aristotle (New York, 1932), p. xxxvii; Ernst Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages (New York, 1953), p. 77.

Merritt T. Hughes, "Burton on Spenser," PMLA, XLII (1927), 144; Edmund Spenser, Works, ed. Ernest de Selincourt (Oxford, 1911), p. 211.

fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline."<sup>1</sup>

Thus, oratory and poetry aimed to reason men into virtue.

Rhetoric, the act and art of writing and thinking, should help man come to know. Yet, as we considered before, the bounds of knowledge were somewhat circumscribed. Later in the Seventeenth Century rhetoric was applied to reportage of the outer, "extensional" universe. But earlier, the proper employment of rhetoric was more toward self-knowledge--with all that the wider conception of self implies. Auerbach has shown how that representative man Montaigne is in this tradition: he denies the acquisition of knowledge about the external world, but it nonetheless clears the way for him to the "kind of knowledge which matters to him, that is, self knowledge." And the ultimate goal of his quest is right living. His little trust in the sciences of nature is allied with his greater allegiance to self-knowledge, which acquires a positive epistemological significance: "only in regard to the moral study of man, for in his study of his own random life Montaigne's sole aim is an investigation of the humaine condition in general, and with that he reveals the heuristic quality which we constantly employ--consciously or unconsciously, reasonably or unreasonably--when we endeavor to understand and

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<sup>1</sup>Merritt Y. Hughes, "Burton on Spenser," PMLA, XLI (1926), 546; Edmund Spenser, Works, ed. Ernest de Selincourt (Oxford, 1931), p. 407.

judge the acts of others, whether the acts of our close associates or more remote acts which belong in the realms of politics or history. We apply criteria to them which we have derived from our own lives and our own inner experience--so that our knowledge of men and of history depends upon the depth of our self-knowledge and the extent of our moral horizon."<sup>1</sup> The focus of man should not be a total negation of the extensional world but a subordination of such concerns to the why's of the inner world of thought and action. The proper materials upon which man should work--invent, dispose, figure--are those of moral wisdom and rightly willed action.

But in speaking of the Renaissance ideals of the application of rhetoric, we really cannot dissociate man the microcosm from man the member of a larger community. Hence, the service of rhetoric, Alexander Sackton believes, is related and directed to two characteristic Renaissance ideals: not only the doctrine of the individual moral man, but the newer doctrine of public service.<sup>2</sup> This goal developed but differed from the general medieval stress upon the city of God rather than the polis.

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<sup>1</sup> Auerbach, pp. 264-5.

<sup>2</sup> Sackton, p. 14.

That the function of scholarship, its techniques and its fruits, was service to the state is a characteristic Renaissance belief. Lawrence Babb says that Burton holds this belief, regarding the ultimate goal of the schools not merely to train other scholars but rather to impart the fruits of knowledge to the state. Ideally, the learned should constitute society's most valuable class.<sup>1</sup> But how were the fruits to be imparted? Persuasion was the key. It was "the humanly-heavenly proper means which reasserted the right bridge between the intuitive and the discursive, between the truth of righteous things and real public good." One of the major theses of Stein's Heroic Knowledge is that Christ's progress in Paradise Regained is the process of increased self-knowledge and, concomitantly, teaching himself to be a teacher. After his trial in the desert he returns to the living--to embody and bring about the final stage that knowledge within the sublunary world can achieve: public good. Raising Eden again in the wilderness equals returning to the source of being, returning to the original intuitive knowledge--but "with the support of a fuller human discipline of reason and intellectual experience." Rhetorical dialectic has helped him gain what is possible in some form to all: intuitive knowledge of truth. But for

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<sup>1</sup>Babb, p. 56. *Paradise*, p. 187.

Christ this does not require that he withdraw from the world but rather engage it. "Truth originates from God, not the world, and is answerable to God--but in the world."<sup>1</sup>

Although men of the Seventeenth Century were committed to blending the ideals of morality and rhetoric in both the spheres of private and communal life, that commitment is still more a statement of purpose than a blueprint for action. The search for a proper style within the rhetorical tradition occupied many. Bacon, Lipsius, and Montaigne wished to establish a style "meant to express reality more acutely and intimately than oratory can do." They wished, Croll continues, to "domesticate a genus humile." But still the tension between and yoking together of private and public worlds seemed to demand a style that would persuade the public world "in greatness." The answer is the style Croll calls Baroque--a style deriving from many schools in the tradition and managing to unify the simplicity and grandness of man in his world.<sup>2</sup> That was the style of Robert Burton.

The study of traditional rhetoric helped man arrive at the greatness he sought. As the chapter entitled "The Well of Democritus"

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<sup>1</sup>Stein, pp. 105, 133, 134.

<sup>2</sup>Croll, "Attic Prose," p. 107.

in The Enchanted Glass shows, logical and rhetorical study in the Renaissance was closely affiliated with the doctrine of success--both within the self and the greater world. The study of the forms of thought and expression--techniques of invention, arrangement, purpose, and so on--was central to attaining the mastery desired. Craig points out that a prevailing principle of the age was the Aristotelian doctrine of entelechy, the "realization of form-giving cause as distinguished from mere potentiality." Judged from this standpoint, there was much sound sense in the curriculum: "If man was in his life to achieve the practical, he must learn to realize it through the form."<sup>1</sup>

This respect for the ancient techniques, for the forms of science rather than direct observation of facts, which to us seems a naïve and limiting approach, was not conceived so at all to the earlier rhetoricians. Even the libertine Senecans, whose style seems more capable of recording the minutiae of sense impressions, accepted this Ciceronian ideal that the most beneficial education was one that would give its students a "palpable design, a single and sensuous pattern, which might finally teach them . . . the method of apprehending the truth itself."<sup>2</sup> This system had the appeal of not only

<sup>1</sup>Craig, Glass, p. 140.

<sup>2</sup>Morris Croll, "Muret and the History of 'Attic Prose,'" PMLA, XXIX (1924), 264.

current proof but the sanction of centuries. And to those believing exactly the contrary to the idea of progress, ancient ways were superior. "Surely," said Wilson the English rhetorician, "if we learn the gestures of the ancients we shall not fail at last to have minds like theirs, too."<sup>1</sup>

These were the chief assumptions held by those working in the older tradition of rhetoric. Throughout this discussion, the focus has been on large areas of agreement rather than the numerous and bloody internecine battles. We have touched only briefly on the dialectical pattern of oratorical against essay style which Morris Croll sees as informing--often in a hostile fashion--the tradition.<sup>2</sup> We have glanced only briefly at the sort of issue which would provide the scene for the adulation or abhorrence that met Peter Ramus. The contention has therefore been that the major assumptions about what language was and could do were much the same from school to school; the differences lay chiefly in the methods.

A chief concern in Renaissance rhetoric was the study of the figures. One point we are apt to neglect when we read of the assiduous attention to Sherry, Peacham, and Puttenham and the other compilations of figures of thought and sound is that such a study is anything

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<sup>1</sup>Croll, "Muret," p. 264.

<sup>2</sup>Croll, "Attic Prose."

but sterile. Rightly used, the figures are not mere ornamentation but are special forms of meaning. Commenting upon the use of parallelism characteristic of Samuel Johnson, W. K. Wimsatt defends the devices as follows: they are "not so common to thinking that they cannot be avoided, like the sentence, but common enough to reappear frequently in certain types of thinking, and hence to characterize the thinking, or the style." Since the figures express different sets of meaningful relations--contrast, similarity, and so on--"they express a kind of meaning which may be discussed as legitimately as the more obvious kinds such as what a man writes about--the vanity of human wishes or the River Duddon."<sup>1</sup>

The figures are, then, ways of thinking. Certain collocations of them characterize the manner in which men look at the world. Jonas Barish has shown that a man usually criticized for appliquéing the figures upon the body of thought beneath in fact worked quite differently. It is we who see the appliqué; Lyly used the euphuistic figures of sound as means to apprehend the world. He uses parison, citing multiple parallels between the natural and the human world, but he continually stresses contradictions rather than consistencies. Consequently, this euphuistic device is only apparently an appliqué.

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<sup>1</sup>Wimsatt, Johnson, p. 12.



As Barish shows, obliquely in the simile and discursively in the soliloquy Lyly deals not so much with the treats of love but rather with a darker world in which there is a genuine disparity between the apparent and the real. Toads may wear bright jewels on their brows, but they are still ugly toads. Another characteristic figure, antithesis, strikes a balance--but it is still tenuous, and the very pairing of ideas points out that the components of the subdivided world are not always mutually exclusive but often composite. Thus for Lyly syntax attempts both to unravel and to knit up the complexities that are inherent in things.<sup>1</sup>

Our study of the uses to which the figures were put is growing to reach the respectability it should. With J. B. Broadbent we can appreciate the richness of Milton's use of rhetorical figures, to characterize his epic actors (that Satan has a great hoard of figures does not damn rhetoric but one half of the two-handed engine: Satan's is false wit), to serve as thematic accompaniment. And one figure can epitomize major intellectual and moral goals of an age: Father Walter J. Ong has pointed out that the quest for copia

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<sup>1</sup> Jonas Barish, pp. 14-35.

is not just childish exuberance but is related to the humanists' dream of covering the whole mind.<sup>1</sup>

Just as the variety of figures provided the means for expressing a variety of possible styles, so did the kinds of sentence types--periods--defined in the rhetoric books provide for ways of expressing different visions. George Williamson's Senecan Amble defines at length the two major camps of Senecan and Ciceronian who contended throughout the century. Morris Croll has given us the most lucid description of the forms of the periods over which the battles raged. He has illustrated the balance and circularity of the Ciceronian and its opposing form, the chain-like Senecan. Croll continually stresses that these two forms were by no means mutually exclusive, that in the Baroque styles of Browne, Burton, and even Bacon the two were blended. Both accomplished Senecan ideals, to catch the truth when it is freshly imagined, to "express the order in which an idea presents itself when first experienced." It is difficult, therefore, to fence in precisely the camps of Senecan and Ciceronian. The two remain large dominances but still connected. Milton blended both; Ciceronian periods appear in Browne. And depending upon the occasion, one man could be master of a variety of styles--not just Senecan or Ciceronian

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<sup>1</sup> J. B. Broadbent, "Milton's Rhetoric," Modern Philology, LVI (1958), 224-242; Walter J. Ong, S. J., "Tudor Prose Style and the Oral Tradition," unpublished paper read at annual meeting of the Modern Language Association, December 28, 1963.

(although he was usually committed to one or the other) but to the traditional three--low, middle, and grand. James Roy King has shown that Jeremy Taylor can decorously vary his style to suit the circumstances; Auerbach's essay on Rabelais deals with the mingling of styles in the "world in the maw."<sup>1</sup> Sir Thomas Browne's Letter to a Friend, with its simple diction, lack of figural richness, and conversational structure and tone exemplifies the "humble" style. But his Hydriotaphia, with consciously abundant figures of sound, magniloquent diction, elaborate use of the cursus, and structural complexity, represents the other pole. It is decorous, fitting, to treat the subject of death and eternity with all possible grandness. Although Ciceronian periods might seem to predominate in the grand style, it is not necessary that they do; some of his finest successes--"We whose generations are ordained . . ."--are constructed by Senecan blueprints. Both Senecanism and Ciceronianism could be beaten into low, middle, and grand forms.

Since in many respects the rest of this study of Burton will assess the covert statements about rhetoric he makes through his practices, before we continue let us look at the overt statements he himself makes about knowledge and its transmission, as a kind of peroration to this chapter.

<sup>1</sup> Croll, "The Baroque Style in Prose," and James Roy King, "Certain Aspects of Jeremy Taylor's Prose Style," English Studies, XXXVII (1956), 197-210; Auerbach, pp. 229-249.

Testimony to Burton's voracious love of knowledge is most obviously given by the size of the book--a compendium of ancient lore, of current proverbs, of common-sense advice. And the system of footnoting, citing works and authors representing hundreds of years, shows his own care in crediting the huge variety of sources of his own learning. One of the first items of praise he accords to Democritus, the mask he adopts, is that he was "learned in everything, a general scholar, a great student." Burton himself roved long in the libraries at Oxford--was, in fact, keeper of the library at Christ Church. He "had a great desire . . . to have some smattering in all, to be Somebody in everything." This joy in learning, delightful in itself, he did not engage in merely for itself. Orthodox, Burton stresses that the proper knowledge, of God, will help man regain the garden; "Wisdom cries out in the streets," "God himself woos thee . . . to come into his fair Garden." When action and mind interfuse, man can be united with God. In that painful picture of the iron world of religious melancholy which ends the book, continual themes are superstition and ignorance, the shacklers of mind which keep man from becoming what he should be. The last part of the book shows the obverse of what man should seek: true knowledge of God, pursuing knowledge rightly called vain: "I am like to their rest as well as others," that "company of foolish antiquaries,

Burton would never be so extreme as to say that the mere accumulation of stores of learning can purchase man's entrance into the garden. He continually stresses that learning is a double-edged gift, often masked. It is not so surprising, therefore, that he should list "Love of Learning, or Over-much Study" as a cause of melancholy in the first partition. Even so, he does not so much condemn the bulky materials upon which man's mind can work as rather the conditions surrounding the accumulation and use of knowledge. The system of patrons, the impure motives for gaining knowledge, even the unhealthiness of the sedentary life he identifies as more common sources of the scholars' misery. The same distinctions are made in the subsection devoted to "Education a Cause of Melancholy." The real villains are cruel educators, poorly chosen goals, education for the wrong things. As he makes clear at the end of his section on symptoms from education, his treatment of the infirmities related to the life of learning is all by way of an exemplum. Lest his treatment of melancholy, his treatise, be a cause of melancholy in others, let the reader read it right.

Right reading springs not just from pure motives; it also depends upon the material the mind attacks. Although acutely aware of his own guilt in pursuing knowledge rightly called vain ("I am liable to their lash as well as others," that "company of foolish notemakers,

humble bees, dows and beetles, they rake all over those rubbish and dunghills") he is not dealing with vain knowledge in the Anatomy. Ailing man is the subject. Burton does seem to cross that fine line separating vain from rightful knowledge in many places throughout the book; self-knowledge, especially in an age in which the self was mirrored even in the stars, could be stretched far. One way he gets around it appears in his "Digression of the Air." After citing the major contemporary theories of cosmology--which, according to some, definitely were vain knowledge--he dismisses them all in a fashion typically Burton: "But hoo! What have I to do with this? When God wants us to know the answer he will reveal it."

The proper study of mankind then is man's self. "So that if men would attempt no more than what they can bear; they should lead contented lives, and, learning to know themselves, would limit their ambition, they would perceive then that Nature hath enough without seeing such superfluities, and unprofitable things, which bring nothing with them but grief and motivation." And the proper study of mankind is God. The perfect example to follow in gaining knowledge is the knowledgeable hero Christ. "He could not be ignorant," says Burton, but his mind was directed not to trivia but to right knowledge, to right conduct. "Therefore (I say) scorn this transitory state, look up to Heaven, think not what others are,

but what thou art: what's thy place in the world: and what thou shalt be, what thou mayst be."<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, the lover of learning Democritus Junior will transmit right knowledge, dulce and utile. To his subject and audience, "man, and human kind," "thou thyself" he will attempt to give wisdom. This heuristic purpose is no easy one--to correct and rectify the ills of man is as great a task, he says, as "to perfect the motion of Mars and Mercury," to find out all the creeks and sounds of the Northwest Passage. He is then a true scientist, one who would cure the imposthume within his own head as well as in others. And in a day when doctors were traditionally atheists he, like Sir Thomas Browne, will assume the robes in service to the religio medici: "A good Divine either is or ought to be a good physician, a spiritual physician at least, as our Saviour calls himself, and was indeed." In short, he seeks "to reform what is amiss" and "to do good."

One way in which he hopes to reform is through his own style. It is true that his style is a jumble; he pleads guilty to "tautologies, apish imitation, a rhapsody of rags gathered together from several dung-hills." And, begging off for lack of amanuenses, he admits

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, pp. 872-6.

that, like an unfinished cub, his book is not completely licked into shape. Yet this same extemporaneity is part of his purpose. He continually invokes Seneca and his principles of manly fullness of content. "I neglect phrases, and labour wholly to inform my reader's understanding, not to please his ear; 'tis not my study or intent to compose neatly, which an Orator requires, but to express myself readily and plainly as it happens." Of course this belief is central to his contemporary Senecans. "To publish it, as it was first written, whatever came uppermost, in an extemporaneous style,"<sup>1</sup> is to capture the ideas in their most true state, as they come white-hot from the forge.

Nonetheless, we tend to question the genuineness of the extemporaneity of the "mind-thinking" quality the Senecans aimed at when, immediately following his statement of discipleship to Seneca he describes his own style in a very elaborate image, comparing it to a river: "So that, as a River runs, sometimes precipitate and swift, then dull and slow; now direct, then winding; now deep, then shallow; now muddy, then clear; now broad, then narrow; doth my style flow: now serious, then light; now comical, then satirical; now more elaborate, then remiss, as the present subject required, or as at

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, pp. 20-26.



that time I was affected."<sup>1</sup> A simile like this never sprang from anyone's head full grown. We suspect, with Hardin Craig, that he is shamming,<sup>2</sup> shamming not only in that his protestations of roughness might be purchases of the reader's indulgence but also that his Senecan lack of deliberation might be an effect, polished for roughness rather than smoothness. How certain sentences came to achieve the effect they have we shall never know. But we should remember that Burton is consciously aware of style as a tool for teaching. Seneca can bear him out on those "pleonasm of words, tautological repetitions": "It can never be repeated too often, since it can never be learned too well." Quotations and other additions occur for a purpose: "to make the style more harsh." In sum, when reading the Anatomy we know we are in the hands of a man who knows what the world of man is like and what he can do about it, who can use his language to affect and change fallen and melancholy man.

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup>Craig, Glass, p. 168.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE MASK OF DEMOCRITUS: THE PERSONA AS A STYLISTIC CONTROL

Robert Burton saw his role as that of one who carried on past knowledge so that traditions of the past could inform those in the future. But his technique was neither simple spoon-feeding nor tongue-lashing; instead, as a teacher he found one of the most effective tools to be the mask, donned before entering the classroom. He would give directions by indirection.

The speaking voice that we hear in the Anatomy of Melancholy, clear though it may sound, is not merely Robert Burton, fellow of Christ Church, Oxford. Rather, the voice he wants us to hear is filtered through the mask of Democritus. In the lengthy exordium to the Anatomy, "Democritus Junior to the Reader," he states forthrightly that he is "arrogating," "usurping," another man's name. Promising reasons later, he immediately sets down a brief character of "this our Democritus, what he was, with an Epitome of his life":

Democritus, as he is described by Hippocrates and Laertius, was a little wearish old man, very melancholy by nature, averse from company in his latter days, and much given to solitariness, a famous Philosopher in his age, coeval with Socrates, wholly addicted to his studies at the last, and to a private life: writ many excellent works, a great Divine, according to the divinity of those times, an expert Physician, a Politician, an excellent Mathematician, as Diacosmos and the rest of his works do testify. He was much delighted with the studies of Husbandry, saith Columella, and often I find him cited by Constantinus and others, treating of that subject. He knew the natures, differences, of all beasts, plants, fishes, birds; and, as some say, could understand the tunes and voices of them. In a word, he was learned in everything, a general scholar, a great student; and to the intent [that] he might better contemplate, I find it related by some, that he put out his eyes and was in his old age voluntarily blind, yet saw more than all Greece besides, and writ of every subject: Nothing there is in all the contriving of nature, of which he hath not written. A man of an excellent wit, profound conceit; and to attain knowledge the better in his younger years, he traveled to Egypt and Athens, to confer with learned men, admired of some, despised of others. After a wandering life, he settled at Abdera, a town in Thrace, and was sent for thither to be their Law-maker, Recorder, or Town-clerk, as some will; or as others, he was there bred and born. Howsoever it was, there he lived at last in a garden in the suburbs, wholly betaking himself to his studies and a private life, saving that sometimes he would walk down to the haven, and laugh heartily at such variety of ridiculous objects, which there he saw. Such a one was Democritus.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 12.

In the very next sentence, however, Burton asks, "But in the mean time, how doth this concern me, or upon what reference do I usurp his habit?" Such a question we might well ask, too, as we study the expressive system of this divine, Robert Burton. We will investigate later some of the reasons for adopting Democritus; right now, let us consider why he should choose to speak from behind a mask.

Given the traditional nature of Burton's practices, one easy answer for Burton's use of the mask is this: he had precedent. When Erasmus used his Folly as a stalking horse he was using a device known to Plato, Juvenal, and Chaucer--to name a few disparate practitioners--and sanctioned by rhetorical tradition. Marvin T. Herrick cites Aristotle's comments upon the comic mask that "excites laughter, is sometimes ugly, and distorted without causing pain."<sup>1</sup> In a drama, the mask can be part of the costume or, by extension, a spokesman for the author set as a character engaging in the dramatic action. But it is not necessary to create a novel or play in order to set a persona speaking. In the non-fictional mode of the prose treatise the mask is a recognized species of the figure known as prosopopoeia, by which an object or a person, either living or dead, real or imaginary, is presented as speaking to the

<sup>1</sup>Marvin T. Herrick, Comic Theory in the Sixteenth Century (Urbana, 1950), p. 62.

audience. The mask is therefore artificial, in the best sense. And rhetoric is, in Maynard Mack's words, a "body of learning that insists on the recognition of artifice."<sup>1</sup> This device, sanctioned and practiced by Aristotle and Plato, contained in the manuals of rhetoric for hundreds of years, embodies a goal of literature which in our day T. E. Hulme has defined as: "the art of literature, the making of the other world. They must wear high-heeled shoes which make them appear free movers, and not sprung from the low thing Earth. This separation of the high heel and the powdered face is essential to all emotions, in order to make a work of art."<sup>2</sup>

Despite the long tradition of the mask as a valid and artful choice by the author, it has been only recently that we have returned to certain poets and prose writers with a new understanding of their technique--and of their literal meaning--because we have come to recognize how the adoption of a mask controls their work. For too long in this century we tended to take the "I" of the author at face value. Although we knew who stood behind "Michael Robartes" and "Owen Aherne," when "Juvenal" complained of his roughness and

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<sup>1</sup> Maynard Mack, "The Muse of Satire," Yale Review, XLI (1951), 81.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Ernest Hulme, Notes on Language and Style, University of Washington Chapbooks, ed. Herbert Read, XXV (Seattle, 1929), p. 20.

amateur status, we smiled commiseratingly and agreed; when "Thackeray" reminisced about the last time he saw Becky, we gritted our teeth at his failure to follow James' and Conrad's prescriptions to show us, not to tell. Happily, in recent years we have learned that it is we, not Thackeray, who are the real innocents. Complaining of the lack of art, we did not see the artifice of the mask. Perhaps it is because of the contribution of psychology that we have come to re-evaluate the relation between writer and audience, filtered through the created mask or persona;<sup>1</sup> perhaps it is a re-reading of the rhetoric books that shows us that all created characters need not be segregated within the covers of a novel, play, or narrative poem. The teller of the tale, even when he goes by the name of "Thackeray" or "Tennyson," is not necessarily the man writing.

One of the earliest re-evaluations of the technique of the mediating author was done with George Meredith. Lionel Stevenson identifies the Jacobites and Lubbockites as those throwing the most stones because of Meredith's unmistakable stylistic device of letting his own personality come between himself and the story. Stevenson would cast the stones right back; those who criticize this technique of point of view are betraying their own provinciality, in that his

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<sup>1</sup>See Simon O. Lesser, Fiction and the Unconscious (Boston, 1957).

practice can be justified in the "romantic [and, we might add, rhetorical] tradition that expects the personality of the author to be an integral part of the total effect."<sup>1</sup> In another way such critics reveal themselves as young men from only one of the provinces of prose: the personality of the author can be an integral part of the total effect, but often in only parts of the real author's personality. Certain qualities of the real author often do appear (apparently Horace really was a thoroughly charming man), but just as expectably, a complete contrary might be the rule (Swift's modest proposer represents the exact antithesis to Swift). Often the two would give much trouble in the separation. As William Cadbury has pointed out, Tennyson's "supposed confessor" "is not Tennyson, but his divided will and his preoccupation with religious doubt are problems which did concern Tennyson . . . the man."<sup>2</sup> Those who read Meredith as the "I" are misreading: that "I" is not Meredith so much as a persona.

The persona, then, is a traditional way of transmitting the author's emotions; when turned around, Swift's cool businessman

<sup>1</sup>Lionel Stevenson, "Meredith and the Problem of Style in the Novel," *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, VI (1958), 188.

<sup>2</sup>See William Cadbury, "The Utility of the Poetic Mask in Tennyson's 'Supposed Confessions,'" *Modern Language Quarterly*, XXIV (1963), 374-385.

is seen as Swift himself, white-hot with saeva indignatio. An adoption of a mask does not diminish the intensity of the work; on the other hand, it can increase it. A writer must not have to suffer personally from a cause in order to write about it. Wayne Booth believes "The emotions and judgments of the implied author are . . . the very stuff out of which great fiction is made."<sup>1</sup>

Coming fresh from reading Booth, we must remember that the novelist does not possess exclusive rights to the device of the mask. Not just in a fable, fiction, but in nonfiction can the device be used effectively. Explanations vary from fear (surely Martin Marprelate did not wish the gallows) to jest (Defoe wanted to tweak the noses of those reading his "Shortest Way With Dissenters"). William Bragg Ewald, discussing Swift's many masks, suggests that contemporary popularity may be one reason for Swift's use of the device. Marana's Turkish Spy, Goldsmith's Citizen of the World, Sir Roger de Coverley, all of whom presented questions from a fresh point of view, who made details of their narratives credible simply because they posed as eye witnesses, doubtless pointed out to Swift devices and reasons for the mask.

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<sup>1</sup>Wayne Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago, 1961), p. 86.

William Bragg Ewald, ed., The Masks of Jonathan Swift (Cambridge, Mass.: 1954), pp. 1-11.



Further, a wardrobe of masks can equip a writer to deal with many occasions, from a love-letter signed "Presto" to a savage indictment of the moderns signed by the Grub Street Hack. One way that Swift transcended his contemporary masquers, Ewald contends, is that he saw more clearly the capacities for irony. A mask by its very nature implies two levels of meaning, a consciousness of the dual nature of things.<sup>1</sup> Later, the hack reveals himself as a stupid scribbler, the honest Gulliver can be painfully gulled. Swift's own apartness from some of his personae is part of the meaning of the works. It must affect our reading of them. Only an Ilse Koch of Buchenwald could accept his "Modest Proposal" at face value; those of us who have access to the real author behind see superbly sustained irony. And unlike someone like Oscar Wilde, who tried to become the mask he fashioned, Swift stands above and beyond: he knew what he was and what we all should not be.

When we turn Swift's many masks around--whether they be Grub Street Hack or Gulliver--we can see Swift behind. Yet his masks are always active participators in the subject satirized: travelers, writers, conversationalists. Burton's mask is not so much the active participator as the commentator upon the follies of

<sup>1</sup>William Bragg Ewald, Jr., The Masks of Jonathan Swift (Cambridge, Mass., 1954), pp. 1-11.

others, the lonely man standing at one side of the world's stage observing the actors but not always taking them seriously, commenting with wry humor. Burton depicts the point in space from which he metaphorically and literally views the fair field full of fools; like Democritus in his garden, Democritus Junior is "sequestered from those tumults and troubles of the world . . . in some high place above you all, like the wise Stoick, seeing all ages, past and present at one glance."<sup>1</sup> This Olympian point of view, a peak which he later names "Minerva's tower," is a pose typical of the Renaissance, according to Gilbert Highet.<sup>2</sup> He cites Jaques, that interloper in the Forest of Arden, as typical of the point of view. Yet even though Jacques is a satirist, he should not be taken completely seriously. As, in Rosalind's fuller vision the purger deserves purging, so too must this pose of the ironical commentator not always be taken for final truth. Julius Caesar wisely referred the matter of the nature of laughter to Democritus<sup>3</sup> --not always because he could provoke laughter, but also because he himself was somewhat laughable. How this string attached to the mask fits Burton we shall see later.

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Gilbert Highet, The Anatomy of Satire (Princeton, 1962), p. 47.

<sup>3</sup>Herrick, p. 52.

The mask fulfills still another purpose allied with the nature of the document itself. The religious doctor writing the Anatomy makes quite pointed that it is a heuristic work, that he is a teacher. And he, as any teacher, knows the usefulness of histrionics as he attempts to transmit facts and ideas into the students' heads. But his technique did not stop with adopting the pose of outraged task-master at one moment or quiet-voiced eiron at the next. Instead, his adoption of the mask was a mode of consciously re-animating past wisdom, of reminding his listeners of the truth--chief aims of rhetorical persuasion, as we saw in the last chapter. Richard Ellmann, showing that Yeats attempted to accomplish a similar goal by donning the masks of past Irish types, quotes Thomas Mann's description of this re-animating principle:

The Ego of antiquity and its consciousness of itself was different from our own, less exclusive, less sharply defined. It was, as it were, open behind; it received much from the past and by repeating it gave it presentness again. The Spanish scholar Ortega y Gasset puts it that the man of antiquity, before he did anything, took a step backwards, like the bullfighter who leaps back to deliver a mortal thrust. He searches the past for a pattern into which he might slip as a diving bell, and being thus at once disguised and protected might rush upon his present problem. Thus his life was in a sense a reanimation, an archaizing attitude. But it is just this life as reanimation that is life as myth. Alexander walked in the footsteps of Miltiades; the ancient biographers of Caesar were convinced, rightly



or wrongly, that he took Alexander as his prototype. But such "imitation" meant far more than we mean by the word today. It was a mythical identification . . . .<sup>1</sup>

Burton's identification of himself with the worthy ancient Democritus was then a choice with value sanctioned by the tradition. "Imitating" a knowledgeable man and teacher, he shows us the way we are to see the fellow of Christ Church; identifying himself with a wise prototype, he gained a voice through which to speak of wisdom, accumulated and transmitted from the past into the present.

Ideally, Burton's audience would react rightly to his choice of the ancient worthy Democritus as the persona he chose to identify himself with. Simply invoking the name itself should conjure up the proper response to the values embodied in the person Democritus. To make doubly sure, and to fulfill a rhetorical aim common to any rhetorician, one adopting a mask or not, Burton uses Democritus as a way to accomplish the aims of ethos and pathos. For the teacher, the establishment of an authoritative ethos and the proper use of pathos are imperative.

To "that form of persuasion which endeavors to put the audience in a certain frame of mind" Aristotle gave the name pathos: "When

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas Mann, Freud, Goethe, Wagner (New York, 1942), pp. 34-35, cited in Richard Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and the Masks (New York, 1948).

people are feeling friendly and placable, they think one sort of thing; when they are feeling angry or hostile, they think either something totally different or the same thing with a different intensity: when they feel friendly toward the man who comes before them for judgment, they regard him as having done little wrong, if any; when they feel hostile, they take the hostile view."<sup>1</sup> To get his audience into the right frame of mind to receive what he had to say, Burton used virtually all the figures that Aristotle, Cicero, and the ensuing rhetoricians listed as devices for insuring pathos, or moving--for Burton's aims, toward pity but, especially at first, to laughter.

Only a few sentences out as he begins "Democritus Junior to the Reader," the tone evokes laughter by the figure aposiopesis, or "breaking off." Addressing the gentle reader with a mock-serious tone, he begins to answer their question why he so "insolently intrudes upon this common theatre to the world's view, arrogating another man's name." His answer? "Why should I tell you?" And "supposing I do not wish to answer, who should make me?" If the contents please the reader, let him assume the writer is the Man in the Moon.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Sister Miriam Joseph, pp. 386-7.

<sup>2</sup>Burton, p. 11.

Quickly following this humorous "breaking-off" of the reader's expectation of a serious answer, he then uses a number of species of ecphonesis, or exclamation. Fraunce's and Fenner's lists are exemplified. First is mocking irony: "Besides, it hath been always an ordinary custom, as Gellius observes, for later writers and impostors to broach many absurd and insolent fictions under the name of so noble a philosopher as Democritus and to get themselves credit and by that means the more to be respected." The irony here is, of course, aimed not only at the pasquil writers but slyly at himself. Indignation, another form of ecphonesis, pervades the passage: not only the impostors but merchants, ministers, and man in general--a ship-load of fools-- are soon spoken of with indignation. Protestation--not only protest against folly but protestation of his own humility--"I confess indeed that to compare myself unto him for aught I have yet said, were both impudency and arrogancy: I do not presume to make any parallel, he outranks me by countless numbers; I am inconsiderable, nothing at all"<sup>1</sup>--is made easily because of the gap between himself and his model. And the emotions of pity and commiseration enter the passage because of the persona.

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 12.

Democritus as an old man, voluntarily blind, becomes a topos embodying such values.

Still another use of the values that Democritus embodies which attain pathos is erotema, or interrogativo (not, as Peacham prescribes, to ask for information but to affirm or deny something--a "rhetorical question"). Just as Democritus Senior turned over many books, so did Democritus Junior: "To do myself good I turned over such physicians as our Libraries would afford, or my private friends impart, and have taken these pains. And why not?"<sup>1</sup> The interrogation, though concerning a serious subject, still blends, characteristically, seriousness and un-seriousness. The "why not?"--in speaking accompanied by the upraised palm--denotes acceptance of a subject and gentle humor, as well.

A variety of other figures connect both Democritus Senior and pathos. Anamnesis (recalling sorrow) appears in reminding the audience of Democritus' blindness, and of his friend Heraclitus' lamentation. Deesis, used, as Sherry says "when for God or, for mannes sake we vehemently desire to have any thyng," appears when Burton attempts to justify the "arrogation" of Democritus' name: "Yet thus much I will say of myself, and that I hope without

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 17.

all suspicion of pride, or self-conceit, I have lived a silent, sedentary, solitary, private life, with myself and the Muses in the University."<sup>1</sup> Figures of consolation are bound to Democritus Senior. What Peacham calls medela, used when "we seeke to heale them [our friends] with plastures of good words" appears when Burton defines both his prototype's and his own purpose: Democritus Senior anatomized many creatures "not that he did contemn God's creatures, as he told Hippocrates, but to find out the seat of this black bile, or melancholy, whence it proceeds, and how it was engendered in men's bodies to the intent he might better cure it in himself, and by his writings and observations teach others how to prevent and avoid it."<sup>2</sup>

Lest the tone become too serious, he breaks out with mycterismus, what Peacham considers a subtle mock with words. He mocks not only the pasquil-writers and hacks but also the readers who have bought the book--but he mocks them indirectly, of course. After reading this statement, "For as Larks come down to a day-net, many vain readers will tarry and stand gazing, like silly passengers, at an antick picture in a painter's shop, that will not

<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Burton, p. 15.



look at a judicious piece,"<sup>1</sup> the reader will doubtless nod, "How true"--especially for those people down the street. And still further varieties of pathos the persona secures for Burton include those of blessing and rejoicing, eulogia, summed up in Burton's long eulogy upon the virtues of Democritus, and paeanismus, when he expresses his joy in his own learning, pursuing knowledge like a ranging spaniel, and blessing his own readers by way of providing a way to health for them.

The second of the three modes of persuasion outlined by Aristotle and accompanied, in part, for Burton, is ethos, which is "in a sense, included in pathos, for the attitude of the audience toward the personal character of the speaker, their confidence in him and in his good will toward them constitutes part of their feelings and frame of mind as they listen." Certainly with the choice of Democritus the task of gaining the audience's confidence is partly done. As an ancient living closer to the golden age he was nearer the source of truth; as a great theoretical scientist and traveler, "an expert Physician, a Politician, an excellent Mathematician" he was a type of the reasoning and wise man. Yet he could not be painted gold. Certain characteristics, his passion for solitude,

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 15.

his practice of vivisection, darken the picture somewhat. With access to certain kinds of truth, however, these shadows (like melancholy itself) could be, paradoxically, passageways to the light. A solitary, dispassionate observer is often able to discern more clearly than one in the thick of the fray; hence Democritus Junior's own vantage point high in Minerva's tower. And his anatomizing of the beasts served the same purpose that some scientific research does today. Even the fact that he was a Greek, and therefore pagan, poses no real difficulty. Jean Seznec's Survival of the Pagan Gods shows that not only the gods but human beings, pagan though they be and alien to the Christian world, were regarded from very early times as extra dimensions of revealed truth.<sup>1</sup> In fact, Burton is able to syncretize both Greek and Hebrew streams when he calls himself not only Democritus Junior but Democritus Christianus also.

Adopting the persona, then, automatically accomplishes for the speaker a sense of good will from the audience. He helps gain this receptiveness and trust for the speaker pervading the work by

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<sup>1</sup>Jean Seznec, The Survival of the Pagan Gods: The Mythological Tradition and its Place in Renaissance Humanism and Art (New York, 1953), p. 5.

figures traditionally aimed at inspiring confidence in the speaker. One is comprobatio, when, Peacham says, "we see some good thynge either in the Judges or in our hearers," as when he compliments his hearers for anticipating him in certain arguments; another, parrhesia, involves craving pardon beforehand, showing humble submission. After his description of Democritus Senior he says, "I am inconsiderable, nothing at all; I do not aspire to greatness, nor hope for it."<sup>1</sup>

Other figures aim to engender a favorable opinion of the speaker. In anacoenosis, the speaker asks counsel of the adversary or the judges, as when Burton converses with his "Gentle Reader"; eustathia, promising constancy in purpose and affection--

"'Tis not so with me.  
No Centaurs here, or Gorgons look to find.  
My subject is of man, and human kind.  
 Thou thyself art the subject of my discourse."<sup>2</sup>

At times one will find eulogia, pronouncing a blessing, and philophronesis, gentle speech and humble submission.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Burton, pp. 12-13.

<sup>2</sup>Burton, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>For the rhetorical terminology and quotations from manuals of rhetoric in this section of the chapter the author is indebted to Sister Miriam Joseph, pp. 386-98.

Without question, the mask of Democritus would help Burton move his audience and attain their good will. Yet we must not over-stress the sunniness of either Democritus or Democritus Junior. The optimism is there, but it is only part of a many-sided persona. That "little wearish old man" revived in the Seventeenth Century is far too crotchety, at times too downright mocking, to be printed in nothing but gay colors. The audience may cluck their tongues at "those people" who are like the larks come down to a day-net cited earlier, but the admonition is still there. This asprezza comprises part of the complex persona Burton adopts and the person he is. We often wonder, as in the presence of our teachers, just how close the mockery of others approaches to us. With this purposeful roughness we will deal in much greater detail later, when we see the mask as a tool of Burton's satire; let us now consider its next function, as a way of distancing the writer and his audience.

In one of the few comments in print upon "Democritus Junior to the Reader," William Mueller has said that in opposition to Swift, where there is a gap between the reader and the world of the writer, in Burton there is no gap to close. "If there is any obliquity at all in his approach, it lies in his viewing all the world as a comedy of errors, and himself as an actor, sometimes as spectator, and

William Mueller, "Samuel Butler's 'Democritus Junior,'" *Modern Language Quarterly*, 27 (1976), 42.

sometimes as director, once removed from the world itself."<sup>1</sup>

Mueller's view is, curiously enough, comparable to the views cited earlier of those who thought the "I" in Vanity Fair is William Makepeace Thackeray. It is fortunate, therefore, that the work being done with the function of the mask in narrative prose can shed light upon non-fictional prose. Disagreeing with Mr. Mueller, I contend that the very choice of Democritus as spokesman provides a means of attaining obliquity. Whereas Mueller criticizes his variety, I consider it an advantage, one mirroring the many-sidedness of the book itself. Burton never says that he is speaking as Democritus; rather, he speaks as Democritus Junior--with the advantage that the values associated with the senior are visited upon the junior, but the junior can still speak with his own voice. This makes it possible for Burton to use Democritus as one of his sources, a practice seen several times, when he adds Democritus' name to a fairly long catalog of others' names or quotes him alone. This is not inconsistent: he is not Democritus Senior; he is Democritus Junior--another being. Then, too, this mask allows him to be both actor and spectator, functions which I fail to see are limitations in non-fictional prose. Conradian prescriptions of "showing" and "telling"

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<sup>1</sup>William Mueller, "Robert Burton's 'Satyricall Preface,'" Modern Language Quarterly, XV (1954), 32.

and the purity thereof need not apply to non-fiction, nor are they necessarily hallowed absolutes. Last, as for Mueller's criticism that, contrary to Swift, in Burton there is "no gap to close," I would say first that that is simply wrong because of the mask--and the care he gives it in the exordium, "Democritus Junior to the Reader," which should set up our responses to the speaker for the rest of the Anatomy. Again, Mueller's criticism is that Burton's satire ranks far below Swift's on this ground: that the ironic double vision is not sustained. Here, too, a misreading occurs from what I would call a misinterpretation of Burton's general purpose. Doubtless the Anatomy has a satirical purpose, as we shall soon see. But that is not its entire purpose, nor its final mode of operation. Burton wants to change his readers, to cure melancholy. But to use only one pill for such a complicated disease is malpractice. Therefore, when the occasion demands satire, he will use it. But when an unsatiric exemplum, an unironic adjuration fits the occasion better, he will vary his techniques. Certainly "Democritus Junior to the Reader" is not the masterpiece of satire that "A Modest Proposal" is. His Utopia does not begin to have the ironic shock effect of Swift's paragraph beginning, "Now therefore let no man talk to me . . . ." But to require that Burton's exordium is a wholly "satyricall preface" is simply to ask it to be something it is not nor is it aiming to be.

Despite Mueller's belief that there is no gap, the truth is that the mask provides a distancing, one which can serve many purposes. William Cadbury has identified some of the ways in which a mask, inherently, can provide needed esthetic distance. If we know that the persona is not the author, then in a poem dealing with conflict, for instance, our interest will lie in the conflict itself rather than the biographical details contributing to the problem and the resolution in the poet's own life. Too, since the mask is "creation, not creator," the motives need not be limitedly realistic. In addition, for a self-conscious writer the mask can prevent the work from being misread as an embarrassing personal statement and judged as case study rather than as art. Therefore, "the persona is midway between poet and audience, and the critic must judge him as a separate, but created, personality, representative of general human truth as the poet sees it, not proof of the poet's own peculiarities."<sup>1</sup> The mask represents only a few aspects of "human truth," of course; he does not represent all men.

Despite the many parallels Burton draws between himself and Democritus--love of learning and solitude, for example--he makes it very clear that he is not the reincarnation of the ancient philosopher: there are too many differences. He is instead one who is wearing his

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<sup>1</sup>Cadbury, pp. 374-75.

robes--he may look like him, but he is not the same. And, further, Democritus Junior is not necessarily Robert Burton. We have no way of knowing completely whether or not all the qualities possessed by Robert Burton appear in Democritus Junior's style. Very likely the gusto, the high seriousness, the irascibility are shared by both. But because of the very fact that he retreats behind the mask--"When you see the cover, why ask about the thing hidden? . . . or whom thou wilt to be the author, I would not willingly be known"<sup>1</sup>--we are able to have it both ways: Democritus Junior both is, and is not, Robert Burton.

The similarity of interests of Robert Burton and Democritus Junior we will consider later. But now let us ask why he should want this convenient stalking horse to keep a distance between him and the reader. One reason is, of course, humor. When in "To the Mischievously Idle Reader" he counsels, "I further advise you, not to asperse, or calumniate, or slander, Democritus Junior, who possibly does not think ill of you," he is able to mock the reader who has taken his criticism too seriously and bring him back in with a smile. In addition to humor, often the mask seems rather perverse; perhaps Burton can lash out without himself being held accountable.

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 11.



Then, too, the mask can work in the same way that the topos of affected modesty can.<sup>1</sup> It is easier to apologize for one's failure to live up to expectation, for one's shame in acting foolishly, if one does it in another name. The device can suggest deadly seriousness under the mask of disclaiming. Finally, the distancing provided by the mask has the virtue of artificiality--or, to use a term more in favor, artfulness. Art imposes an order which ordinary speech cannot attain. Therefore, according to Renaissance theory, the work reaches the audience better. And the artifice of the mask contributes to this heightening.

For the author the mask allows for greater freedom. Democritus Junior can send darts toward the pedants in a way Robert Burton could not. And as Burton uses the mask, it allows for unmistakably personal statements giving ethical proof. One of the testimonies he gives to amulets is the one he speaks in his own voice; he lifts the mask away to inform his audience that his own mother, like Dioscorides, found efficacious a spider lapped in silk. The mask gives the author freedom because it allows him to disclaim what he has just said. Describing a convention common to many primitive

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<sup>1</sup>Ernst Robert Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages (New York, 1953), p. 83.

Robert C. Solomon, The Power of Poetic Magic: Ritual Art (Princeton, 1963), p. 81.

societies, Robert C. Elliott has shown how the "public disclaimer ritual" works. The Ashanti, for example, precede an attack upon someone--even the chief or high priest--with the formula, "We don't really mean to say so." A story follows, usually dealing with a grievance against the chief, and even holding him up to disguised mockery, but naming no names. And, as follows after gridiron roastings, the real target will have heard, the offended man will feel much better, and, because it is all a masquerade, no one will be hurt.<sup>1</sup> Laughing Democritus provides the opportunity for such disclaiming. And, finally, for the author on his side of the mask, the use of Democritus is a way of heightening the importance of his topic. Erasmus must invent a false genealogy from the gods in order to give his Folly the proper pedigree. For Burton, Democritus is already recognized as an ancient worthy; having him guide the author's pen, even indirectly, automatically raises the importance of his work.

For the reader, the mask accomplishes a number of things. First, for either a Seventeenth-Century contemporary or even a later reader, there is no feeling that an actual human being is spooning in the castor oil. Instead, we are able to enjoy, to laugh with and

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<sup>1</sup> Robert C. Elliott, The Power of Satire: Magic, Ritual, Art (Princeton, 1961), p. 81.

at an imagined creation, a not-real being whose feelings we do not need to spare. And we really do laugh in reading Burton. In fact, Northrop Frye has classified the sort of invective that Burton specializes in as the sort that brings on the belly-laugh, that "solid physical laugh, an earthquake in miniature, a laugh which begins far down in the abdomen, bursts the vest buttons, rolls the stomach, shakes the diaphragm, suffocates the throat, reddens the face, and finally reduces the whole body to rolling and kicking in an epilepsy of joy, then, after quieting down, returns for the next few hours in a couple of dozen squalls of splutters, gasps, and reminiscent chortles, and finally sinks into the subconscious to be left until called for."<sup>1</sup>

The passage evoking this kind of Squire Western rumble collects a bagful of misogynistic abuse: "gubber-tushed . . . fat fustilugs . . . a mard in a lanthorn," etc. This is not the only kind of laughing which Democritus Junior brings about. The sardonic smile and the titter appear in his bag of tricks, as well. And, like the other kinds, they perform the service that is laughter's in comedy--bringing in the shipload of fools, forgiving, chastising, but including them.

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<sup>1</sup>Northrop Frye, "The Nature of Satire" in Charles A. Allen and George D. Stephens, ed., Satire: Theory and Practice (Belmont, Calif., 1962), p. 22.

And, finally, the still-disclaiming bard--"For, should Democritus Junior prove to be what he professes, akin at least to his elder namesake, or smack even so little of his genius, it is all over with you"<sup>1</sup>--encourages an important aim of the teacher. The mask gives freedom to the reader in a way that a button-holing Burton would not. The mask lets the reader come to his own conclusion, to judge on his own, to think for himself. And that is true freedom--to be given the space and time to accept or reject what the speaker offers.

One curious omission in scholarship and criticism of Burton, sparse though it is, anyway, is that few have dealt with the strongly satiric vein of much of the book. Curious it is particularly because the word anatomy appeared in the titles of many satires contemporary with him (Philip Stubbes' Anatomy of Abuse comes to mind). And even though the term was not reserved for satires, the relationship of Saturn (the planet impelling toward melancholy) and satire was pointed out frequently in the Renaissance. Prefixed to Thomas Drant's translation of Horace's satires was a definition of satire connecting it etymologically with the satyr and the "wristled waspyshe planet Saturn." Drant also characterizes satire as a cleaving, cutting instrument: the Arabic word for satire "doothe signifye a

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 105.

*Collected English, Second Edition: A Study (Chicago, 1954).*

glave [ sword]."<sup>1</sup> So far as relating satire to satyr and Saturn, Drant is probably in error; but the point is that men of his time believed the verbal relationship a true one. And the continued use of the metaphors drawn from surgery in Burton's book should show a similarity of purpose, though the figure is not restricted to satire alone, of course. Hamlet's decision to lance the imposthume within Denmark is a tragic, not a satiric, choice. But still other kinds of clues should help us see his satiric intent. His first quotation in "Democritus Junior to the Reader" is from Seneca's satire "On the Death and Pumpkinification of Claudius Caesar"; his next is from Martial, the following, Juvenal. It is with Juvenal that Burton shares a similarity of viewpoint, technique, and even diction. An undocumented quotation from Juvenal pins down a view of both: how is it possible to write, and not write satire? And in Burton's attacks upon the kind of deserving victims Juvenal lashed into-- women, foul city streets, greedy merchants--we can see that he would agree to some extent with Juvenal that "the only kind of literature which has any reason for being written--now, in his own day--is satire. Satire deals with real life, and real contemporary life is so horrible and so absorbing that other subjects are worthless."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Elliott, p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> Gilbert Highet, Juvenal the Satirist: A Study (Oxford, 1954), p. 48.

The Anatomy is not a complete satire: too many other modes enter into it--scientific exposition, unsatiric encomium, for instance. It does have satiric elements, though, and they are gained largely through his choice of persona. Consider how Highet's definition of satire as a form applies to the Anatomy:

Satire is a continuous piece of verse, or of prose mingled with verse, of considerable size, with great variety of style and subject, but generally characterized by the free use of conversational language, the frequent intrusion of the author's personality, its predilection for wit, humour, and irony, great vividness and concreteness of description, shocking obscenity in theme and language, an improvisatory tone, typical subjects, and the general intention of improving society by exposing its vices and follies. Its essence is summed up in the words . . . ridendum dicere uerum-- "Joking in earnest."<sup>1</sup>

The many sides of Democritus and Democritus Junior appear in the varied styles; the sense of a "man speaking," his intrusive personality--though here again it is as Democritus Junior as much as, if not more than, Robert Burton--the "mind thinking" Senecan periods, and the unmistakable heuristic purpose accomplished by purging melancholy and its related vices and follies by laughing with the laughing philosopher Democritus; all these ally this book with those in the satiric tradition.

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<sup>1</sup> Gilbert Highet, The Classical Tradition: Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature (Oxford, 1949), p. 305.

Yet the belly-laugh with which Democritus would greet the sights at the harbor and the gusts of laughter with which Democritus Junior greeted the swearing bargemen on the Thames or the ugliness of women are not the only ways in which satire and satirists can accomplish one of their chief goals: attack. The uplifted eyebrow with which he relates the topic of love among the plants, the icy scorn he heaps upon the zealous superstition-mongers are ways Democritus Junior attacks folly, also. At such times a laugh is all wrong, nor is it always necessary that the two be synonymous. We must admit with Gilbert Highet, though, that the most attractive satire is the laugh-provoking sort.<sup>1</sup> If it is too sombre, as is Capek's Insect Comedy, we see too much the nightmare rather than the meaningful dream. Further, if ultimately there is no standard shared between writer and audience, the attack itself reminds us of a blunderbuss rather than a stiletto. If the satirist works from a norm, a standard, then he can see why the subject deserves attacking in the first place. And pointing out the departure, the incongruous, he can thus imply the congruous, the hope for redemption. Secure in the ideal, if not the reality, of the norm, he can then tell the truth

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<sup>1</sup>Highet, Anatomy, p. 191.

with a laugh. The laugh serves an important role in rhetoric; it helps persuade its audience to forsake folly and reach toward virtue.

The persona of the wise Democritus allows for this rhetorical purpose. First, that "little wearish old man" told the truth--and harshly. And when lashing out at his collection of villains--superstitious papists, sellers of papal frippery--Democritus Junior spares no strokes. Sound and sense combine when he describes the present state of man: "But this most noble creature (one exclaims) O pitiful change! is fallen away from that he was . . . a monster by stupend metamorphosis, a fox, a dog, a hog, what not?"<sup>1</sup> Yet this harshness is coupled with a sense of detachment (without which we are not likely to get satire at all.)<sup>2</sup> By placing himself with Democritus, Burton is in the tradition of Renaissance and Jacobean neo-Stoicism and withdrawal.<sup>3</sup> Just as Democritus Senior withdrew at times only to return to engage himself in the active life of travel, and community service, so too does the detachment of Democritus Junior often become detached. Democritus was not callous; Democritus Junior

<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 113.

<sup>2</sup>James Sutherland, English Satire (Cambridge, 1962), p. 26.

<sup>3</sup>Mueller, p. 31.



is often quite seriously involved in the world he views from his Minerva's tower. His withdrawing, even from the heat of the passions he himself has suffered, allows him to judge more clearly of the nature and intensity of these passions.

Often he ventures forth from the tower with whip in hand.

Even though we may regard the verbal flaying a primitive form of satire, or invective, it is still a form of satire. Often the glossy surface must be stripped off before the corruption beneath can be seen--or cured. The fond lover whose eyes are blind to his lady's faults needs to have his eyes opened to her chitty face, goggle eyes, or rammish disposition. And that stripping Democritus Junior does, only partly teasing. Wisdom is good, and we can gain it by anatomizing cutting up.

Democritus' fascination with anatomizing places him in the satiric tradition, also. Mary Claire Randolph's study entitled "The Medical Concept in English Renaissance Satiric Theory" deals with the commonly found satiric images drawn from surgery as clues to the author's intent.<sup>1</sup> Certainly the set-piece describing the meeting of Hippocrates and Democritus should clue us in to one of the many

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<sup>1</sup>Mary Claire Randolph, "The Medical Concept in English Renaissance Satiric Theory: Its Possible Relationships and Implications," Studies in Philology, XXXVIII (1941), 125-157.

intentions of Robert Burton. And he himself uses a variety of medical metaphors--lancing, cauterizing, purging--as ways of expressing the cure of melancholy and the state of health resulting. Democritus Junior may be a doctor, but often in spite of a rather surly self. Often he, like Thersites and other satirists,<sup>1</sup> stresses his native surliness. Sometimes he can "laugh and scoff with Lucian and satirically tax with Menippus, lament with Heraclitus, sometimes again I was bitterly mirthful, and then again burning with rage."<sup>2</sup> These many facets do not really make for as many inconsistencies as they might. The subject itself requires attack from many quarters. And he is not surly without reason. In fact, many surly passages-- "But who shall compel me [to tell my name] ?"<sup>3</sup> -show teasing behind. He is Saturnine, but in season.

Although Democritus was greatly admired, he was also thought a fool by the populace of Abdera and other places, where his peculiarities aroused laughter. This, too, adds to the complexity of the persona Burton adopts. It shows that he blends the two types of satiric spokesmen identified by Hight--the disappointed man and the happy man of overflowing energy and vitality.<sup>3</sup> Conscious that

<sup>1</sup> Randolph, p. 153.

<sup>2</sup> Burton, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Hight, Anatomy, p. 241.

he often cuts a foolish figure, Democritus Junior defends his prototype: it is the Abditerians who really need the hellebore, even though it is disappointing to see the multitude of ways man has fallen from grace and the way he himself as a fallen man is inescapably filled with folly. The sense of acceptance of his limitations is one of the contributors to his vitality. "But hoo!" he would again burst out: God will judge us all in his good time, and in the mean time there are so many games to be played, books to be read, and follies to be cut up--his own included.

Ironically, one of the ways a satirist has of purchasing indulgence is by playing the fool--a role only a very wise man can play successfully, as Viola once told the fool. Elliott traces the identification of the railer as fool to very early sources. The railer, he says, need not wear cap and bells nor have a physical deformity, but he is a kind of fool, nevertheless. "His special license and his special function may in part be accounted for by an early (hypothetical) association with our most ancient life-giving rituals, wherein he was called upon as a magical protector against evil forces, but might also be rejected as a loathesome sacrifice."<sup>1</sup> In the Renaissance the figure of the wise fool was common in drama, even in plays not normally considered

<sup>1</sup> Elliott, p. 139. *Shakespeare's Fool* (London, 1944).

<sup>1</sup> Elliott, p. 139. *Shakespeare and Society* (Chicago, 1941), pp. 139, 142.

satiric or even comic. Lear's fool, speaking the truth though possibly unaware of it, comes immediately to mind. Characters demonstrating foolish qualities, but awareness of their own foolishness, appear in several of Shakespeare's other plays. O. J. Campbell has shown that Mercutio, the Bastard in King John, and Falstaff blend both outrageous foolishness but ironical perceptiveness in that their foolery is serving some purpose, whether it be mere entertainment or satiric advice.<sup>1</sup> In other genres the figure of the wise fool serves the satiric purpose of the whole. In a brilliant analysis of that conglomeration, Skelton's "Speke, Parrot," A. R. Heiserman has shown that the parrot-hero, complex as he is, belongs to this tradition. The gibberish he speaks is only apparently foolish; on the contrary, Heiserman shows, to the wise those mad ramblings are wise. The fragmentary and aloof parrot presents confusion deliberately not just to mirror the magistrates' courts but to suggest by clever juxtapositions, by silly "mistakes," by jargon, foreign language and allusion a number of cases of both typical and general folly.<sup>2</sup> Democritus Junior might blow off steam after reporting the available theories of cosmology with a "But hoo!"

<sup>1</sup>Oscar James Campbell, Shakespeare's Satire (London, 1943).

<sup>2</sup>A. R. Heiserman, Skelton and Satire (Chicago, 1961), pp. 130, 155.

But this anti-intellectual foolery really leads to a statement of what his time would consider real wisdom: final answers will be revealed only by God. It is the frenzied seekers after vain knowledge who really need a dose of hellebore.

Although the mask of Democritus contains within itself the elements of satiric tradition and practice, we might well ask if there are still other concerns which cast the Anatomy into a satiric pattern. The answer is, of course, yes; a look at the formal structure of what the speaker says and his intended effect upon the audience would show that it complies with traditional satiric models.

Traditionally, satire has had to "go underground" by a number of fictional devices. Miss Randolph cites one of the most obvious-- to avoid the law.<sup>1</sup> Martin Marprelate is not the only writer of scurrilous satire who hid under a mask to escape hanging. But the underground world need not be a world populated by anti-establishmentarians escaping the law; often the satiric bite lies under not only a single mask but an entire series of them acting in a fable. The satire of Gulliver lies underneath the narrative itself, since Gulliver is not a hero, a man whose education is to be taken at face

<sup>1</sup>Mary Claire Randolph, "The Structural Design of the Formal Verse Satire," Philological Quarterly, XXI (1942), 368.

value. The satire of Gulliver's Travels lies under the artifice of language, also. In his speech to the king of Brobdingnag, in apparently cool expository prose, the very juxtaposition of folly-ridden practices of civilized man with institutions of genuine worth shows the world of corruption beneath, the stupidity of Gulliver's world and of the world of values in his own mind.

Several kinds of fictional layers give structure to the satiric work. Maynard Mack believes that eventually the layers can be reduced to two--a "thesis layer attacking vice and folly, elaborated with every kind of rhetorical device, and, much briefer, an anti-thesis layer illustrating or implying a philosophy of rational control, usually embodied in some more or less ideal norm like the Stoic vir bonus, the good plain man. The contours of a formal verse satire, in other words, are not established entirely or even principally by a poet's rancorous sensibility; they are part of a fiction."<sup>1</sup> Though Mack applies his idea to formal verse satire, that does not exclude its application to a formal prose treatise. And the norm of the vir bonus certainly is summed up in the persona of Democritus. He slashes at vice and folly with rhetorical elaborations because he is a good man filled with righteous indignation. Often the terms of attack will imply the norm, as certainly we see in his contempt of the

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<sup>1</sup>Mack, p. 85.

"bedlam Tutors, light, giddy-headed." In the large-scale organization of the book the great care devoted to cures--even when some of the advice is self-contradictory--shows that beneath the rancor there wells much common sense, much compassion.

Democritus speaks with more voices than a simple vir bonus--like the man relating the rape of Belinda's lock, let us say,--is apt to do. In fact, he often seems to blend the three voices with which satire's personae speak separately. The first voice we hear from Democritus is what Mack calls the voice of ethos, the man of plain living, high thinking, and lasting friendships, the vir bonus. We certainly hear this tone when Democritus Junior describes his mode of life:

Yet thus much I will say of myself, & that I hope without all suspicion of pride, or self-conceit, I have lived a silent, sedentary, solitary, private life, with myself and the Muses in the University as long almost as Xenocrates in Athens, nearly to old age, to learn wisdom as he did, penned up most part in my study. For I have been brought up a student in the most flourishing College of Europe, the most august College, and can brag with Jovius, almost, that in that splendor of Vaticanish retirement, confined to the company of the distinguished, I have spent thirty-seven full and fortunate years.<sup>1</sup>

But he does not wear the high collar nor durable linsey-woolsey all the time. In a sentence following soon, Democritus Junior shows

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 13.

his naïveté; he is Mack's ingenu, still gazing with wide-open eyes at the wonders of learning:

Something I have done, though by my profession a Divine, yet being carried away by a giddy disposition, as he [Scaliger] said, out of a running wit, an unconstant, unsettled mind, I had a great desire (not able to attain to superficial skill in any) to have some smattering in all, to be Somebody in everything, Nobody in anything, which Plato commends, out of him Lipsius approves and furthers, as fit to be imprinted in all curious wits, not to be a slave of one science, or dwell altogether in one subject, as most do, but to rove abroad, the servant of a hundred arts, to have an oar in every man's boat, to taste of every dish, and sip of every cup.<sup>1</sup>

And although he fits these robes better than the final one, there is still something in his prototype Democritus Senior of the public defender, the hero. Called to Abdera because of his great practical wisdom in ruling a city, conferring with many learned men, Democritus defended and protected the public good. He may couch his own "paper kingdom" in terms of his own fancy, but Democritus Junior's Utopia contains many ideas which could make of him an early hero among city-planners. Though his heroism is more the type of Tennyson's Telemachus, this patient understanding and diagnosis of the economic and political ills of England and their cure in the

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 13.



form of his own imagined world must cause us to see him as a genuine defender of the public good.

The choice of the mask also helps give not only a kind of formal integrity underlying the assumptions of the speaker. It also helps to form the structure of the entire work itself--here considered as a discernible plan. Of the three main shapes of satire prescribed by Gilbert Highet, the Anatomy is neither narrative, as is Candide, nor parody, as The Dunciad. Rather, it is a monologue, in which, according to Highet, the satirist speaks either in his own person or behind a mask.<sup>1</sup> Such, he says, is Juvenal; such, we might add, is Burton. These are not mutually exclusive forms, but one generally predominates while blending the others. The Anatomy, for instance, contains a plenty of narratives; it parodies other works. But the monologue--organized according to a seemingly simple yet actually complex scheme, as we will see later--provides the major formal organizing pattern.

The Anatomy is satiric, also, because of its intended effect upon the audience. It could be so because satire assumes a relationship between the speaker and his audience: they know what right is and can therefore laugh at those who depart from it. Burton is not

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<sup>1</sup>Highet, Anatomy, p. 13.

a revolutionary, as we saw in the last chapter. He is a conservative upholding the accepted standards of right and proper behavior-- intelligence, temperance, reason. He is thus like the Tory satirists described by Louis Bredvold: they were satiric observers of what is, not spinners of theory of what might be.<sup>1</sup> Proof of Burton's commitment to the established system though criticism of certain flaws within it can be seen in his "paper kingdom," *Utopia*. J. Max Patrick, who has studied Burton's *Utopia* and compared it with contemporary economic theory--sparse though it surely is--has concluded that Burton's aim was "to improve the existing order, not to transcend or revolutionize it."<sup>2</sup>

Burton is then a conservative, a man whose satiric attacks remind his audience of what they knew to begin with but had temporarily forgotten. Just as Bunyan's readers did not need to learn from Pilgrim's Progress that they should seek "the everlasting prize,"<sup>3</sup> so did Burton and his readers not question the worth of the standards of virtue he upholds and the evils he attacks. Since both reader and writer share the standard, even if they occasionally

<sup>1</sup> Louis Bredvold, "The Gloom of the Tory Satirists," in James L. Clifford, ed., Eighteenth-Century English Literature: Modern Essays in Criticism (New York, 1959, 1960.)

<sup>2</sup> J. Max Patrick, "Robert Burton's Utopianism," Philological Quarterly, XXVII (1948), 356.

<sup>3</sup> Booth, p. 286.

depart from it, the satire can work. And Burton attacks the obvious victims--extremists of any persuasion, whether papist or presbyterian; hypocrites who "frequent sermons, knock their breasts, turn up their eyes . . . [but who are actually] monsters of men, harpies, devils in their lives"; mercenaries who delight in gore; the chameleon who "acts twenty parts & persons at once for his advantage . . . to fawn like a spaniel . . . rage like a lion, bark like a cur . . . sting like a serpent, as meek as a lamb, and yet again grin like a tiger, weep like a crocodile."<sup>1</sup>

The techniques he uses go far beyond invective, the only satiric tool Frye allows Burton. The primitive satire of invective he does use can become annihilating. It is hard to watch him flay the Theologasters without ourselves feeling the lash:

And hence it appears that such sorry buffoons everywhere, so many idiots, placed in the twilight of letters, ghosts of pastors, itinerant quacks, stupid, dolts, clods, asses, mere animals, burst with unwashed feet into the sacred precincts of Theology, bringing nothing but a brazen countenance, some vulgar trash, and scholastic trifles hardly worth hearing on the high roads. This is that unworthy and half-starved class of men, indigent, vagabond, slaves to their belly, that ought to be sent back to the plough-tail, fitter for sties than altars, who basely prostitute our Divinity; these are they who fill pulpits, creep into noblemen's

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 53.

houses, and, since they are deprived of other means of livelihood by their feebleness of mind and body, and are very unfitted for any other functions in the state, flee to this sacred refuge, clutching at the Priesthood by hook or by crook, not in sincerity, but, as Paul saith, making merchandise of the word of God.<sup>1</sup>

Burton does not stop with simply spewing out invective; the hideous image of the Theologasters "clutching at the Priesthood by hook or by crook" shows that he can manage irony: The cliché "by hook or by crook" can suggest nefarious action; and because that crooked action is done with the gently restraining tools of a good shepherd the perversion is doubled. Such savage irony prepares the way for the later and still more savage attack by Milton upon the "blind mouths" who "for their bellies' sake/Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold."

Burton is a master of smiling irony, too. He ends a passage differentiating between gentlemen and whoremasters with a summary sentence blending the two urbanely: "In Italy he is not a gentleman, that besides his wife hath not a Courtesan and a mistress." Dealing with love, he indulges in still another satiric weapon, parody. To Jacobus de Voragine's "twelve motives to mitigate the miseries of marriage" ("1. Hast thou means? thou hast one to keep and increase

<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 279.

it. 2. Hast none? thou hast one to help to get it.") he appends his Antiparody, which he writes merely "To exercise myself.": "1. Hast thou means? thou hast one to spend it. 2. Hast none? thy beggary is increased."<sup>1</sup> Heavy-handed it may be, but placed where it is, in the section upholding marriage as a cure for love melancholy, it has a certain ironic effectiveness.

Finally, he uses the weapon of fiction, the fable, for satire. This is no extended Animal Farm or Brave New World, to be sure; but Burton is able to use the fable to attack a deserving foe. Often the "story" will be only implied, obliquely told in a sentence or two. But he also embeds fuller-scaled satiric exempla in the body of the text. Aretine's Lucretia, whose eyebrow could destroy a thousand ships, bewails deliciously her effect upon men: "They would all turn friars for my sake, as she follows it, in hope by that means to meet, or see me again, as my Confessors, at stool-ball, or at barley-break."<sup>2</sup> He can vary the tale to suit the occasion; the often-told tale of the dancers of Colewiz Burton re-tells for a satiric purpose.

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, pp. 817-818.

<sup>2</sup>Burton, p. 704.

In some ways, the Democritus Junior who is fully aware of his own limitations and quite capable of laughing at himself falls into the pattern that Elliott has seen in Timon, Alceste, and Gulliver: the satirist satirized.<sup>1</sup> Unlike Gulliver, who never learns quite enough to see how he is finally wrong, Democritus Junior knows all along that he, too, deserves the slap-stick. He laughs at himself. This does not cause us to reject him as spokesman, though; rather, it makes him more human, even more humane. Because he, too, has fallen under the wiles of folly, we sympathize with him. But because he can send folly packing, we see him as an exemplar.

At times he doffs the mask of Democritus--not necessarily to reject him but to don another. We often forget that he keeps the mask of Heraclitus, the weeper, for certain occasions. The two are not in opposition in the same way that in Juvenal's satires the motif of opponent-adversary gives structure to the work.<sup>2</sup> These two are not so much foes as they are two halves of a complex persona. Democritus is dominant, but Heraclitus is there. This is by no means an accusation of inconsistency within the book. These two aspects of mind run throughout as parts of Burton's ironic vision--

<sup>1</sup> Elliott, p. 220.

<sup>2</sup> Hightet, Juvenal, p. 54.

mingling laughter and scorn with compassion. In a poem which serves as a coda to "To the Mischievously Idle Reader" it is hard to say which is dominant:

Weep, Heraclitus, for this wretched age,  
 Nought dost thou see that is not base and sad:  
 Laugh on, Democritus, thou laughing sage,  
 Nought dost thou see that is not vain and bad.  
 Let one delight in tears and one in laughter,  
 Each shall find his occasion ever after.  
 There needs, since mankind's now in madness hurled,  
 A thousand weeping, laughing sages more:  
 And best (such madness doth prevail) the world  
 Should go to Anticyra, feed on hellebore.<sup>1</sup>

This fullness of vision allows for successful satire; the laughter can attack; the compassion (shared by both Democritus and Heraclitus) can help rebuild.

In seeing the many ways in which the persona affects the work, we must not forget that it does influence the style of the Anatomy. The most obvious influences reside in that intangible area, tone. Yet this, like "atmosphere," is one of those qualities of style that do exist despite the difficulty of labeling them with complete precision. The mask influences the tone, first, by serving as the vehicle which embodies the basic assumptions and emotional tenor the writer chooses to cast his ideas into. Because Democritus is

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<sup>1</sup> Burton, p. 105.

what he is, because on the second page of "Democritus Junior to the Reader" Burton lists the facets of his personality he considers relevant, we are prepared for the tonal variations in the work that follows. The great man Democritus, consulted by famous men, prepares us for the grand style; the cool theoretical scientist points to the disquisitions upon the diaphragm and the meseriack vein; the withdrawn observer prepares us for gruffness and satiric irony; the laughing philosopher looks forward to the verve and gusto of his imitator. Although the ruling tone is one of overflowing vitality, we must not forget that Democritus and, even more, Heraclitus--the other mask--possessed as part of their ironic views a great sense of the distance man had fallen from his original glory. Though the distance between can result in a sense of incongruity faced by laughter, it can also result in compassionate sympathy. Weeping Heraclitus, then, prepares us for the tonal shift to pity. Tones ranging from low bawdy to piteous compassion to exaltation exist not only because of the subject; they do not disunify but amplify the speaker's many voices.

One question here arises. Granted that the tonal variants in the entire document can be related to the pictures of Democritus and Heraclitus he paints in "Democritus Junior to the Reader," what are we to do with the fact that he apparently discards the mask after that



first section--only a tenth of the book? It is true that he rarely refers to himself as Democritus Junior in the second part, speaking of himself chiefly as "I" and, further, that he cites Democritus Senior as merely another of multitudinous sources. But the break-off is not as abrupt as it might seem. In the exordium he does what every good rhetor should; he establishes a sense of pathos and ethos, sympathy and respect for himself and his work. Once he gains the rapport he needs, he can do what he pleases. As for the objection that Democritus Senior becomes just another author, that is not as serious as it might seem. He does not claim to be Democritus Senior but Democritus Junior. The important task that he accomplishes in the exordium is this: after we have read that passage, we know our man: we know the several aspects of his mind--comic, satiric, coolly descriptive, and so on. From then on, he can simply be "himself." He can treat a variety of aspects of his subject in a variety of fashions; we can trace their precedent back to the micro-cosm in "Democritus Junior to the Reader." He can shift from high seriousness to outrageous bawdiness because it has been prepared for; he can even doff the mask and speak in his own voice because, in later additions to the exordium, he identified Robert Burton as the author.

The several sides of the mask help control the diction, the kinds of words he chooses to express his feelings and ideas. The irony resulting from the pairing of the institution of the law with the wolf in "So he that goes to the law, as the proverb is, holds a wolf by the ears" has been prepared for by the viewpoint high in Minerva's tower. The asprezza of "a Witch's beard, her breath stink all over the room, . . . an ugly Tit" springs from his engagement within the world and the gusto with which he did return. The scientific objectivity of such a passage as "Inward organical parts, which cannot be seen, are divers in number, and have several names, functions, and divisions" is quite in line with the dispassionate anatomizing both Democritus were capable of. Even squeamishness ("O Master Schoolmaster, do not English this") about the omission of certain unmentionable details springs from the solitary state of both. And the heightened diction of "Man, the most excellent and noble creature of the world . . . a Microcosm, a little world, Sovereign Lord of the Earth, Viceroy of the World, sole Commander and Governor of all the Creatures in it"<sup>1</sup> is not inconsistent with the Christian and humanist faith of the compassionate Heraclitus and Democritus Christianus.

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 113.

Even the sentence structure is controlled by the mask of himself that he would have us see. Although the subject will be taken up in greater detail later, we can see a few characteristic structures influenced by the mask. The voracious exuberance taking the form of strings of catalogues, links of clauses reeling in as many ideas as possible fits Democritus Junior in many moods, from snarling attack to delight in the wealth of material. The clarity of certain passages fits his anatomizing mood; the fizzing et cetera's show his attempt to cover all the topic, to suggest all possibilities to the sharing mind of the audience. And even the over-quick resolutions, the sudden discountings--the "But hoo's!"--are to be expected from the persona he characterizes at the first: these are the explosions of a man in search of some kinds of truth, but sure of more important ultimate truth. They purge the mind by laughing trivia away--temporarily destroying the bridge between author and reader but only to build it back again: when the reader, sharing values with the speaker, realizes that in God's good time all will be answered, he will know as does Democritus Junior that laughter can cure. In the world Democritus Junior lives in, even melancholy is behovely--for all manner of things will be well.

CHAPTER IV

WORDS, IMAGES, AND FIGURES

In "Democritus Junior to the Reader," Burton makes an important statement of purpose when he calls himself a "loose, plain, rude writer, & as free as loose, I call a spade a spade, I write for minds, not ears, I respect matter, not words; remembering that of Cardan, Words exist for things, not things for words; and seeking, with Seneca, rather what than how to write."<sup>1</sup> Reading this statement too literally, we might think it a presumptuous task to attempt a consideration of the role of words in Burton's style: after all, has he not just disclaimed use of "big words," "fustian phrases," tropes, and other "hyperbolical exornations"? But, as with much of Burton, we must take this statement two ways: first, as a serious dissociation from fine Ciceronianism, whose practitioners spent too much time busying themselves with what Burton calls toys; but, second, as a comic trick of shamming. As a Senecan he is expected to vituperate against the "elegancies," but as a writer he uses them.

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 25.

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This is the paradox: he says he does not respect words, but he can write with nothing else. His conception of what words can do ennobles them far more than the conception that words are hardly more than pretty sounds. To Burton, words are conveyers: used rightly, they can embody and communicate "things"--feelings, ideas, universals. He can respect words when they exist not for themselves alone but when they "labour wholly to inform my reader's understanding." To understand Burton more fully, we can look first to the simplest forms, individual words, to see the many ways they inform our understanding. We can look next to more complex forms created by words, to the kinds of images he forms from words and uses to embody his ideas. And even though he disclaims tropes and figures, he makes effective use of these forms of thought (as well as sound), which were codified by the rhetoricians and expressive of many kinds of meaning.

In studying style, we should begin with individual words, those building blocks of which the edifice is constructed. But deciding the ways in which to go about such study creates many problems. A word can be savored alone; but its total meaning depends upon its context. The sense of its contribution to the author's style springs from its participation in a larger rhythm. The single word bibles that Pope places upon Belinda's dressing table along with "Puffs,

powders, patches, . . . and billet-doux" contributes to the sense of delightfully muddled disarray because it is part of a group. Words take color (in this passage, underlining the unimportance of sacred scripture to the priestess of pride) and illuminate (here, casting upon the frippery a glow shining sacred within Belinda's mind) the immediate surroundings. Multitudinous and incarnadine gain even more breadth and sweep when juxtaposed against seas. Some techniques of focusing upon words by themselves are unsatisfactory. A word-count of adjectives in Poe, of derivations in Emily Dickinson, by themselves fail to explain what is essential in the work.<sup>1</sup>

But a total study of style must include the microscopic vision, examining the total part by part. "If we study a piece of prose word

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<sup>1</sup>Two studies representing different approaches to diction are Josephine Miles' The Continuity of Poetic Language (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1951) and William Empson's The Structure of Complex Words (London, 1951). Both help us understand the works analyzed, though in different ways: Miss Miles, tabulating the recurrence of the most popular words in three major periods of English poetry, is able to show how individual poets depart from the norm. She is also able to make some generalizations about changing styles. In her several books we nonetheless never see the kind of close attention to the word itself and its "tentacular roots" spreading to other words in the same work that appears in Empson's study. Working with the recurrence of all in Paradise Lost, for instance, he shows how its very sound enforces themes of the poem, how its placement helps characterize some of the actors, and how by shared sound and meaning this word binds together many words to help unify the poem.

by word," Marjorie Boulton reasons, "we shall be able to talk intelligently about the choice of vocabulary."<sup>1</sup> Herbert Read agrees, "Words are the units of composition, and the art of prose must begin with a close attention to their quality."<sup>2</sup>

Given these concerns, what plan of attack upon diction can we map out in order to cover the territory most efficiently? Despite the unkind previous allusion to source studies, we should seek origins. But statistical lists illuminate little unless interpreted. The conception of source can mean many things. First, geographical source--whether from another country or another dialect within one country--is important. And the implications for style and meaning are many. For example, Wimsatt relates Johnson's philosophical conception of the general type to his use of "abstract" Latin terms.<sup>3</sup> Technical terms, sources from certain professions lend qualities--clarity or pomposity--to style. And the source in time, whether archaic or most current, contributes. But tracing down the source, or sources, of words is wasted time unless we relate it to the work and the man. A writer's prejudices, such as Burton's anti-Popery;

<sup>1</sup> Marjorie Boulton, The Anatomy of Prose (London, 1954), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Herbert Read, English Prose Style (Boston, 1928), p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> W. K. Wimsatt, The Prose Style of Samuel Johnson (New Haven, 1941), pp. 52-62.

his knowledge, as Burton's fascination with eating; his subjects and themes appear in the kinds of words he chooses to express them and control the kinds of things he can say.

Once the store of words is established, the use he puts them to is the next matter. We should then consider the kinds of syntactic units which characterize the style: verbs, whether active or passive, or cast into verbals; nouns, whether abstract or concrete, common or proper; modifying units and their characteristic forms. Length of words, sound, and connotation are important. Finally, the genre demands attention; a letter to a friend obviously requires different kinds of words than does an oration.

In order to analyze Burton's diction I have chosen to consider one passage--because it is typical of the conversational middle style in which most of the Anatomy is written. A close analysis of this passage will provide a point of departure for examples drawn from other parts of the Anatomy. This procedure has some precedent; R. A. Sayce's book on French prose analyzes major stages of French style using only one passage for each author.<sup>1</sup>

The passage I have chosen appears about half the way through "Democritus Junior to the Reader." The subject is characteristic

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<sup>1</sup>R. A. Sayce, Style in French Prose: A Method of Analysis (Oxford, 1953).



of Burton: religious madness. I have numbered individual sentences for easier reference:

(1) If Democritus were alive now, and should but see the superstition of our age, our religious madness, as Meteran calls it, so many professed Christians, yet so few imitators of Christ, so much talk of religion, so much science, so little conscience, so much knowledge, so many preachers, so little practice, such variety of sects, such have and hold of all sides, banner against banner, such absurd and ridiculous traditions and ceremonies.

(2) If he should meet a Capuchin, a Franciscan, a Pharisaical Jesuit, a man-serpent, a shave-crowned Monk in his robes, a begging Friar, or see their three-crown'd Sovereign Lord the Pope, poor Peter's successor, the slave of the slaves of God, to depose King with his foot, to tread on Emperors' necks, make them stand barefoot and bare-legg'd at his gates, hold his bridle and stirrup, etc., (O that Peter and Paul were alive to see this!), if he should observe a Prince creep so devoutly to kiss his toe, and those Red-cap Cardinals, poor parish priests of old, now Princes' Companions, what would he say? (3) In our folly we storm the very heavens. (4) Had he met some of our devout pilgrims going barefoot to Jerusalem, Our Lady of Loretto, Rome, S. Iago, S. Thomas' Shrine, to creep to those counterfeit and maggot-eaten Reliques; had he been present at a Mass, and seen such kissing of Paxes, Crucifixes, cringes, duckings, their several attires and ceremonies, pictures of saints, indulgences, pardons, vigils, fastings, feasts, crossing, knocking, kneeling at Ave-Marias, bells, with much such Spectacles pleasing to the ignorant masses, praying in gibberish, and mumbling in beads. (5) Had he heard an old woman say her prayers in Latin, their sprinkling of holy water, and going a procession,

A thousands bands of monks go on procession;  
Why should I mention banners, crosses, idols?  
 (NAUGER)

their breviaries, bulls, hallowed beans, exorcisms, pictures, curious crosses, fables, and baubles. (6) Had he read the Golden Legend, the Turks' Alcoran, or Jews' Talmud, the Rabbins' Comments, what would he have thought? (7) How dost thou think he might have been affected? (8) Had he more particularly examined a Jesuit's life amongst the rest, he should have seen an hypocrite profess poverty, and yet possess more goods and lands than many Princes, to have infinite treasures & revenues; teach others to fast, and play the gluttons themselves; like watermen, that row one way and look another. (9) Vow virginity, talk of holiness, and yet indeed a notorious bawd, and famous fornicator, lascivious beast, a very goat. (10) Monks by profession, such as give over the world and the vanities of it, and yet a Machiavellian rout interested in all matters of state: holy men, peacemakers, and yet composed of envy, lust, ambition, hatred & malice, firebrands, overgrown pests of the country, traitors, assassinatees, thus do men reach the stars, and this is to supererogate, and merit heaven for themselves and others. (11) Had he seen, on the adverse side, some of our nice and curious schismaticks in another extreme abhor all ceremonies, and rather lose their lives and livings than do or admit anything Papists have formerly used, though in things indifferent (they alone are the true Church, the salt of the earth, whereas they have the least savour of all:), formalists, out of fear and base flattery like so many weather-cocks turn round, a route of temporisers, ready to embrace and maintain all that is or shall be proposed in hope of preferment: another Epicurean company, lying at lurch as so many vultures, watching for a prey of Church goods, and ready to rise by the down-fall of any: as Lucian said in like case, what dost thou think Democritus would have done, had he been spectator of these things; or had he but observed the common people follow like so many sheep, one of their fellows drawn by the horns over a gap, some for zeal,

some for fear, wherever the storm drives them, to credit all, examine nothing, and yet ready to die before they will abjure any of those ceremonies to which they have been accustomed; others out of hypocrisy frequent sermons, knock their breasts, turn up their eyes, pretend zeal, desire reformation, and yet professed usurers, gripers, monsters of men, harpies, devils in their lives to express nothing less?<sup>1</sup>

In a passage anatomizing the Papists, it is only fitting that Latin terminology should be here in abundance: conscience, ceremonies, Sovereign, indulgences, breviaries, and similar terms appear. However, that same grandeur of Latin can be turned against the Roman church: he makes some of his best criticism by such words as ridiculous, fornicator, lascivious, and notorious. He often reserves blunt words of Germanic origin for the last word; though Burton does not consciously pair Latin and Germanic words as does Sir Thomas Browne ("to well manage our affections and wild horses of Plato"), in this "vortex" sentence typical of Burton he administers the final kick with a common Anglo-Saxon monosyllable. After a long passage of Latin proper names--which to Burton should doubtless be drawn out with a snarl--"a Capuchin, a Franciscan, a Pharisaical Jesuit. . . their three-crowned Sovereign Lord the Pope, poor

<sup>1</sup>Burton, pp. 43-45.

Peter's successor," he describes their humiliating treatment of kings in blunt Anglo-Saxon: "to make them stand bare-foot and bare-legg'd at his gates." Again, after a long list of ceremonies, including words like Crucifixes, ceremonies, and indulgences, he ends up with the degrading stupidity of "mumbling of beads." Perhaps the best example of the drawing out of the idea with rhythmic Latin, somewhat euphemistic, but ending abruptly with a concrete Anglo-Saxonism is "famous fornicator, lascivious beast, a very goat." I would not say that Burton purposely aimed for this elaboration in Latin, with its connotations of elegance and intellectual complexity and then "proved the ideas upon his pulses" with his native Anglo-Saxon idiom. Latin was Burton's second language. But we can say that he seemed consciously to reserve for end position a sharp, short clincher.

Burton draws from other sources within the two large linguistic streams. In this passage the church contributes numerous terms: monks, friar, sovereign, Lord, Paxes, Reliques, Crucifixes. However, the terms do not stand unmodified. To a Roman Catholic, such words and the conceptions they stand for are highly favorable; the anti-Papist Burton pairs them with the barnyard, garbage pail, or dangerous wilderness. Pharisaical Jesuit is in apposition with that monstrosity man-serpent; Reliques are mentioned, but they are

maggot-eaten. The Puritans and the other "schismatics" do not escape his attack; they are weathercocks, vultures, sheep.

Words alluding to other literature, especially to sacred scripture, add a sense of intellectual richness; he mentions the Golden Legend, the Koran, the Talmud. Yet from Burton's point of view these are pretenders to the truth. Knowledgeable allusion can be turned against the villains: the Catholic rout is Machiavellian, Jesuits Pharisaical. Satirically he turns the Bible itself against the Bible-thumping Puritans: they think they are "the salt of the earth, whereas they have the least savour of all." Even those men reaching for the greatest good, heaven, do so erringly. "Thus do men reach the stars," Burton injects sardonically in a passage replete with descriptions of Machiavellian tactics. The "very heavens" are reached only by storming, "in our folly."

The body is brought in to serve the mind, but with an acute sense of physical fact. The Pope deposes kings "with his foot"; he treads on Emperors' necks. Princes creep not merely to honor the Pope but to "kiss his toe." Concrete physical details are enlisted to describe the Puritans, as well. These devils "knock their breasts, turn up their eyes" in sheer hypocrisy.

Terms from everyday life denigrate Burton's picture of the religious extremists' beliefs and practices. Princes must hold the

Pope's bridle and stirrup; genuflections are cringes, baptism duckings. He deflates Jesuits by comparing them with watermen, who "row one way, and look another." Throughout, the Papists are described in terms of commerce: possess, credit, usury. And the Puritans are presented with terms blending two evil realms--vultures and thieves, both of whom lie at lurch, "watching for a prey of Church goods."

Throughout the passage, the broadness of scope from which the terms are drawn, as well as the realms represented, give a picture of surging life, a linguistic equivalent of the variousness of a Hieronymus Bosch. If we are to accept the conclusion of L. C. Knights about earlier English prose, we could say that this prose, like the more "primitive" Elizabethan prose, postulated an organic community--organic in several ways: it was predominantly agricultural, and it evoked direct physical reaction, it marked a closer relation of word with thing.

"Not only was the relation of word and thing, word and action, far more intimate than in a society that obtains most of its permanent impressions from books and newspapers, a large number of Elizabethan words and phrases are the direct equivalent of action--gestures of sociability, contempt, or offense (the Elizabethans had a particularly rich vocabulary of abuse). Moreover, the muscular content of Elizabethan English is an important part of its 'meaning', and it was this, together with the reading habits fostered by speaking such a language, that enabled physical states [even such a humble one as itching] to be portrayed with such immediacy."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>L. C. Knights, "Elizabethan Prose," Scrutiny, II (1934), 431.

Knights nonetheless contends that that same style, so apt for discussing plowing, itching, and carting, has its limitations. Excellent for fanciful description, it is poor for exact description; fitting for satire, it is not for analysis and logical argument. It is, in short, not subtle enough, not controlled.<sup>1</sup> Burton's prose is, of course, not Nashe's and therefore not subject to the same indictments although it is to his praise. I would say that Burton's wider vocabulary--able to encompass both Latin and Anglo-Saxon, terms from both the cathedral and the barnyard--enables him to do a number of things. First, he can talk about and can make intellectual abstractions concrete: the hypocritical Jesuits described first in a series of abstract nouns are at last pinned down surely with a concrete illustratio of the watermen. In common, graphic diction he makes the general particular. The wide-ranging sources give life to his subject, religious superstition; making the passage live, they show its importance. Finally, although the worlds of monastery, cathedral, and street were never as close as we might think, in Burton's view the community he creates is organic--if perhaps in a more satiric than harmonic sense. The world is fallen, and Burton shows that all share in sin when he juxtaposes schismatics and vultures, Jesuits

<sup>1</sup>Knights, p. 435.

and ferrymen. This is not the same kind of commonalty that Knights uses to define earlier Elizabethan prose, but it is a development from it. Burton can write effective satire in language of great immediacy; the like-minded audience he is addressing can see and feel the subjects embodied by his words. And because his diction is drawn from a store of words standing for more complex ideas, they are reminded to think, as well.

Looking beyond the sources of his word-hoard, we can understand Burton's tactics even more if we consider the grammatical kinds of words he chooses. In this passage verbs are a chief source of strength. It is often difficult to establish not only what kinds of sentences he is writing but whether or not they are sentences at all. The logical answer is, that parsing Burton's prose units bounded on one side by a capital letter and on the other by a period according to current standards is not only difficult but wrong. His unit is not the neat, trim unit prescribed by grammar-books of the Eighteenth Century and after; it is the period, a more loosely ordered unit to which after-the-fact laws do not apply. Within the prose units as they appear in the Dell-Jordan-Smith edition we can still see the predicates and verbal constructions under firm control. The introductory clause in eight of the eleven periods here sets the mood for the passage: subjunctive. It is quite contrary to fact that Democritus



was alive then, and he develops that fact in several ways: "If Democritus were alive," "If he should meet," "Had he met," "Had he heard," "Had he seen." This same verbal mood allows the world of wishes to exist, yet this is no dream to which Burton invites and invokes Democritus. Rather, it is a very present reality--if anything, a nightmare--and Democritus Junior would wish his predecessor present to shame the offenders by his presence and to pronounce judgment upon them. Democritus' name is the one invoked, but fair reporting requires the mention of Peter and Paul. In contrapuntal parenthesis appears Burton's syncretic blending of types of wise ancients. The real wish is, therefore, for past greatness to see present horror, for the Golden Age to judge the Iron and--Burton as teacher and parent suggests--to bring them out of it. "What would he say?" The answer, filled in by the audience, is obvious.

Within the individual sentences, the basic subjunctive mood is only a beginning for the verbal acrobatics to come. The first period, which is, according to the limiting terms of the classroom, not really a complete sentence but only a subordinate clause, prepares the way. It also foreshadows a later technique--"fracturing" the language to mirror the chaos he is describing. Have and hold, normally verbs, he transmutes into an effective noun in "such have and hold of all sides." In the second period he really starts to work. Here the

introductory clause is subjunctive, "If he should meet, . . ." but it leads into a list mixing sundry types of verbals all damning the Papists-- begging, to depose, to tread, make stand, make hold--with objects graphically physical: barefoot, necks, bridle and stirrup. The second part of this period repeats in miniature the first but, if anything, in more degrading terms: "if he should observe" prepares the way for "creep so devoutly to kiss his toe." The fourth period follows the same pattern: "Had he met" is followed by going barefoot, to creep, and maggot-eaten; its longer second clause mixes nouns and adjectives indiscriminately with words based upon verbs such as kissing, cringes, duckings, crossing, knocking, and mumbling. The shock-effect of these depends upon their being applied to religious sacraments.

At this point Burton changes methods. Instead of the long envelope pattern of subjunctive-vicious verbals, he uses a shorter version of the same thing, with fewer verbal constructions: "Had he heard . . .," "Had he read . . ." Now that the audience has had time to make up its mind he speaks to them: "How dost thou think . . ." Shortly thereafter he aims for their mind in still another way. In the eighth period he no longer overwhelms his readers with a surging depiction of chaos. Now, he sets up a neat series of opposites describing the Jesuits, who are rather more dangerous enemies than are mumbling old women. He enlists alliteration in

the first antithesis--"profess poverty and yet possess more goods and lands than many Princes." They teach others, yet play themselves. Finally, like the watermen, they look one way and row another.

The next two periods, shorter than the first, change technique again. Neither the ninth nor the tenth contains a bona fide subject; both instead are built up around strong verbs: vow, talk, overgrown, reach, supererogate. In reading these two, though, we do not really miss the subject, knowing exactly about whom he is talking. The final focus upon the Papists reveals them acting wrongly.

The last period and the longest attacks Burton's other example of religious madness, the Puritans. The order differs, but the technique of the envelope is much the same. "Had he seen" introduces the passage; it is quickly followed by a damning antithesis. The schismatics had rather "lose their lives than do . . . anything the Papists have formerly used." Like weather-cocks they turn round, ready to embrace anything that will get them preferment. The graphic image with which he concludes this section is even stronger than some addressed to the Papists: They are like vultures, lying at lurch, watching, ready to rise by the fall of any. As a coda, Burton brings in the audience, and Democritus, again: not how this time, but "what dost thou think Democritus would have done" had he

observed any of these beast-like beings? Their stupidity he images with a passive verb and a picture of sheep; they are "drawn by the horns." Lacking control, they are at the mercy of the driving storm. A final judgment upon the disparity between what they do, and consequently seem to be--and what they actually are--is given by syntax. What they do is "frequent sermons, knock their breasts, turn up their eyes, pretend zeal, and desire reformation." What they are is usurers, monsters, harpies, devils.

Verbs in this passage enforce the sense of immediate chaos that is Burton's topic. Once he establishes the mood of condition or wish, he uses the present tense in several forms: simple, emphatic (do reach), historic. By jumbling nouns and verbs together in passages where we would normally expect parallel structure, he gives us syntactic disorder in words reflecting the things he is dealing with. In such a world melancholy must triumph.

What Burton sets in motion with verbs he fixes with nouns. The recurrent theme of the disparity between appearance and reality, a disparity which the verbs present to us as in a moving picture (we see the breast-beating, the creeping) the nouns enforce in a series of "stills." Salt is set against lack of savour, the state of virginity and holiness professed by the Jesuits against the things they really are--bawds, fornicators, goats. Burton never lets us forget who the

enemies are; he directs our eyes to the proper names he does not fear to name: the Red-cap Cardinals, the Capuchins, the Sovereign Lord the Pope. We know the enemy. And we know the things they use to delude us. In a condemning catalog in the fifth sentence which at first glance seems to drag their tools out of the bag in violent disarray, we can see how Burton leads us to realize how we should take them by his arrangement of nouns. He uses alliteration first to link objects sacred to Papists but slanted by Burton--"breviaries, bulls, hallowed beans." The explosive b is neutral with the first word in the series, but it becomes progressively more powerful when applied to bulls (an obvious word-play) and then to beans, reeking of witchcraft and flatulence. The next items seem fairly neutral, although referring to exorcisms by the plural does seem to fragment the potency of a process. Another alliterative tag, curious crosses, seems at first to describe the peculiarities of ornament but refers also to that serious desire, curiosity. The last two sum up the series. Fables are pretty stories; if Papist, probably untrue. Baubles, which word picks up the initial letter, ties the catalog together with not just sound but sense, also. All the things of the superstitious Papists are trivial, substantial as soap bubbles.

Burton informs us by choosing nouns with strong inherent connotations and then arranging them in a persuasive order. One

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kind of pattern he uses to enforce this thematic and structural concern of contrast is the popular one of tranlacing, repeating certain roots of words but applying them in different contexts. Certainly the initial distinction of "so much science, so little conscience" exemplifies this. These words are part of a still larger pattern Burton designs in the arrangement of nouns, a pattern involving levels of abstraction. This paragraph encompasses several: words referring to abstract states, such as poverty and holiness; words referring to more concrete classes, such as goods and lands; and words of unmistakable concreteness: horns, maggots, weathercocks. Many levels appear concomitantly throughout the passage, but a general weighting occurs. Predominant in the first part are abstractions; in some ways the paragraph can be seen as the concretizing of an abstraction--"the superstition of our age"--which he expands with the abstract nouns "so much science, so little conscience, so much knowledge," and so on. In a long catalog setting forth the contrasts of faction against faction, information as against wisdom, he embeds the concrete picture of "banner against banner." In this phrase, illustrating before our eyes the warlike strife, he is also able to suggest its futility by choosing from among all weapons of war a symbol made of cloth. The concretions ending the whole passage do not suggest the glories, if futilities, of warfare that the banners

maximally rough. Reading it makes the medicine work better.

do: finally embodying the superstition which is his subject are the concrete nouns grippers, harpies, devils.

Burton's strength in this passage derives from nouns and verbs, things and actions. Modifiers are few--perhaps, as with adverbs of manner, for instance, because they add a feeling of imprecision, of groping. The "pure" adjectives here are not particularly fresh: much, little, absurd, ridiculous, devout, adverse, true, and base. But with participles (gaining extra force because they are derived from verbs) he gets some good effects. The insulting shave-crown'd, applied to Monks, is too close to three-crown'd, applied to the Pope, to escape notice; begging Friars and maggot-eaten relics sum up his view. Adjectives derived from past villains he enlists to define his own, to bring in other worlds to suggest still further ramifications of the evil he is concerned with. Jesuits are Pharisaical and Machiavellian, some schismatics Epicurean. He uses the same vortex pattern seen earlier in a list of adjectives: notorious, famous, lascivious, and finally the brief very applied to goat.

Given the number of strong headwords, it seems surprising that so few connectives occur. There are a few if's, but's, and and's and yet's, a thus, and a whereas. In current prose this sort of omission would denote sloppiness, lack of control. Such omissions were an important part of Burton's aims: they make his prose more consciously rough. Reading it makes the audience work harder.

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The only connective he uses to join what we consider subordinate elements is if--an important one, as we saw before, in establishing the subjunctive. With even this he uses a variant form. If appears only thrice in the eight sentences beginning with the subjunctive. For the remaining five he uses a had he construction--not simply for variety, because he does not vary this pattern once he begins it, but rather for greater life: the verbal mood is the same, but had he seen quickens the statement. All the rest are either coordinate conjunctions (and, but, or) or subjunctive adverbs (thus, whereas, and yet), which are also used to relate members of equal "weighting" and similar construction within the sentence. Providing the tools of expression of Burton's theme, these make contrasts with ease. The Jesuits vow virginity and yet are notorious bawds; they show disparity: the schismatics think they are the salt of the earth, whereas they have the least savour of all.

The linking is often quite weak. To go from such juncture as "holy men, peacemakers" to "and yet composed of envy, lust, ambition" requires a constant series of adjustments, not only because the two are not grammatically parallel (to our eyes, at least) but also because the meaning is not parallel: two different kinds of things, men and qualities, and two different kinds of rhythm are attached. Also, the and connects things which are even less obviously coordinate than



men and their qualities; in fact, we should rather expect a negative or or a but instead: "teach others to fast, and play the gluttons themselves." Here the coordination is possibly satiric, yoking together two shameful opposites in one man. But because we expect relation stated in negatives rather than positives, we are alerted more quickly to the two-facedness of the Jesuits.

Not only are the connectives few, they are often omitted, leaving punctuation to show relationships. Here we may see clearly Burton's use of the "mind-thinking" pattern of the Senecan period to cause the reader's mind to pursue a similar path. Quick juxtapositions, easy enthymemes are provided by the abrupt leaps of the semicolons, colons, and commas. Instead of the too-obvious spelling out that a full-fledged subordinate clause would give us in "those Red-cap Cardinals, poor parish priests of old," we have a swift remembrance of their past role. We reach the conclusion; we do not have to wade through words such as "who were once, you will remember," relating words which do not let us exercise our minds to see the picture Burton wants us to see for ourselves, though he guides us there. The semicolon between "play the gluttons themselves" and "like watermen" enforces the sense of a swift mental jump. But its very swiftness makes us see that the apparent distance between priest and riverman is not so great. The colon draws us up to a

temporary plateau, then sends us out again--to a conclusion Burton wants us to make. The strength of the break seems to ensure the sureness of the only way out he provides. Following "a Machiavellian rout interested in all matters of state" appears a colon. It is immediately followed by two flattering terms, holy men and peacemakers, but those terms in context are quite ironic. Even though we may know that somewhere there are peacemaking Papists, we tend to believe only what Burton wants us to--that the only conclusion that could follow from the initial description is that the holiness is false, the envy and lust true.

Diction serves Burton's theme, subject, and persuasive techniques. We could examine his stock of words from still other vantage points, from the length of words, for example, but we have already seen some of the ways he places longer, more intellectually complex Latinisms against the monosyllabic Anglo-Saxon. We could consider the sound-effects of certain words chosen--of the hissing s's of the series including "holiness . . . notorious . . . famous . . . lascivious beast," which damns as it describes, reproducing sense with sound. The onomatopoeia of "praying in gibberish and mumbling of beads" also exemplifies an oral basis of Burton's stock of words, to him a source through sensory perception of ultimate truth. And we could consider still further the connotations of individual words.

Some of the ones we have looked at, sheep, maggot-eaten, demonstrate Burton's choice for the common store of speech rather than the outré.

The store of words is not the only way in which this passage is a key to Burton's Anatomy. The subject, superstition and thus false knowledge, is developed with conscious care, artful persuasion. Since this is only a piece of the book, it may give a false impression: throughout Burton does not swell and growl with indignation at the departed brethren. Instead, this negative picture must be set against the standards of behavior he establishes later. But it gains much of its splenetic force because of his acute awareness that these are departures from right reason. Because he attacks from the norm, he can re-solidify the right thinkers. It is doubtful that he is aiming to bring into the fold those who have left--either Catholics or Puritans--unless his attack is more efficacious than most. But he certainly intends to bring the right-thinkers together again, to remind us of the forms of aberration.

One way in which "we" return with him is in the pose he adopts here, seen in the choice of verbal mood. He sets up a mood contrary to fact, making us think through with him what it would be like if Democritus, Peter, and Paul were here. This pose of Democritus Junior the teacher is a long-tested and effective one. It starts out

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indirectly, with more impersonal construction. When we are musing with him, though, he darts in more personal constructions, requiring active participation from the audience: "How dost thou think he might have been affected? . . . What dost thou think Democritus would have done?" In the reiterated "What would Democritus say?" the rhetorical question answers itself in our minds. The satiric pose forms itself within the diction of the passage. Burton is anatomizing superstition while invoking Democritus; pointing accusing fingers at folly, he makes us find the proper ways to health.

In the larger unit of the paragraph in which the words are set, the organization follows a simple two-part plan. First he deals with the Papists, then with the Puritans. The second group is only slightly less satirized than the first, even though proportionately less space is devoted to it. Animal terms pervade both, and it is hard to say which is made more bestial. The Puritan vultures are repellent, the Papist man-serpents disgusting. And both are criticized by the same charges: misuse of the mind. Inversion (science-conscience, salt-savor) of language shows the perversion of their minds. And progressively throughout the paragraph the reader must work harder. The first sentences set the "if" mood, but as he goes along Burton includes more questions, more "incomplete" sentences so that the reader will fill in the answers and omissions from his own mind.

The last mark of punctuation is a question mark--though it follows a construction which is not necessarily a question, "to express nothing less." In terms of the effect, however, Burton has caused the reader to fill in. In answer to the implied question--"Are they nothing less" than monsters, harpies, and devils--the correct response from the right-thinking audience is, "yes."

The figure of Democritus has then accomplished an unmistakable satiric aim of exposing vices and follies and helping man think rightly so that society can improve itself. With what Hight prescribes for satire--"great vividness and concreteness of description"--he has transmitted much information about the kinds of follies open to the superstitious and more importantly has transmitted an attitude about them. This "common philosopher" gets some of his best effects because he uses everyday diction and, since most of the language is drawn from such a source, he is then able to direct us by indirection. Setting up the "if" world leaves the way free for our minds to roam; asking questions, choosing words with the connotations they inherently possess leaves the way open for the reader to choose--though that way is paved. The speaker is a vir bonus, doubtless, standing on the right shore. But he is also an ingénu, asking with wide-open eyes for the answers.

In discussing the sources of Burton's diction, it has been almost impossible to separate individual words from their fitting into patterns of images. Burton draws great strength not only from words originating in Latin or Anglo-Saxon, church or barnyard. Those same words serve as concrete images of emotional and intellectual complexes. And Burton believed that man, who could comprehend universalities, first learned them through the senses. The first quality that strikes a reader of Burton's prose is the profusion of images, overt and radical. Because of that profusion, and because of the size of the book, it would be impossible to show that a single metaphor informs the entire work in the same way that, according to Frank Huntley, the metaphor of the circle provides a structural pattern for Sir Thomas Browne's Hydriotaphia and The Garden of Cyrus.<sup>1</sup>

We can say that Burton utilizes nearly all kinds of image.

First, he is a master of the word giving us an acute sense of physical fact. We can see the entire action of the Theologasters when he says that they creep into noblemen's houses. In another passage we can

<sup>1</sup>F. L. Huntley, "Sir Thomas Browne and the Metaphor of the Circle," Journal of the History of Ideas, XIV (1954), 353-364.

sense another physical fact relayed to us by words; we can sense his boredom with multitudinous publications by the heard rhythm of "a Sermon at Paul's Cross, a Sermon in St. Mary's Oxford, a Sermon in Christ-Church, or a Sermon before the Right Honorable, a right Reverend, a Sermon before the Right Worshipful, a Sermon in Latin, in English, a Sermon with a Name, a Sermon Without, a Sermon, a Sermon, etc."<sup>1</sup>

The simile makes clearer the abstract or unknown. In a scientific passage describing the three chief organs he explains the workings of the body by a clear comparison--one which, by the way, shows in action the sort of argument by correspondences typical of the Renaissance in Spenser's House of Alma passage in the Faerie Queene or Fletcher's Purple Island, which come to mind when we see this passage:

Inward organical parts, which cannot be seen, are divers in number, and have several names, functions, and divisions; but that of Laurentius is most notable, into noble or ignoble parts. Of the noble there be three principal parts, to which all the rest belong, and whom they serve, brain, heart, liver; according to whose site, three regions, on a threefold division, is made of the whole body. As first of the head, in which the animal organs are contained, and brain itself, by which his nerves give sense and motion to the rest, and is (as it were) a Privy Counsellor, and Chancellor, to

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 27.

the Heart. The second region is the chest, or middle belly, in which the Heart as King keeps his Court, and by his arteries communicates life to the whole body. The third region is the lower belly, in which the liver resides as a hidden governour with the rest of those natural organs, serving for concoction, nourishment, expelling of excrements.<sup>1</sup>

We may smile at his naïveté, but we nonetheless see the inner workings of the body far more clearly after we read the passage.

He also includes set pieces, "epic similes," elaborately developed, as ways of making us know. In order to enforce his advice that we not "wrestle with God," that we must limit our ambitions and inquiry, he injects this epic simile from Greek myth: "When that monster-taming Hercules overcame all in the Olympicks, Jupiter at last in an unknown shape wrestled with him; the victory was uncertain, till at length Jupiter descried himself, and Hercules yielded."<sup>2</sup> Being lowly wise is wiser for all creatures, even Hercules. The most common sort of simile, however, is drawn from the minutiae of daily life. He ends his treatment of mirth as a remedy with a reminder that empty-headed mirth is folly, that no

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 131.

<sup>2</sup>Burton, p. 157.



one escapes pain. And for a final image to pin down the idea he uses his own version of Aesop's fable with homely details drawn from everyday life: "And so, like Grass-hoppers, whilst they sing over their cups all Summer, they starve in Winter; and for a little vain merriment shall find a sorrowful reckoning in the end."<sup>1</sup>

Metaphor (envy is a "rotting in the bones"), personification, metonymy, synecdoche--all these Burton uses to embody his ideas. Symbols, both public and private, appear. In fact, we might say that melancholy itself becomes a symbol of the condition of man. But such pigeon-holing is idle business; it does not show us how Burton uses the language of figures. For the remainder of this section of the chapter it might be profitable, therefore, to trace through certain key patterns of image to see how they reflect, enforce, even contain meaning. At the outset, I must say that I do not believe that the progression of images provides the structure of the work in the same way that they do in a poem of, let us say, T. S. Eliot's; I rather simple-mindedly accept Burton's own naming of the larger rhythms of the book--cause and cure. But as reflectors, witty and serious, images help him communicate his ideas.

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 487.

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One of the most successful--and, indeed, inevitable--patterns of images in the book is drawn from the human body. It is inevitable from the subject, ailing man: "Thou thyself art my subject." But the way in which Burton views man shows his participation in the traditional conception of man as a microcosm, both angel and beast. Because of his potentialities man's falling away into sickness is correspondingly more painful to contemplate. Because of that disease his own role and task are both literally and metaphorically set for Burton. He must anatomize, cut up: curing demands it. Introducing his Utopia in "Democritus Junior to the Reader" he images the state in terms of the physical body. Sources of sickness must be "purged from a Commonwealth, as a bad humour from the body, that are like so many ulcers and boils, and must be cured before the melancholy body can be eased."<sup>1</sup> He requests indulgence from the audience while announcing his purpose with the same image: "If hereafter, anatomizing this surly humour, my hand slip, as an unskilful prentice I lance too deep, and cut through skin and all at unawares, make it smart or cut awry, pardon a rude hand, an unskilful knife."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 77.

<sup>2</sup>Burton, p. 104.

<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 77.

But at the same time that he will anatomize with Democritus and satirize with Juvenal, his knife is double-edged. He will cure, will nourish those who are under his care. And it is with that cluster of images built around nourishment and food that he defines his own role and the role of his listeners, that he criticizes his opponents, and even anticipates his reception by other critics.

The first appearance of this metaphor helps him establish ethical proof. His love of much learning is imaged in terms of his own eating: "I had a great desire . . . to taste of every dish and sip of every cup."<sup>1</sup> With this image he shows his own voracious appetite for learning; it establishes himself as a purveyor of knowledge that the audience can accept, particularly when it is coupled with his later statement that his own work is honey, not poison. Like the bee, he has ranged the library to sip from the flowers of learning; unlike the spider, he injures nothing that he sips from: he gathers out of many flowers and "makes a new bundle of all." This helps provide an image of his relationship with his audience. Their palates are whetted by his work, his "warmed-over dish." They can digest his "macaronicon," his mixed dish containing many kinds of nourishment.

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 13.

The image, carried to its ultimate form, also provides a witty statement of the reasons he must write. Writing of melancholy to avoid melancholy, he "could imagine no fitter evacuation than this": the doctor can cure himself. Whereas the scatology is wittily applied to himself, for the pretenders to learning it is serious. The philosophers are thieves: "They lard their books . . . with the fat of others' works"; they "scrape Ennius' dunghills . . . By which means it comes to pass, that not only our libraries & shops are full of our putrid papers, but every close-stool and jakes are well supplied with privy poetry."<sup>1</sup> Homer spews, "they lick it up."

But he himself is not entirely innocent. He confesses to a barbaric style "gathered together from several dunghills, excrements of authors . . . ill digested." Yet this roughage is "partly affected"--partly to shock his audience into an awareness of what he is talking about, partly for sheer fun. He admits his occasional excremental style, but in other places refers to himself in less pejorative terms. The figure of the Dutch Host who replies in a surly tone, if you dislike your fare, diet, and lodging, "Get you to another Inn," helps define part of his conception of his relation to his audience: if the diet is too strong, go eat the cupcakes and petits

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<sup>1</sup> Burton, p. 18.

fours others are serving. But he, the water-drinking Senecan, sees the physick, the purge, as leading to health. "Let some good man relate the same [good advice], and the counsel will be embraced." Thus his strongly physical images have thematic relevance to his purpose. Body and soul are blended; we reach the spirit through the sense. "A good Divine either is or ought to be a good physician." The reception of the book he images in terms of food: "Our writings are as so many dishes." And the plate can contain a dose of hellebore as well as edibles. Democritus' medicine "shall salve" the reader, even when his book is "somewhat tart." He prepares for the roughness of the ensuing style, the hard-hitting satire with "sharp sauces increase appetite, even victuals are tasteless without a little vinegar."<sup>1</sup>

Another kind of image Burton uses deals with not just man himself, serving, eating, producing. Because of his subject, melancholy, sometimes imaged as an external force from which man is struggling to extricate himself, he chooses many times to cast his ideas into images showing man as either the victim or conqueror of external nature. He frequently turns to the figure of man tossed about by an ocean or a river to depict man's perilous state. The image helps show his own involvement. He can deal with melancholy because he

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 102.

has experienced it: "I was fatally driven upon this rock of melancholy, and carried away by this by-stream."<sup>1</sup> We can see this as depicting part of his complex point of view. True, he views the world from Minerva's tower, but he can remember his own imprisonment in the stream, as well. But Burton can master these forces; he can travel on top of the water. Anatomizing man, he says, is like finding the North-West Passage. Neither destination may ever be reached, but the trip can be made without shipwreck. But the stream goes on. We may think we have mastered our folly, but it courses onward: "And as a River, we see, keeps the like name and place, but not water, and ever runs, our times and persons alter, vices are the same, and ever will be."<sup>2</sup>

Burton lives not just in a world of books and metaphor. Every mention of a river is not always in a metaphoric sense. When he plans his own Utopia, he talks about rivers, isthmuses, and aqueducts in a very literal sense. But we must not forget that in Burton's vision the worlds within and without were connected by a series of parallelisms and correspondences. His own style he images in terms of a river, in a passage quoted earlier. This passage shows the variousness of the

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup>Burton, p. 43.

<sup>3</sup>Burton, p. 31.

natural world, the possibility of numerous changes within the worlds of man and nature, and the connections between the powers of the outer world and of man expressing himself through the flow of language.

The picture of the ever-changing river--now swift, now slow--leads us to consider still another cluster of images pervading the book. That group we could call images of metamorphosis. The hideous possibilities of negative metamorphosis can be seen in the following picture of this kind of "wicked caitiff": "To see an ass dressed in the skin of a lion, a filthy loathesome carcass, a Gorgon's head puffed up by parasites, assume unto himself, glorious titles, in worth an infant, a human ass, a painted sepulchre, an Egyptian Temple!"<sup>1</sup>

In a long litany in the center of "Democritus Junior to the Reader," describing the iron world Burton gives a virtual vision of hell, hellish particularly for the degrading transformations the denizens have chosen or allowed to happen. As the first item in the anaphoric list he chooses the chameleon from the world of natural history to image the changes in man: "To see a man turn himself into all shapes like a Chameleon." The next he draws from the world of myth; the stock figure of Proteus stands for those who can

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 51.

transform themselves into "all that is monstrous." Even the cosmos provides an example in Mercury the planet. From here he scrutinizes nearly all realms--court, cottage, farm, college--and finds them all in a state of melancholic change, out of place and out of mind. Servants can buy out their own masters; a man can "roll himself up like a snow-ball, from base beggary to Right Worshipful and Right Honourable titles"; dogs devour their masters; sheep demolish towns-- "in a word, the world turned upside downward!"<sup>1</sup>

This is part of his diagnosis. The fallen world is returning to chaos, and it needs to be righted again. One thing that makes the picture of the present disease so painful is that man has turned beast rather than angel. Man, "that excellent and noble creature of the world," that "marvel of marvels," that "Sovereign Lord of all the Earth . . . created in God's own image," has forfeited his estate. Following Burton's exalting panegyric upon the potentiality of man which he sets forth in the very first paragraph of Partition I of the Anatomy, is a definition of what he now has become: "a monster by stupend metamorphosis, a fox, a dog, a hog, what not?" The following hundreds of pages are devoted to Burton's own attempts to persuade, either with whip or sugar-coated pill, to lead man back

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, pp. 53-56.



toward his potential form, to change him again. In the very last paragraph of the Anatomy he reiterates his aim--to make man whole. However, the tone of the passage itself is so subdued, so sadly melancholy, that we know his hoped-for changed man will only rarely be found.

In sum, Burton's images show an animate world, of man surging with life, of the outer body of the world in a state of constant motion. Even the winds can be "lascivious," the seas and waters "enamoured." The profusion of images gives the effect of not having been elaborately planned but rather of following the Senecan principle of being "struck off" the thinking mind. They do not seem labored; part of the easy, conversational effect derives from the source in everyday life. He follows his imagination like a "ranging spaniel," the tapsters "drown their wits and settle their brains." Some of the most effective images are restatements of a parallel idea in Latin; in this passage he embeds a metaphor drawn from common life (though with mythological allusion, for the learned) to sound out all possibilities of the abstraction: "if any controversy arise betwixt us . . . [if they] touch the string of our commodity, we detest and depress them upon a sudden: neither affinity, consanguinity, or old acquaintance can contain us, but the vainglorious avoid the wretched. A golden apple sets all together by the ears, as if a marrow-bone, or honey-comb,

were flung amongst Bears."<sup>1</sup> Within the language itself Burton found a store of dead metaphors: "The love of kinsmen is grown cold" may be live or fossilized.

No particular metaphor consciously rules each section. But animals, fires, transformations, and disparities between inside and outside appear in each--possibly to show the basic similarity of various forms of melancholy. Nonetheless, the objects described and the tone differ from section to section. A comparison between two sections will show that though the vehicles may be similar, the tenor is quite different. The passages deal with two kinds of melancholy, one describing love melancholy:

But this is not the matter in hand, what prerogative this Beauty hath, of what power and sovereignty it is, and how far such persons that so much admire, and dote upon it, are to be justified; no man doubts of these matters; the question is how and by what means Beauty produceth this effect? By sight; the Eye betrays the soul, and is both Active and Passive in this business; it wounds and is wounded, is an especial cause and instrument, both in the subject, and in the object. As tears, it begins in the eyes, descends to the breast, it conveys these beauteous rays, as I have said, unto the heart. I saw, I was undone. Mars sees her, and would have her at first sight. Shechem saw Dinah, the daughter of Leah, and defiled her; Jacob [loved] Rachel, for she was beautiful and fair: David spied Bathsheba afar off; the elders Susanna, as that Orthomenian Strato saw fair Ariclea, the daughter of Theophanes, bathing herself at that Hercyne well in Labadea; and were captivated in an instant.

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<sup>1</sup> Burton, p. 626.

Their eyes saw, their breasts were ravaged with flames.  
Amnon fell sick for Tamar's sake. The beauty of Esther  
was such that she found favour, not only in the sight of  
Ahasuerus, "but of all those that looked upon her."<sup>1</sup>

and the other, religious melancholy:

Other fears and sorrows, grievances of body and mind,  
are troublesome for the time; this is for ever, eternal  
damnation, hell itself, a plague, a fire: an inundation  
hurts one Providence alone, and the loss may be recovered;  
but this superstition involves all the world almost, and can  
never be remedied. Sickness and sorrows come and go,  
but a superstitious soul hath no rest; superstition can  
give the soul no peace, no quietness. True Religion and  
Superstition are quite opposite, as Lactantius describes,  
the one arears, the other dejects; the one is an easy yoke,  
the other an intolerable burden, an absolute tyranny; the  
one a sure anchor, an haven; the other a tempestuous  
Ocean; the one makes, the other mars; the one is wisdom,  
the other is folly, madness, indiscretion; the one unfeigned,  
the other a counterfeit; the one a diligent observer, the  
other an ape; one leads to heaven, the other to hell.<sup>2</sup>

Both describe states of dis-ease. However, the one dealt with in  
the first does not hurt so very much; it is the "sweetness so sad,  
sadness so sweet" of the deliciously suffering sonneteers. The  
tone of the second passage is considerably darker. The paths of  
this sorrow can lead to the fires of hell. The image of burning is  
used in both sections. In the second, the fires are lurid, in the first

<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 674.

<sup>2</sup>Burton, p. 897.

the beautiful rays which descend to the breast and ravage female bosoms with the flames of love. Wounds appear in both. In the first the fearful weapon is the eye, and the pangs only those of love; in the second, the wounds can be eternal. The Plague can lead to eternal damnation. In both appears the image of capture--but for love the yoke is captivity; in the second, Superstition is imaged as an "intolerable burden, an absolute tyranny." A final similarity is the image of metamorphosis, specifically, into animals. Superstition can convert one to an ape, that beast whose similar appearance to man only mocks his difference from him. In images occurring later in the passage on love quoted here, the metamorphosis is blunted: one is besotted, another's heart pants; bestiality is suggested, but only in amusing terms. This general practice seems to follow through most of the Anatomy; the image is fitted to the subject. Similar things may be evoked from passage to passage, but different qualities transfer, depending upon the guiding idea. The subject is not controlled by the progression of a particular metaphor.

A final concern of Burton's style in this chapter will deal with smaller units of language. These units, the rhetorical figures, do not themselves comprise a sentence but they are meaningful patterns. In some ways the material dealt with here will overlap with the next chapter, which will deal with sentence structure. At the same time

an attempt has been made to restrict the discussion here to those figures which do not stand alone but which occur as part of the larger unit. These are the traditional schemes of grammar, schemes which Puttenham classifies as those that work by disorder, by defect, by surplusage, and by exchange.

The first group, to which the genetic name hyperbaton is usually assigned, appears in abundance in the Anatomy. The disordered mind of the melancholic is suggested not only by the sense of the passages but by the very order of the words describing the sufferer. One of the species, anastrophe, which is a departure from the normal order of words to secure the desired emphasis, can be seen in this example: a grave senator described by Pliny the Younger starved himself because of his suffering from the gout. "Neither he nor Hispulla his wife could divert him, but grew more and more inflexible in his resolve; die he would, and die he did."<sup>1</sup> Here the normal order of subject + modal auxiliary + verb is switched; the auxiliaries become the important terms. The man's death is inevitable, and so the terms--the willed would and the emphatic did--enforce his crazed desire.

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 372.

Tmesis, the interjection of a phrase between the parts of a compound construction, can show disorder in other ways. In "They will by all means quench their neighbor's house" the prepositional phrase breaks in two the verb phrase; it disorders the normal form but only to suggest still more possibilities: the break-up of the order calls attention to the ambiguity of the phrase by all means-- suggesting the awful certainty of the quenching, and the vast number of ways at their disposal to accomplish the quenching. In his use of hysterologia (interposing a phrase between a preposition and its object) later in the same passage the fracturing of the normal order calls our attention to the material he has used to break up that order: "It troubles me to think of, much more to relate, those frequent aborts and murdering of infants in their Nurseries." Here his own sorrow shows his own sympathy; the difficulty of reporting such a subject impresses its seriousness upon the reader more than a simple statement would have done. Hypallage or the changeling, which perverts the sense by shifting the application of words, we have seen in the long passage quoted at the first part of the chapter. A construction like "Such have and hold of all sides," by shifting verbs into nouns without even making them verbals, and by "roughening" the syntax causes us to notice the change and therefore the subject he is talking of. Furthermore, in this passage dealing with the

greedy Papists, the very fact that verbs are the substituted words is fitting; they extend even farther the qualities of clutching and grasping that Burton would have us see.

One of the most characteristic forms of hyperbaton is parenthesis, a scheme he puts to many uses. He can merely give the source and thus let the parenthesis serve as a footnote, an additional enforcement to what he is saying: "(which Martianus Capella likewise maintains, but our Christian Philosophers explode)"; he can speak his own sorrow in another's words - here, those of Virgil: "But this most noble creature (one exclaims) O pitiful change! is fallen from that he was."<sup>1</sup> In this second example we see a characteristic pattern we might call contrapuntal: he is able to carry on two levels at once--external fact and personal opinion, as here; or to provide reinforcement of the main theme: "And which is more wonderful, though they be very dry (as in this malady they are)"; or conditional: "they begin to rave, fly water and glasses, to look red and swell in the face, about 20 days after (if some remedy be not taken in the meantime)"; or disagreement: "three distinct souls (which question of late hath been much controverted by Picolomineus, and Zabarel)." Thus, the parenthesis allows him to cover a great deal

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 113.

of material, to range far and wide without really losing a sense of continuity in the main passage. In reading, we tag in those extra explanations or contraries, so that we, too, are aware of many possibilities with Burton--but we do not lose sight of the main unity of the passage. They are rarely longer than a dozen words, so that they do not disrupt too much. But they force us to exercise our minds and to accommodate as many different kinds of relationships as possible. And certainly Burton wishes us to do so: he does not want to exhaust his reader, whose mind must sweep from one thing to another, but he wants to present us as exhaustive a picture as he can.

These kinds of disorderings of the natural, or normal, structure of the sentence work by lengthening out the idea, by stretching out and enriching our knowledge of a topic. Burton also includes the second kind of grammatical scheme outlined by Puttenham--those that "work by defect and so represent short-cuts in expression." These, too, demand more from the reader. Refusing to spell out neatly all connections for his audience, Burton forces them to bridge the gaps--and thus make discoveries on their own. One of the simplest devices forcing this bridging is the eclipsis, or ellipsis, which "omits a word easily supplied by ordinary understanding, as in "Men, if they see another man tremble, giddy, or sick of some fearsome disease . . ." This eclipsis works in connection with



what we would call non-parallelism. Tremble is a verb, giddy and sick adjectives. But the point is that by his leaving out be giddy or appear to be sick we fill in the necessary words; the sentence demands more of us. Zeugma and its several species (prozeugma, occurring when the verb is expressed in the first clause and understood in the others; mezozeugma, if it is expressed in the middle clause; hypozeugma, if in the last clause) appear throughout, being required by the loose clausal structure and the leaping and lingering of the ideas. Giving remedies against discontents, he ends, "I conclude, hast thou a sound body, and a good soul, good bringing up?"<sup>1</sup> Here the structure, by leaving off a verb with the last two members, demonstrates prozeugmatic structure. Here the progress of the nouns tricks us: we think the three items in the series are all separate, but upon consideration we could regard the last as a summation of the first two. Further, the nouns are of different kinds. The first two, body and soul, are common nouns; the third, bringing up, a more complex gerund. And because they are linked together by the verb, the shift calls attention to the third member and its importance as a device summing up the other two: proper training involves both body and soul.

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 505.

Schemes which, Puttenham says, affect the rhythm of language and its tempo contribute to Burton's style. Two division, however, Puttenham outlines--those which contribute to a sense of harmonic, balanced rhythm, and those creating a sense of roughness or vehemence. It seems almost too obvious to say that Burton will have none--or few--of the first. Isocolon, which the Elizabethans called parison and used ad nauseam in Euphuistic prose, Burton does not use. It is only in an occasional proverb or epigram ("After benching, then comes wenching") that we would find an instance of this scheme "which maketh the members of an oration to be almost of a just number of sillables." So, too, with homoioteleuton, which, combined with isocolon and alliteration, gives a sense of similar rhythm and almost similar rhymes at the ending of the members. Burton would simply not write a sentence ending like Donne's "We are swallowed up irreparably, irrevocably, irrecoverably, irremediably." The reasons why isocolon and homoioteleuton do not often appear in Burton are not based upon personal pique. Instead, they represent the kind of over-elaborate artifice of Ciceronian balance that came to be almost anathema to the Senecans. To write a proper isocolon one must search more for words than matter--the exact antithesis to what Burton counsels. And even though he may have run his own Senecan periods through a nutmeg grater, roughening them up and

not necessarily publishing them as they were first struck off his brain, the effects upon the audience of those two types of artifice are quite different. The rhythm and somber sound of Donne's homoioteleuton mesmerizes the listener-reader in a way that Burton would never want to work upon his audience. Instead, he would toss out the schemes that could hypnotize the audience and submit in their place schemes which make one think of this world.

For that reason the rhythmic schemes which predominate in the Anatomy are those which leave out connectives, which run counter to euphuistic syllable-counting. Brachylogia, therefore, is one of his most common schemes of linking those numerous catalogs by which he attempts to develop a topic almost to exhaustion. Sorrow, for instance, "dries up the bones, saith Solomon, makes them hollow-eye'd, pale, and lean, furrow-faced, to have dead looks, wrinkled brows, riveled cheeks, dry bodies, and quite perverts their temperature that are mis-affected with it."<sup>1</sup> Here the comma introduces the source, links general appearance with particular substantial detail, noun with infinitive, non-finite with finite verb. It latches an independent clause onto the end. There seems hardly any other grammatical state that he could have added. The clotted joining

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 226.

together makes us focus quickly on a myriad of different aspects of the effects of the emotion. It is quick and rough. Closely related to brachylogia is asyndeton, which "omits conjunctions between clauses with like effect": "or if they be strong or able to endure physick, yet it brings them to an ill habit, they make their bodies no better than apothecaries' shops, this, and suchlike infirmities, must needs follow."<sup>1</sup> Here the commas are the only separators and joiners of independent sentences. The relationship could be seen as somewhat causative, but it is the reader who must reach that conclusion. Burton forces us to make the relationship between over-much purging and its consequent ill effects.

What Puttenham calls the vices of language--and the line between the vices and the figures is often hard to draw--appear in Burton. Soraismus, or the mingle-mangle, mixing foreign terms with the native idiom, might be termed here almost a structural principle in Burton's continual switching to Latin. He is not so culpable as it might seem: the figure became a vice only if the words were used ignorantly. An instance of heterogenium, answering irrelevantly, we have already seen as contributory to Burton's comic mask of Democritus: "Supposing I do not wish to answer

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 206.

[to the question, who are you?], who shall make me?" We might carry Puttenham's view of amphibologia, or ambiguity, as "tolerable" even farther. In his long blank verse poem introducing the book, "Democratis Junior to His Book," the delightfully ambiguous line "No forceful eagle the light fly engages" suggests the chasm between dilettante and serious scholar from the points of view of both.

To perissologia (adding superfluous clauses) parelcon (adding superfluous words, especially that), and pleonasmus (redundancy) Burton must plead guilty. But to Burton the teacher these might not look like such serious vices. Repetition is necessary for an audience; if the message does not get through by one set of words, perhaps another will do. And part of the appeal of Burton's vivacity and gusto lies in his including so much: it can be a source of interest just to see how he can vary the same topic the next time around.

Figures of repetition occur. Alliteration, the "only one of the figures of repetition concerned with the repetition of letters only," is present here as it is in everyday conversation. Unlike the euphuists, who would sell their souls for a similar sound, Burton uses many alliterative proverbial tags, "kiss and coll," "jokes and jests," as well as more subtle alliterative bindings, chiefly within the catalogs. The list of Papal frippery earlier showed how the

letter b linked ideas together. Burton's anaphoric list beginning "To see . . ." in "Democritus Junior to the Reader" is the longest sustained form of this figure that I have ever found. But apart from the other set piece, the "Antiparody" on the joys of marriage, he uses this hardly at all. Anaphora seems to show too much previous planning, too little regard for ideas. Much the same conclusion applies to the other forms of repetition, epistrophe and symploce. Climax, or gradatio, is not as common as it might seem. The act of judging the importance of a series Burton leaves to the reader who is wheeling his way through the copious lists. Polyptoton, the translacer, appears in "I have mingled sacred with profane, but I hope not profaned," but it is not too common. Epizeuxis, the repetition of words with no others between he reserves for moments of heightening: "On me! On me! Here am I who did the deed," appears in the last paragraph of the book.<sup>1</sup>

Puttenham and Peacham thought, as we do, that the figures of repetition have not merely a "musical" purpose to please the ear but also a function in emphasizing ideas and moving the mind. The fact that Burton uses many kinds of repetition but, unlike Johnson or Lyly,

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<sup>1</sup>For information concerning terminology of the rhetorical figures dealt with here I am indebted to Sister Miriam Joseph, Rhetoric in Shakespeare's Time, pp. 293-307.

does not make a structural principle of them is, I think, important. For some key notions--Anglo-Saxon tags embodying "mother wit," man as "the marvel of marvels" yet "a fox, a dog, a hog"--he chooses words for the blending of sound and sense. But more often than not, he forces the reader to connect the ideas. He will prepare the way out but the reader must create the rest.

In sum, Burton both respects and uses words and word-groups to transmit ideas from his mind to the mind of his reader. That he dwells so frequently upon concrete and familiar things helps him communicate the texture of the experience. He brings to bear colloquial and onomatopoeic diction and images upon the matter he wishes to transmit; they relay ideas and emotions to the reader. One quality of Burton's is his clarity; we are rarely in doubt about what he is saying, or feeling; he has the ability to choose individual words which capture precise ideas. In addition, sound and rhythm mediate--sometimes almost kinesthetically--between speaker and audience. At times the rhythm of a certain passage will be almost mimetic; he will show us as well as tell us the nature of an experience so that we, too, can come close to experiencing it. For instance, the awkward, mumbling rhythm of the passage beginning "A Sermon at St. Paul's Cross, a Sermon . . ." quoted previously captures for us his acute boredom with the glut of publications. Renaissance

rhetoricians helped provide a wealth of different kinds of rhythmical patterns, codified in the manuals of figures and expressive of many possibilities. The rhythmic snap of the isocolon "After benching, then comes wenching," the intentional roughness of the brachylogic catalogues help us sense and feel the ideas, intellectually and even physically, that he wants us to know. And within larger contexts Burton uses words to penetrate our minds. The kinds of connections, whether loose or tight--forcing us to draw conclusions, to see things new--accomplish his purpose. The various kinds of combinations, abstract set against concrete so that one realm reflects another, the controlling metaphors, the consciously irregular figures which break up our expectations; all these make us active participants in the reading. By choosing the words, images, and figures that he does, Robert Burton causes us to think and feel with him.



## CHAPTER V

### THE SENTENCE

So much has been written about the characteristics of the Senecan Style, about its relation to a whole frame of mind, that a student of Seventeenth-Century style begins to feel that the tools of analysis have already been forged. Such, I believe, is not entirely so. Although it will be apparent that many pages of this chapter are indebted to Morris Croll, I must submit that his descriptions of the forms of the Seventeenth-Century sentence assume too much. He is, of course, right when he says that the Baroque period and its predecessors, in attempting to transmute the Latin period into English, obviated the necessity to judge these prose units by standards of English grammatical "correctness." But the Latin period, bulking large with its complex structure and hierarchies of clauses, was still formed upon a clear structural basis: subjects acted or were acted upon; they could act upon other objects. Of course a perceivable structure does not automatically imply "correctness," but to characterize a sentence as a random collection of members unrelated to a central "skeleton" seems quite wrong. We could

produce a sentence of Burton's, chosen at random, to show that it is quite obviously a "fragment," lacking both correctness and normal structure and therefore a typical Senecan word-group, but that, too, would fail to take into account its surroundings, where it takes on clearer meaning because of the structure of ideas and language. These, then, will be two principles upon which I will examine Burton, two principles upon which I depart somewhat from Croll: first, that any sentence must be looked at in context, where its participation in larger patterns of meaning and grammatical structure will be clear; and, second, that Croll's insistence that the Senecans rejected grammatical discipline does not mean they were as licentious as they might appear: we realize the effect of the departures from the standard if we know what the standard is.

Where we can look to find a definition of the formal bases of the English sentence? In this century, linguists like Charles Fries and Noam Chomsky are attempting by mathematics and machine to do just this. Their first task has been to tear down; they chide us for so long accepting patently absurd statements such as "A sentence is a group of words expressing a complete thought." What they now submit is a more accurate definition, based upon a structure of forms rather than meaning and far more

*Continued on the next page*

accurately described, still seems hardly new. The generating "kernel sentence," built of a subject phrase and verb phrase, we have met before, though calling it by other names--"skeleton," "subject-predicate combination," for instance.

Still, the kernel sentence, with its validity bolstered by charts and statistics, gives us a place to begin. It is interesting, I think, that Fries shows that this structure pervades even everyday conversation, elliptical though it may be. His The Structure of English draws its conclusions from thousands of conversations in English made within recent years.<sup>1</sup> Though obviously limited in space and time, his discoveries would not necessarily disallow the contention that the structure is common to utterances in English made in times wide apart. And even if it is true that the kinds of sentence that Fries works with are extremely simple, rarely if ever reaching the structural complexity that we find in most literature, that very simplicity provides us with a basic pattern that can be varied in an infinite number of ways. If style-study means analyzing an author's manipulation of the forms of his language as well as his departures from the norms, then surely the linguists' kernel sentence gives us a starting place.

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Carpenter Fries, The Structure of English: An Introduction to the Construction of English Sentences (New York, 1952).

Yet a study of style should not be merely a description of an author's basic sentence kernels and their transformations into passive and modifying constructions--although that is certainly necessary for a complete study. Two limitations are bound up in this sort of approach: first, it can recapitulate the obvious (obviously there are only a limited number of ways in which the passive can be generated from a given kind of verb) and thus waste time; second, a "scientific" description, valuable for a correct description of the language, nonetheless seems to imply that the emotional effect of a certain word or phrase is irrelevant. And such effects, impressionistic and intuitive as they may be, are central to the study of style and of literature in general. I do not mean to imply that form and effect are mutually exclusive; in fact, one helps to create the other. But I do mean to say that in this study, both dispassionate grammatical description and emotional impression will be used to attempt to define Burton's expressive system. "Scientifically," it may seem absurd to say that a sentence omitting conjunctions can cause a mood of abruptness; considered in its emotional context, such a sentence may substantiate that impression.

But a problem brought up earlier still remains unanswered. In the Anatomy, a great number of word-groups are punctuated like sentences but are upon examination what we would call sentence fragments. A catalog, a verb phrase, a noun phrase may stand alone, lacking syntactic completion. Of course we could explain away criticisms of his poor grammar as niggling comments made in ignorance of the fact that Burton wrote before the Eighteenth-Century impulse toward regularization of grammar, that the older rhetorical tradition accepted far less rule-ridden groups of words as acceptable periods. Yet that kind of explanation is rather too cavalier. For one thing, even though he wrote in English, Burton knew the stringent requirements of Latin grammar as to subject, object, and predicate. To a trained ear, part of the power of a fragment, or of a nonparallel verb phrase, depends upon its departure from the established pattern. Though stretched out or jammed together, the syntactical parts of Burton's sentences presuppose a basic pattern.

To define Burton's sentences as groups of words lacking grammatical order located between a capital letter and a period is then wrong. And to say that his sentences are ordered groups

of words is likewise too simple-minded: some kind of ordering principle can be claimed for even a line of gibberish. We might then define Burton's sentences as meaningful groups of words. They gain their meaning from two sources: first, from the context. It is doubtful that a group of words such as "Vow virginity, talk of holiness, and yet a notorious bawd . . ." a "fragment" quoted in the preceding chapter, would fail to convey meaning to anyone. Second, they gain meaning from their syntactical surroundings: the hypocrites named earlier in that paragraph serve as the subject for the verbs in this "fragment." The kernel is present, but it is exploded. We might argue from analogy here. Jean Rousset has contended that "a baroque facade is a Renaissance facade reflected in shimmering water."<sup>1</sup> If the clear order and logical relationships that characterize early Renaissance design are broken into Baroque patterns, then we might say that the Baroque prose of Robert Burton expands and seems to fracture the norms of English syntax. But behind the apparent disorder is an unmistakable framework of subjects, actions, and complements which gives form to the syntax and informs the reader.

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<sup>1</sup> Joan Webber, Contrary Music: The Prose Style of John Donne (Madison, 1963), p. 29.

We can make allowance for the fact that the forms of the rhetorical period do not have to obey the strictures of "correctness" that schoolbooks demand, but we can also see that the form of the Baroque sentence also presupposes syntactic norms common to the English sentence. The next problem is to see what shape Burton's sentences take. There are many: we can find very short simple sentences containing one subject and one verb, sentences which could by themselves serve as textbook examples of a kernel: "Thou thyself art the subject of my discourse." Although Burton eschews euphuistic fanciness, we can find elaborately pointed compound and complex sentences: "I am not poor, I am not rich, nothing's here but nothing's lacking, I have little, I want nothing: all my treasure is in Minerva's tower."<sup>1</sup>

Only rarely do we find the Ciceronian period, the circular sentence. Instead, the characteristic shape of Burton's sentences is what Croll calls the typical Senecan chain: one idea leads to the next, which leads to the next.<sup>2</sup> But the order is rarely the order of the syllogism or the order which syntactic ligatures such as despite or nonetheless provide. Instead, the connection is usually

<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Morris Croll, "The Baroque Style in Prose," pp. 423-434.

"associational"--and often we must act quickly to make those associations with Burton. A typical Senecan chain takes this form: "Look how nightingales sang of old, cocks crowed, kine lowed, sheep bleated, sparrows chirped, dogs barked, so they do still; we keep our madness still, play the fools still, the play's not finished yet, we are of the same humours and inclinations as our predecessors were, you shall find us all alike, much at one, we and our sons, and so shall our posterity continue to the last."<sup>1</sup>

The whole sentence is an argument for the everlastingness of folly: the relation between the animal noises and human madness is effective. Once he has brought the animals before our eyes and ears in the first half, he changes to human weakness. But there is a connection: The unchanging acts of bleating and chirping suggest the permanence of man's madness. The first member after the stronger break of the semicolon is a statement which sums up the following: "We keep our madness still," the last word meaning yet, contrasting with the of old in the first part of the sentence and tying in with the yet of "the play's not finished yet!" as well as other verbs in the present tense. He begins the process of covering all possible implications of that idea with "play the fools," a phrase which links by way of

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<sup>1</sup> Burton, p. 43.



grammatical shift to play as a drama metaphor in the next. The longest member of all, bringing in the Latin polysyllables inclinations and predecessors, draws out the idea and points toward the word sons, which makes concrete the implications of still in the first member. By relaying this idea into the future, Burton has made an even stronger statement: there is no permanent cure for madness. He ends this rhythmic last member on a masculine beat; he ends the series of inclusive abstractions with the emotionally "loaded" term last. For the "shape" of this sentence Croll's metaphor of the chain does not seem as satisfactory as that of a spiral; he always returns to the same idea, but shows that this idea relates to many realms, to the physical setting of dogs and sparrows and, finally and frighteningly, to last things.

When we consider the "shapes" of Burton's sentences, then, we must keep in mind the relation between his syntactic structures and those which are the bases for the English language. We must be aware of the tensions between the tradition and the individual talent. Going beyond the simple kernel, we must consider his use of more complex forms, of the kinds of clauses and total patterns in which he invests his thought. The central part of this chapter, therefore, will assess more carefully

the kinds of complex sentences found in the Anatomy. But after these preliminary distinctions, and before we look at more characteristic forms, let us consider what Burton and those in his tradition thought a sentence could do.

To answer this question we should return to some of the traditional beliefs examined in Chapter II: a sentence, as an ordered segment of language, can do what the language can do. And here we must remember that Burton wrote before the break, before Dryden damned the metaphysicals, before Sprat made his plea for a closer route to truth by way of a simpler language. Though changes were in the air, Burton participated in an older view of the power of language. We might call this view more primitive, if primitive implies a magical bond between name and thing named.<sup>1</sup> We might call the view far more exalting, since it empowers man to reach the universal by way of language.

Language, then, could bind man more closely to the world outside him. When poets compared their veins to rivers, their hair to vegetation, they were exemplifying their testimony to the theory of correspondences. And the correspondences were not

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<sup>1</sup> See Ernst Cassirer, Language and Myth (New York, 1946).

mere fancy. Language, numbers--systems of symbols--really could help man express and apprehend the world. It is easy to explain away Sir Thomas Browne's joyous affirmation of order in the universe because of repeated quincunxes as the game of a man fuddled with cabalism, but that would be wrong. What is important here is the conception that his quincunx-hunting exemplifies: that words were real things, that they could represent the world correctly, and that through their efficacious power man could know not just sentient, animal, or rational objects but could hope to achieve knowledge of universal and supra-rational truths.

Furthermore, that universe is magnificently ordered. But because man fell, sinning and thus disordering himself both physically and mentally, he is not always able to perceive those fragments of order within himself, the microcosm. The order of language, the harmony of a structure of symbols, was therefore a God-given gift enabling man to rise again. In one way, of course, the simple fact that a sentence is built upon a clear structure could remind man of the potential order pervading the cosmos. And when individual statements were fused together in a work of art man had an even stronger reminder that man could master the disorder within and, creating an artifice of

beauty and harmony, remind others of the inherent--and possible--order in the cosmos. A work of art could metaphorize artistic and theological conceptions.

Lying behind this set of beliefs is the Christian mythic framework of the descent from and the ascent toward Eden. Burton and those having like minds were no Pollyannas, assuming that the act of saying something would suffice to express truth. Burton was just as conscious as was T. S. Eliot many years later that words will not stay in place, that they continually slip and slide. One reason is that, unlike Adam, who could name animals properly in Eden because he knew their essential qualities, fallen man has traveled father away from the illuminating light of early truth. Burton certainly places himself with the Ancients in this respect: one reason for returning to ancient texts is that they were composed when man's mind was clearer, less diseased. Many fell into melancholia because of this belief that they were living on the shores of a declining world. In a tone of world-weariness Burton admits that "we can say nothing but what hath been said, the composition and method is ours only, & shows a Scholar."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 20.

But that same "composition and method," that same slippery tool language, could help man arrive at an Eden reborn in the wilderness. Returning not only to the content but to the forms of thought of the ancients, man could control his inner chaos. Training and experience in rhetoric could help man slough off error in thinking and wrestle toward the regained garden. Though fallen, man's mind and body could cooperate: Burton himself has outlined the theories of faculty psychology by which man takes in knowledge through the senses and apprehends it eventually by the varied powers of the understanding. We may question whether the mind can arrive at the sort of knowledge Burton deemed possible, but the important thing in considering his view of style is to remember that he, in theory at least, thought that man could apprehend the divine.

Assuming such apprehension could be reached, what was the process through which man did so? Especially relevant for a study of Burton's style is the notion that the form of the sentence was the key to knowledge of the truth. Because of the amount of work that has been done describing the skirmishes and pitched battles of the Senecan-Ciceronian controversies, I will not repeat the findings of Morris Croll, George Williamson, K. G. Hamilton, Erich Auerbach, and others who have addressed themselves to this problem.

Suffice it to say that the controversy over style in the early part of the century was a controversy having implications for not merely the personal choice of style, idiosyncratic as that may seem, but one which penetrated into chief philosophical and theological problems of the day. Croll would consider this battle as a difference that is always with us; he traces the origins back to early Greece, where the strife over the smooth oratorical style and the sinewy essay style was already apparent.<sup>1</sup>

A perennial manifestation of the human mind this may be, but in the Seventeenth Century the choice between harmonious Asiatic and abrupt Attic styles began to imply quite different ways of looking at the world and man's place in it. Burton's contemporaries would call those of the oratorical, or Asiatic, persuasion, by the name Ciceronian--meaning not so much to demean Cicero as his followers. The qualities of this style can be seen in this quotation from Hooker:

The light would never be so acceptable, were it not for that usual intercourse of darkness. Too much honey doth turn to gall; and too much joy even spiritually would make us wantons. Happier a great deal is that man's case, whose soul by

<sup>1</sup>Morris Croll, "'Attic Prose' in the Seventeenth Century," 79-128.

Richard Hooker, *The Works of That Learned and Judicious Divine Mr. Richard Hooker*, ed. John Leslie (Oxford, 1830), I, Pt. II, 390. Cited in Ronald Peckham, *Times and Structures in Hooker's "Tale of a Tub"* (New Haven, 1940), pp. 9, 10.

inward desolation is humbled, than he whose heart is through abundance of spiritual delight lifted up and exalted above measure. Better it is sometimes to go down into the pit with him, who, beholding darkness, and bewailing the loss of inward joy and consolation, crieth from the bottom of the lowest hell, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" than continually to walk arm in arm with angels, to sit as it were in Abraham's bosom, and to have no thought, no cogitation, but "I thank my God it is not with me as it is with other men." No, God will have them that shall walk in light to feel now and then what it is to sit in the shadow of death. A grieved spirit therefore is no argument of a faithless mind.<sup>1</sup>

In total effect, the passage seems to be a clear conclusion about a truth already arrived at. The progress of the ideas and images is logical and ordered; the motif of honey and gall sets up the later contrast between the pits of hell and Abraham's bosom. Further, although the subject deals with a mental struggle, the effect is of surprising ease: the speaker has already been there; we see him not struggling through to the conclusion but magistrally reporting his conclusions to others. Sentence structure is almost geometrically regular: the antimetabole in the first sentence could be diagrammed in the shape of an X; the progress of beholding-bewailing,-to walk-to sit-to have rises from a literal hell to the ranks of the angels in almost syllabically equal steps. The

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<sup>1</sup>Richard Hooker, The Works of That Learned and Judicious Divine Mr. Richard Hooker, ed. John Keble (Oxford, 1836), 3, Pt. II, 590. Quoted in Ronald Paulson, Theme and Structure in Swift's "Tale of a Tub" (New Haven, 1960), pp. 9, 10.

final block set upon this edifice sums up what went before by an abstraction. Although the sentence is antithetic, there is a curious lack of tension. This is the style that Croll and Williamson associate with a mind sure of itself, sure of its place in the universe, sure that the regularity of the syntax testifies to the divine rule within and without man.

The other order has been called by several names--"anti-Ciceronian," "scientific," "baroque," "Senecan." It is this last term that I shall use because it implies that the appearance of the style was not founded for the primarily negative reason of rebelling against something but that as a style it has its own eponymous hero and positive set of values and characteristics. For a definition of that style I will turn not to George Williamson, whose The Senecan Amble is the most complete study of manifestations of the style which we call curt, but rather to Croll. Although he here first names the style by both "anti-Ciceronian" and "baroque," he is talking about those qualities of mind that can also be called by the name Senecan. The philosophical and artistic creed of the practitioners of this style is quite different from the Ciceronian sureness. "Their purpose was to portray, not a thought, but a mind thinking":



They knew that an idea separated from the experiencing of it is not the idea that was experienced. The ardor of its conception in the mind is a necessary part of its truth; and unless it can be conveyed to another mind in something of the form of its occurrence, either it has changed into some other idea or it has ceased to be an idea, to have any existence save a verbal one. It was the latter fate that happened to it, they believed, in the Ciceronian periods of the Sixteenth-Century Latin rhetoricians. The successive processes of revision to which these periods had been submitted had removed them from reality by just so many steps. For themselves, they preferred to present the truth in a less concocted form, and deliberately chose as the moment of expression that in which the idea first clearly objectifies itself in the mind, in which, therefore, each of its parts still preserves its own peculiar emphasis and an independent vigor of its own--in brief, the moment in which truth is still imagined.<sup>1</sup>

How can we recognize these "Caesar's soldiers" of sentences?

In the curt Senecan, the members are short, the progression of thought imaginative rather than logical. Deliberate asymmetry is cultivated by striking differences in form, by sudden shifts between literal and metaphoric statements, and by the omission of syntactic ligatures.<sup>2</sup> The loose period operates in much the same way: the chief difference Croll sees is in the length of the members and a greater use of syntactic ligatures--although they are not

<sup>1</sup>Croll, "Baroque," pp. 430, 431.

<sup>2</sup>Croll, "Baroque," pp. 435, 436.

always strictly logical links. A therefore may add on an idea that may be a non sequitur, an and join two quite unrelated things.

It is easy to see how the Senecan style became the style favored by the Moderns later in the century. If a writer's aim is not to report previously decided dogma but more to report aright the struggle of the mind itself toward truth, he could soon find much more clearly reported the peregrinations of his own mind. The focus can quickly diminish from the prize to the heat of the race. Donne can focus upon both--upon the race and the truth won. And Montaigne, Auerbach believes, illustrates a tendency that was to become far more widespread later: although Montaigne doubtless believed that the truth existed somewhere beyond man, and that man's mind could encompass it, he still preferred to turn inward and depict the progress of his own thought. Whereas Donne's sermons were acts of thought linking himself and his congregation, Montaigne was more peripherally interested in speaking for all of mankind through his own voice. In Montaigne the balance between inner self and transcendent truth is there, but shaky. Later pyrrhonists, realizing the difficulty of knowing truth from the senses and expressing it in writing, could turn to fideism;<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For a more complete discussion of this aspect of the later Seventeenth Century, see Louis Bredvold, The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden: Studies in Some Aspects of Seventeenth-Century Thought (Ann Arbor, 1934, 1956).

others would focus upon the mind itself and refuse to express the supra-natural. *His practices are blended. What I have called is*

Where does Burton fit into these currents and cross currents of change during his century? He reiterates his choice as a member of the party of Seneca--that "superintendent of wit, learning, judgment, learned to a marvel, the best of Greek and Latin writers in Plutarch's opinion: that renowned corrector of vice, as Fabius terms him, and painful omniscious philosopher, that wrote so excellently and admirably well. . . ." <sup>1</sup> To Senecan "flaws" of jumbling things up, accumulation of much, lack of method, lack of form--he pleads guilty. But obviously not all who went by the name Senecan had identical styles; not all held the same views about man and his knowledge of the world.

What I would like to show in this last half of the essay is my contention that Burton blends both old and new, that he was both ancient and modern, probably without realizing it. To do this I will be forced to work from some generalizations that can unquestionably be disproved by a great many particular cases. But, I think, these generalizations will hold true for the majority--or at least what contemporary literary scholarship has identified

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 27.

as the majority. The technique I shall adopt is to show how traditional theory and his practice are blended. What I have decided to consider as the major theories setting forth Burton's traditional conceptions of the world and man's knowledge and expression of it are these: first, the world is unified and language helps bind man to it. Second, in the Christian myth of the descent from and the ascent to Eden we have an explanation of why man's mind limits him but how those limits can be conquered. Third, the act and art of ordering a sentence are metaphors for the cosmic order in which man participates.

To show how these principles have implications for Burton's style I have chosen some traits which occur most often in Burton's style and thus are keys to our seeing what he is about. One can see immediately that certain schemes, certain tropes will be left out. There is precedent for this exclusion. W. K. Wimsatt has analyzed the style of Samuel Johnson not by attempting to cover everything but, rather, characteristic devices: parallelism, antithesis, and "philosophic" diction. Jonas Barish has argued that in seeing Lyly's use of one figure--antithesis--not as ornament but as a structural principle we can see a more profound artist than we earlier imagined. Leo Spitzer, in fact, believes that it is from the

University Library, 321 (1957), 55-56, *Walt Whitman, The Poet as*  
*of Romantic Style.*

unique, the unusual departure from normal language that style-study grows.<sup>1</sup>

I have chosen, therefore, to deal with the following devices: first, the structure of the sentences, both loose and curt, and how they move; in addition, the kinds of sentences (here classified according to rhetorical effect--questions, exclamations, and the like). Figures of sound and thought which give inner form to the sentence will be examined for what they contribute to Burton's style. Here the study will concentrate upon juxtaposition, catalogs (congeries, or heaping, or accumulation), antithesis and contrast, repetition, parentheses, Latin tags, and kinds of rhythmic units. A final aspect of his sentence style has to do with "invention", the control exercised by certain kinds of argument, such as analogy and exemplum.

The question remains: how to put the two--view and practice--together? First, let me make clear that I do not want to fall into the trap of causation that I believe Leonard Goldstein and Wylie Sypher fall into.<sup>2</sup> To assume that Burton uses many instances of

<sup>1</sup>See W. K. Wimsatt, The Prose Style of Samuel Johnson; Jonas A. Barish, "The Prose Style of John Lyly"; Sister Claire Eileen Craddock, Style Theories as Found in Stylistic Studies of Romance Scholars (1900-1950) (Washington, D. C., 1952).

<sup>2</sup>Leonard Goldstein, "Science and Literary Style in Robert Burton's 'Centos out of Divers Writers,'" The Journal of the Rutgers University Library, XXI (1957), 55-68; Wylie Sypher, Four Stages of Renaissance Style.

congeries because he accepts the myth of gone Eden would be sheer foolishness. What ultimately causes a writer to prefer the cursus, let us say, to clotted rhythms depends upon too many other causes: the occasion, the audience, the subject, and so on. But the relationship I would like to pursue is not cause-and-effect so much as reflection. A man's own preference for certain forms of thought should have something to do with his own ideas and the general climate of opinion and linguistic habit that he is in sympathy with. We need not say that specific tropes and figures are caused by a certain philosophic system. Antithesis could suffice nicely to express certain key conceptions of both the medieval world picture as well as Newton's universe of balancing forces. Not the one figure but a combination is very likely an answer. A general collocation of stylistic traits can reflect and express a man's view of the world. And that is what I would like to show with Burton.

If a world view reflects a psychological desire--what C. S. Lewis calls "a taste in universes"<sup>1</sup>--then certainly we can see the first principle that we will investigate embodied in Burton's style and aim. That primary conception is that language binds man to the world within and outside him. The fact that Burton would seek

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<sup>1</sup> C. S. Lewis, The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature (Cambridge, England, 1964), p. 222.

to cure his melancholy readers is testimony to his belief that he can work such a cure in language. Artful language can bind man to things and, more importantly, to others so as to form a community. Burton's language would not attempt the same kind of communal binding that the ceremonial, incantatory language of the liturgy would aim for; nonetheless, man can speak, each to each. Finally, as we have seen before, language can lead man to the understanding and apprehension of universals.

Apart from his stated purpose, what implications would this conception have for his choice and use of patterns of language? First, it could control his invention, the kinds of arguments he seeks out. One of the most common is the argument by analogy, in which he sets two disparate circumstances together and causes us to reach the conclusion he would have us reach. Such a technique helps give structure to the section Of Fortune in the first partition. Addressing the unhappy reader, he advises him to consider kings and princes: "Look into their estate, you shall find them to be most encumbered with cares... Scylla-like, they have brave titles, but terrible fits."<sup>1</sup> The reader thus concludes that since the highest of all are not happy, neither should he expect it. In the

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 240.

same passage, the exemplum-analogy technique works not only to make a negative point but to lead the way to positive action: Demosthenes, preferring to be a prisoner over a judge, exemplifies the life of sweet content that all should strive for. In this sentence he does not draw the conclusions himself; rather, he lets the reader do so. Burton presents the analogies, the reader applies them.

This device of making his reader see the right way through an analogy appears in several forms. Demosthenes is here a topos of a wise ancient. Merely invoking his name brings past wisdom into the passage. This also allows him to make concrete the abstract notions. In the same paragraph he deals with the contemptus mundi theme by this effective simile: "Their wealth is brittle, like children's rattles." Again counseling disdain for the foolish seekers of fortune, he metaphorizes "the middle sort of men" as "so many asses to bear burdens."

But this continual citing of correspondences is certainly not limited to Burton or his times; he may have thought the links in the correspondences more firmly cemented than we do, but this does not make the practice unique. Let us then look at the forms of the sentences he develops by this kind of argument.



One variety we might call "mimetic." "For commonly they that, like Sisyphus, roll this restless stone of ambition, are in a perpetual agony, still perplexed, always falling back, silently & sadly, (Lucretius) doubtful, timorous, suspicious, loth to offend in word or deed, still cogging and colloquing, embracing, capping, cringing, applauding, flattering, fleering, visiting, waiting at men's doors, with all affability, counterfeit honesty, and humility."<sup>1</sup>

Here the comparison with Sisyphus sets forth both subject and form for the sentence: The sisyphian tasks of the ambitious engaged in their climb to the heights are reflected in the copious catalog of actions that Burton rolls through the sentence. There is no sense of building to a climax in this sentence--not merely because it is not Ciceronian but because the disorder mirrors the futility of the ambitious. The basic "kernel" is simple: they, the subject, is followed by a wealth of verbs. But although they are together, those verbs, are, perplexed, falling, suggest different kinds of conditions and actions--whose force grows partly from their being placed in one list. This listing enforces the sameness of the degrading actions they must subject themselves to. But within this depressing list of necessary humiliations Burton allows for

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 243.

variety: the ugly sound of "cogging and colloquing" is one aspect, the elegance of the euphuistic homoioteleuton "with all affability, counterfeit honesty, and humility" shows up the hypocrisy of those it describes.

Another kind of sentence developed by a pattern of analogy is one which might seem more simple than the previous. Such a sentence is "As he could find no tree in the wood to hang himself, I can shew no state of life to give content."<sup>1</sup> A reader's first reaction to this sentence is to pass it over as an idea with easy equations: "his" suicidal hunt for a tree is set against "my" failure to show a life of content. A second glance at the sentence shows that the analogy causes us to pull up short, to see the witty mind thinking within this apparently modest two-part sentence. The inability of both searchers remains, but with an unobvious slant: the humor of the man who does not really want to hang himself introduces a humorous disclaiming of Democritus Junior's aim to show his reader the way. Actually, he shows the way--but we must find the direction, carrying out the analogy to its completion, which he does not. The goals the two men seek--the tree and the contentful state of life--are different. Or are they? Burton,

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 241.

an orthodox Christian, here provides a comparison which is witty and serious: la dolce vita might too often be found in the confines of the selva oscura.

Burton's continual analogies and correspondences are made possible because they are traditional metaphors which also reflected scientific truth. Love among the dolphins, which he treats so wittily, could explain certain human experiences. In this respect the reader in the Twentieth Century cannot completely recapture the effect that such arguments could have upon one of Burton's contemporaries. The common reader today would also fail to respond to the persuasive power of such proof. One variety of proof by analogy to which we would especially fail to respond is the sort cited from books, "auctours," from, for example, the topoi of Demosthenes and Sisyphus already cited. Here, too, we must attempt to realize, if we cannot recapture, the earlier faith in authority. One of those habits of the Medieval-Renaissance time that has been discarded, C. S. Lewis writes, is acceptance of proof from older texts. Serious thinkers believed things because they had read about them in books.<sup>1</sup> Books in print as well as that universal and public manuscript of nature could furnish acceptable proof.

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<sup>1</sup>Lewis, p. 94.

Burton's use of analogies and juxtapositions is not simple, however. Depending upon the purpose, he can form such statements to accomplish several effects. We can savor the ironic combinations, the depictions of chaos. We can smile ironically with Burton at the proud little giants and their audience: "If he be a big man, then is he a Sampson, another Hercules; if he pronounce a speech, another Tully or Demosthenes."<sup>1</sup> We can enjoy the "accuracy" of an argument drawn from scientific lore: "It (applause) makes them fat and lean, as frost doth conies." In sum, on nearly every page of Burton we can see his drive to explain, to make us see by citing parallels, proofs, similarities, with material drawn from nature, from books, from common experiences. The flavor may be quaint or frightening, but the impulse is always there: to touch our senses and minds, to make us know.

One reason for the overpowering sense of physical reality in the Anatomy may spring from Burton's conception of the state of the minds of his audience. Accepting the myth of the fall of man, Burton would explain man's lapses from intelligence as the result of Adam's sin (the ultimate cause of melancholy, he makes clear) and, consequently, as something he must reckon and grapple with in attempting to correct man's mind. Man can still learn; data

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Burton, p. 257

can be absorbed through the senses and passed through the common sense, memory, and understanding; but the way to the understanding is perilous.

One of the first ways in which Burton, like any good rhetor, tries to bring back man into the fold is to get his attention, to make him aware that his state is genuinely sinful. One of the most obvious syntactic devices for mirroring this state is the catalog--congeries, or heaping. Continually calling attention to that jumble shop of the world are the great numbers of these lists which yoke together ideas, actions, things, in a glass for the times: "'Tis an ordinary thing with us to account honest, devout, orthodox, divine, religious, plain-dealing men, idiots, asses, that cannot or will not lie and dissemble, shift, flatter, cut the coat according to their cloth, make good bargains, supplant, thrive, fawn upon their patron, practice the usual arts of climbing, duly observe laws, manner, customs, praise openly, defend through thick and thin, give in to opinions, doubt nothing, believe everything, stand everything, blame nothing, and do all the other things which bring promotion and security . . ." Here not just the heaps but also the structure of the sentence enforce the picture of foolishness. If we pass over the words idiots and asses, we fail to get the point: that it is the plain dealers, the good men, who will not do what we do, practice the arts of climbing, seek

promotion and security. The heaping of bad actions almost exhausts the topic; the "squinting" placement of idiots and asses shows at once the unfortunate reception of good men and gives an initial judgment upon the parts of the sentence that follow. The irony works still another way: not only do we account the honest men idiots if they do not dissemble; we could also read the ambiguous structure of the sentence as saying that we account the dissemblers honest men. By a combination of catalog and ambiguous syntax, he presents the chaotic fallen world.

Burton uses several different types of structure within the catalog. The most common is the simple list. When the occasion demands, he can link together collections of other figures. One list especially effective in presenting his conception is composed of antitheses: "He that was a mariner today, was an apothecary tomorrow; a smith one while, a philosopher another, in these games of Pleasure; a king now with his crown, robes, sceptre, attendants, by and by drove a loaded ass before him like a carter, &,"<sup>1</sup> Here the antitheses make precise the present disorder by contrasting past honor and glory against present degradation. And even within the strict form of the antithesis, setting one thing so neatly against another, is Burton able to work still another effect. Still more changes of fickle fortune's wheel are implied in the first member

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<sup>1</sup> Burton, p. 42.

quoted: the mariner was an apothecary tomorrow. These antitheses are not neat discriminations between two alternatives, either one of which may be acceptable; nor are they points of balance between two opposing forces. Instead, Burton's use of contrast is quite clear: past joy has turned to present pain. And one of these worlds should be overcome.

Another way of imitating man's present fallen state is by rhythm--not merely within the sentence but within predominant patterns controlling entire paragraphs. Perhaps the most obvious example of this occurs on the first page of the first partition, which Burton begins with an exalted paean in honor of "Man, the most excellent and noble creature of the World." In the first paragraph sound patterns and careful attention to syllables continue to achieve such spacious rhythms and haunting sounds as "far surpassing all the rest, not in body only, but in soul" and "that immortal and incorporeal substance, with all the faculties and powers belonging unto it." After the spacious treatment of man's potentiality, the sense and rhythm are varied in the next paragraph when he deals with man's present reality. The syntax becomes more clogged with disruptive exclamations ("O pitiful change!") and parentheses so that the sentence, too, falls into the vortex with man, who is now referred to by the ugly sounds and clotted monosyllables "a fox, a dog, a hog, what not?"

And often the progress of the ideas and of the sentences themselves can be characterized by abrupt curttness, mirroring the subject. In a passage on man's miseries in the first partition, listing the creatures who are "at deadly feud with men" he includes "Lions, wolves, bears, &c. some with hoofs, horns, tusks, teeth, nails. How many noxious serpents and venomous creatures . . . How many pernicious fishes, plants, gums, fruits, seeds, flowers & could I reckon up on a sudden . . . Some make mention of a thousand several poisons: but these are but trifles in respect. The greatest enemy to man is man, who by the Devil's instigation is still ready to do mischief, his own executioner, a wolf, a Devil to himself and others."<sup>1</sup> Here I am referring to abruptness in two senses: first, by some instances of disorderly syntax: "His own executioner" is in very loose apposition with the verbs following, although the idea is clear. More importantly, the ideas are developed in a curt fashion. He foils our expectation. At first we expect to hear of enemies outside; without a transitional phrase, he leaps to the climax. Man is his own greatest enemy.

Although man brought his fallen state upon himself, he still has glimmerings of the divine within him. Through the right use of reason

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 117.



he can regain the garden. This concern for his readers, this seeing himself as a guide along the way, is primary among Burton's aims in the Anatomy. He must help man escape from his thralldom. Commitment to the Senecan style is part of this purpose in helping his audience find their way out of the maze. Let us now look at characteristic patterns within the sentence, kinds of sentences, and larger units comprised of several sentences by which Burton fuses technique and aim.

Within the Anatomy one of the most obvious traits is his repetition. He will use a simile several times; phrases and information reappear. In some ways this may look like poor planning, but Burton requests sympathy at the first by his revealing that he had no amanuenses to help him lick the book into shape. But these repetitions serve a purpose. I do not believe that repetitions of key phrases assume in this book almost a life of their own as similar motifs might do in a shorter poem or play, like the motifs of the naked babe and the cloak of manliness in Macbeth, for instance. For one reason, the book is too long: it cannot be grasped in one sitting. It is that very length that gives us part of the reason for the repetitions, therefore: since it cannot be read at once but picked up and read from time to time, these repetitions do not detract from the book as a whole but rather strike familiar chords so that

we will remember other related parts of the book. A more important function is this: Burton sees himself as a teacher, one who will teach the audience by whatever way he can. Since he is aware that most of us require several repetitions before we ever learn anything well, he does not fear to repeat, repeat, repeat.

It is not the repeated motifs that are our major concern here so much as the device of repetition, or accumulation, within the sentence. Here the important difference is not wholly the syntactical form into which the ideas are cast but the purpose to which they are put. The simplest, least "artful" form is to relay information, as when he lists causes and cures, diets and medicines: "Hyssop, Origan, Pennyroyal, Thyme, Mustard... Pellitory, Pepper, Ginger, & c." He applies the baroque principle of exhaustion in his treatment of such matters; surely there is no other remedy for "griping of the guts," no other purge he has left unlisted. Yet often we notice a curious point: the lists of one authority can cancel another out. Galen may abhor bugloss, Hercules de Saxonia swear by it. Often, too, the same meat and drink may be both cause and cure. How is the reader to take these contradictions? Very likely the way Burton intends them. First, he cannot be so naïve as not to see that his advice contradicts itself largely because

his relied-upon authorities do. He must then have included contradictory information for a purpose: to cover the topic exhaustively, to report that all authorities have said. That all points do not square, it seems to me, fulfills several aims, somewhat contradictory themselves: first, humor; second, realism (one man's meat is another man's poison); and third, instruction. He does not prescribe for every reader but gives him the information to allow him to make up his mind.

As for other examples of accumulation, we usually do not see contradiction but expansion of as many possibilities as the topic can suggest to him in this hunger for completeness. When he works out a metaphor, for instance, he both breaks up and links together the patterns he has started. In speaking of the hypocritical professors he says, "For my part, let them pretend what zeal they will, counterfeit religion, blear the world's eyes, bombast themselves, and stuff out their greatness with Church spoils, shine like so many Peacocks."<sup>1</sup> In this we can justify the metaphors as all suggesting the idea of falseness, of the difference between inside and outside, but they do not interact upon each other in the extremely tight way that the parts of the compass image in Donne's "Valediction" do, for example.

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 271.

Counterfeit and spoils might seem to relate, but not really: the Church spoils are not false. With bombast and stuff out their greatness we begin to get a Drydenian image of a huge bulk full of nothing and signifying nothing--but then he switches to the vanity of Peacocks. This switch is more apparent than real, however. Ending upon this visual emblem of pride, we reach the most serious sin of all. And this creature, too, stuffs out its greatness with a beautiful expanse of fragile feathers. The bleared eyes and the eye-like markings on the Peacock are related somewhat; it is true that the Peacock's eyes cannot dim the sight of others, but, unseeing, they show a related value of moral blindness. Burton "breaks up" metaphors and then ties them together again in new ways.

The broken sentence is characteristic of Burton in general in other ways, too. He achieves his characteristic jaggedness of structure within the sentence by a number of devices which I would like now to investigate. One device that we have considered before is the parenthesis, which he uses to break up the sentence for several purposes. Here is one: "Mistake me not (I say again) O you of Patrician blood..."<sup>1</sup> He interrupts the formal language of the diatribe to inject a simple personal statement. However, the

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, P. 275.

breaking accomplishes several things: it reminds the audience of the simple goodness of the vir bonus speaking and sets him against the proud patricians; and it allies us, to whom the curtain has been drawn back, with the angry good man speaking. It is then not so much a breaking as an expansion of the scenes to include an awareness of all the possible speakers and readers of the passage: the apparent audience the patricians as well as the real audience us, whom the speaker draws in with an "aside" which is an expansive gesture as we see him addressing the great once more.<sup>1</sup>

Another parenthetic pattern which breaks apart the main idea of the stream of the sentence can be seen in this example: "If they [ the patricians again] read a book at any time (if they have any leisure from hunting, drinking, dicing, drabbing) 'tis an English Chronicle, Sir Huon of Bordeaux, Amadis de Gaul, & c..." On the point of verve and flair, it is difficult to tell which is the more important part--and perhaps that is part of Burton's purpose: to show that the dicing and drabbing reported in the sardonic parentheses outweigh the patricians' concern with intellectual matters with even the escape literature they pick up when they do read. As we saw before, these breaks can often provide a contrapuntal

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<sup>1</sup> Walker Gibson, "Authors, Speakers, Readers, and Mock Readers," in Form and Thought in Prose, ed. Wilfred Stone and Robert Hoopes (New York, 1960), pp. 70-76.

background for the main course of the paragraph. We must watch against carrying the musical metaphor too far, however: the parentheses are frequent, but they are not regular. And although they temporarily disrupt the flow of the sentence, that disruption is often as important, if not more so, than the sentence it is interrupting: it can expand the scene, it can bring the real reader and the real speaker together.

Other interrupters, we can say in brief, contribute to the sense of gusto, humor, or indignation in the Anatomy. We are carried along with sudden expletives like "By Jupiter!" and with Democritus Junior's donning still other masks as he identifies with his current subject. For instance, after mentioning "St. Ambrose his brother's death" he leaps, without benefit of preparation or quotation marks, into this set-piece, "Can I ever recall thee without tears? O bitter days! O nights of woe!"

At times the Latin phrases function as interrupters in the sentence: "...but the Emperor still, Cralis amicitiam magni faciens, because he was a great Prince..."<sup>1</sup> Reading the translations, we do not begin to get the effect that Burton's audience did--the fit audience, surely, who could savor the quotation itself as well as

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Burton, The Anatomy of Melancholy, ed. A. R. Shilleto (London, 1893), III, 277.

its aptness for Burton's placement of it in his work--in the same way that one reads certain lines of Eliot's Waste Land and savors the joining of two worlds.

To assess Burton's use of Latin quotations would require another book; devoting this study to his style in English, I will leave that task to another. His uses of Latin do seem to fall into certain patterns, however. First, he uses terms as a modern writer of scientific texts would--to avoid possible ambiguity over terms by citing the generic Latin. He uses this technique most frequently in the scientific digressions upon the anatomy or upon the workings of the mind. At times he will use Latin quotations to enforce an English sentence: "The Boetians in Greece were dull and heavy, Crassi Boeoti, by reason of a foggy air in which they lived, Boeoteum in crasso juranes aere natum, (HORACE)."<sup>1</sup> In such a sentence he parallels and amplifies his statement with proof from the authorities; Latin is the capstone. The great bulk of the Latin he quotes directly is comprised of snatches of quotations, with nuances meaningful to Burton and his fit audience but unfortunately missed by the all-too-common reader today lacking Burton's

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, Shilleto, ed., II, 70.

classical training. Still, we have the sense that his ideas are given extension in space and time by the quotations he seems to relish so much. Often a single quotation, perhaps because it is familiar but, more likely, because it is so well chosen, will participate in the general sense of the passage, will even be an "objective correlative." Such a quotation appears at the last part of the Digression of the Air, where, after traveling throughout the cosmos, he, the "melancholy spaniel," must "come down and follow": "my game is sprung. There is nothing new under the sun." With this quotation from Ecclesiastes he is able to capture a mood of beautiful melancholy and world-weariness partly because of what he says and partly because of the mood evoked by the simple mention of the Preacher. And Burton's placement of the quotation helps us see not only his emotional range but his philosophical range, also. He allies himself with the ancients, for the world is wearing on; after this "modern" breath-taking triphrough the cosmos he concludes that man really should leave such speculation to God. And he is able to show that exploration is still rather futile: when one has seen all, he will conclude with the Preacher that there is nothing new under the sun.

Other ways that we can see Burton's attempt to speak to his audience through stylistic devices are in the kinds of statements



he chooses. One of these, which interrupts the sentence in order to break through to the reader, is the question. He does not always use the most obvious varieties. After his disquisition upon the diseases of young women he rouses himself with a series: "But where am I? Into what subject have I rushed? What have I to do with Nuns, Maids, Virgins, Widows?"<sup>1</sup> Here the effect is comic as the crusty old bachelor shakes himself out of a subject he should not be discussing in the first place. The effect upon the audience is complex. We laugh with him as we see him waking, like Christopher Sly, from a place he does not belong. But the very questioning of himself which he exhibits for the audience causes us to answer-- especially after his remarkably complete treatment of the matter-- that ill-equipped by profession he may be, but knowing as a man he is.

At other times the question simply reinforces material he has just covered--a common teaching device--or it asks, without answering, for a conclusion he would want the reader to reach on his own. An example of the latter is, "Who sees not a great difference between Surrey, Sussex, and Romney Marsh, the Wolds in Lincolnshire, and the Fens?"<sup>2</sup> The conclusion he does not need to state.

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 356.

<sup>2</sup>Burton, p. 431

Another kind of statement in which his energy finds its best outlet is the exclamation, frequently from Latin, like those quoted. These outpourings appear in all parts of the book; they vary from very short sparks--"O pitiful change!" And "Divine Opticks!"--to extended exclamations such as the following, where Democritus Junior is the stage manager: "Happiness to bride and groom! God give them joy together! Hymen, lead the wedding home, Hymen Hymenaeus, come!"<sup>1</sup> These concentrations of emotion link the speaker and the audience together.

Burton is also able to sway us to his point of view, flattering us that we not only think but feel about things in the same way, by including these sentences that do not reach a conclusion logically but spill out emotional reactions to what must be self-evident humors or horrors. We cannot help being swept up by Burton's emotion over the wasted lives in the Popish monasteries--"they are so furiously inclined, urgently carried, and sometimes precipitated, even irresistibly led, to the prejudice of their souls' health, and good estate of body and mind!"<sup>2</sup>--even if we sympathize with the life of a religious.

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 819.

<sup>2</sup>Burton, p. 357.

Just as in everyday conversation, the most common kind of sentence that Burton uses is the declarative statement, a group of words which sets forth a series of conditions, which imply a conclusion or which reach a conclusion within the confines of the sentence itself. It is this "mind-thinking" sentence that is one of the major principles of Burton's and his fellow Senecans' styles. Let us consider some of the most characteristic .

Although a glance at the Anatomy would seem to prove the usual contention that he uses the loose Senecan period almost exclusively, such a conclusion would not be completely correct. He can be as curt as Bacon when he wants, as in this sentence: "I resolve, if you like not my writing, go read something else, I do not much esteem they censure, take thy course, 'tis not as thou wilt, nor as I will. . . ." <sup>1</sup> It must be admitted that the curtness depends from the subject and attitude as much as the syntax and the context. This passage appears in an early part of the Anatomy where he is replying with that surly Dutch Host mentioned earlier: "If you do not like this, get you to another Inn." Granted that the tone is curt, the structure is, too. All the members are short. They are connected by no mark of punctuation stronger or more

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 22

flexible than the comma. The first part does have a logical relationship given by the if, but the I resolve is an arbitrary introduction. In the second sentence the connections are loose; we must make the connections--and the jumps--because there are certainly no pointers like rather or and yet to help us along. And here again the relations are arbitrary. Instead of reasoning with that supposed disapproving audience, he implies that the only way out, if the two are not of like minds, is for the other man to leave. The shifting kinds of verbs cause us to pull up short and reach each differently. Some verbs (I resolve, I do not much esteem) apply to I. Other verbs (go read, take th y course) direct you; another ('tis not as thou wilt) sets forth a general condition. Despite the careful "roughening" of the syntax, Burton makes a subtle alliterative tag as he works with the gap between the speaker and reader.

The pair Thou wilt and I will seems to separate the two ironically by describing their wishes in almost identical words. However, it also forces them back together again. We see the two as somewhat like-minded when the speaker agrees that the book is not what he would have wished it, either.

This kind of curttness is in some ways quite antithetic to his aim to speak to all, although obscurity might fulfill another

chief aim--to make the reader an active participant. That aim seems hardly met in such an obscure sentence as this one, however: "That the belly is hard, wind is a cause, and of that leaping in many parts."<sup>1</sup> The information is hardly worth the struggle to reach it. I have included this specimen of obscurity, however, because it epitomizes the operation of a curt period. Later we will see some of the loose periods which are formed upon a similar basis but which are far more successful

This sentence moves by jerks and starts. It begins clearly enough with a noun clause which makes sense and which we assume will be the subject or object of the ensuing period. In the next member we have abruptly injected both verb and a new subject, wind. Even if we were to turn the inverted sentence around and read it "Wind is a cause that the belly is hard," we would still not have a statement that we, at least, would consider normal. Causes are usually followed by conditions or qualities, such as hardness or discomfort, not the kind of structure that the noun clause takes. But we would not even make that change because of the tagged-on "and of that leaping in many parts." Here wind is pulled two ways--not only as the cause of the hardness of the belly, but also the

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 361.

cause of that leaping in many parts. Sometimes a noun can provide the fulcrum to balance two ideas. But such sentences are smooth when the syntax cooperates. Here, because the first and last members are different, and because the and of that leaping implies a parallelism that is not there, the middle clause is pulled apart. We can understand the meaning, but only after recasting the ideas. And we have not reached anything genuinely new in the process. Obscurity here is based upon irregularities we see elsewhere in Burton--reliance upon the quick connections provided by the comma, quick shifts in form, ambiguity--but the kind of action to which it subjects the mind is not the kind of creative endeavor he accomplishes elsewhere.

Burton can write effectively and ineffectively in the curt style, but more characteristic of him are sentences in the loose style. Several kinds, the spiral, the list, a broken series of antitheses, and two kinds of analogies, have been presented.

Burton's mind worked through still other shapes: "A poor sheep-stealer is hanged for stealing of victuals, compelled per-adventure by necessity of that intolerable cold, hunger, & thirst, to save himself from starving: but a great man in office may securely rob whole provinces, undo thousands, pill and poll, oppress at his pleasure, flea, grind, tyrannize, enrich himself

by the spoils of the Commons, be uncontrollable in his actions, and, after all, be recompensed with turgent titles, honoured for his good service, and no man dare to find fault, or mutter at it."<sup>1</sup>

This kind of sentence operates by contrast as he sets one thing against another. It is not mere simple contrast; instead, we might identify the pattern as one of disparity: parallels between the two thieves are stressed to intensify the difference, one hanged and another rewarded. The verbs begin to point the difference. The poor man is the victim of other forces: compelled by cold and hunger, hanged by unnamed agents. On the other hand, the great man, secure in his ways, actively performs a variety of actions--pilling, polling, oppressing, grinding--until he is acted upon. For his catalogued sins he is made the recipient of benign forces; he is recompensed and honored.

Although this sentence may seem to sprawl, the clauses follow a clear order. In this sentence Burton does not rest satisfied with merely presenting the disparity. He delivers a judgment in the last two clauses--"and no man dare to find fault, or mutter at it"--which again shows disparity between what should be done, and what is.

<sup>1</sup> Burton, p. 50.

In a sentence previously considered, we have seen as part of that sentence a pattern which often serves Burton as the form for an entire sentence. That pattern was the triad "with all affability, counterfeit honesty, and humility." Yet this triad does not sound like those we meet in Lyly, or even in Sir Thomas Browne. There is something wrong with the rhythm; we need another syllable or two between and and humility. It ends too hastily. For that reason, just as the Baroque architects enjoyed breaking the pediment at the top and favored the broken pediment form, we can see Baroque prose stylists breaking the order of the triad. We can imagine why: the climactic triad assumes a regular pattern of steps from low to high, from small to large. And when the pattern is broken the breakings call attention to themselves so that we notice what the writer is saying more than if we were swayed by the rhythm. Such a break is more than a rebellious "roughening up" of the period; it testifies to the writer's concern for ideas more than for words.

One sentence of Burton's that exemplifies fairly regular triadic development is "...Budaeus, in an Epistle of his to Lupsetus, will have civil law to be the tower of wisdom; another honours physick, the quintessence of nature; a third tumbles them both down, and sets up the flag of his own peculiar science."<sup>1</sup> If we were to regard

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 95.



climax as computed simply upon length of the individual members, then we would have to say that this one is fairly regular--although the second member is a trifle shorter than the first. If we were to compute climactic order upon intensity, we would have to say that tumbling is stronger than having or honoring, setting up a flag more vivid than the quintessence or a tower. But even so, normal triads in climactic order are of the same kind; degree is based upon the presence of some similar thing in all, measured by either quantity or quality. Here there is a common element--each man's candidate for queen of the sciences--but the third exists only by throwing away, not adding to, the first and the second.

Most of the time Burton does not restrict himself to three's. Although "that happy number three" is an order of climax that seems almost inevitable, it is very rare that Burton will work out a series of triads within triads such as the one he constructs in this sentence: "Though many again are in that other extreme, too profuse, suspicious, and jealous of their health, too apt to take Physick on every small occasion, to aggravate every slender passion, imperfection, impediment..."<sup>1</sup> If these triads were

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<sup>1</sup> Burton, p. 392

diagrammed, they would extend outward in a pyramid. The first looks like the third member. The first of the three contains its own parallel triad--profuse, suspicious, and jealous; the last contains triple nouns, passion, imperfection, and impediment. Another cross-pattern is begun in the second of the series (the only one not containing its own smaller triad), but it reaches only to diadic proportions: to take is paralleled with to aggravate. This elaborate geometry is rare.

It is the broken pattern that is more common. Still one more "shape" characteristic of Burton's sentences is one containing an overweight subject or verb--asymmetrical, as in "Why melancholy men are witty, which Aristotle hath long since maintained in his Problems, and why all learned men, famous Philosophers, and Law-givers, have still been melancholy, is a problem much controverted."<sup>1</sup> The "kernel" here follows the ordinary pattern of subject-verb-subjective complement. But the compound subject occupies the most space and deserves the most attention in the sentence. The two halves of the noun clause subjects are both why clauses, but they are varied, the first by an adjective clause rather loosely joined on (which refers to the entire idea

<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 360.

*Coordination (Faculty) and Subordination (Spindle-Downer) in Modern English as Writing and Style*, ed. Paul C. Warnock (New York, 1914), pp. 64-72.

rather than more "correctly" to one antecedent) and the second by containing a triple subject. Once the subjects are out, the point of the sentence has been made. That these are problems is apparent--and already stated; that they are much controverted is implied by the mention of Aristotle's discussion. In short, the second half of the kernel is comprised of mere counters. Perhaps this is part of Burton's plan: the neutral words allow time for the first part to sink in.

Another form of asymmetry involves placing the most important idea of a sentence within a subordinate part of the sentence. Of course, by now we are coming to realize that such a practice is full of common sense, that the textbook advice to save one's important ideas for the main clauses and reserve subsidiary material for modifying phrases and clauses simply goes counter to our writing and blunts the ironic or witty effects that can be gained from unexpected placement.<sup>1</sup> At any rate, let us see how Burton turns his structure around in this sentence from the Digression of Air: "We build in bottoms for warmth: and that site of Mitylene in the Island of Lesbos, in the Aegean Sea, (which Vitruvius so much discommends, magnificently built with fair houses, but unadvisedly

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<sup>1</sup>See James Sledd, "Coordination (Faulty) and Subordination (Upside-Down)" in *Modern Essays on Writing and Style*, ed. Paul C. Wermuth (New York, 1964), pp. 64-72.

sited, because it lay along to the South, and when the South wind blew, the people were all sick,) would make an excellent site in our Northern climes."<sup>1</sup> The important idea in this sentence is the one contained in the place usually reserved for afterthoughts, the parenthesis. The "afterthought" is nearly as long as the main clause; it exists mainly to reflect back upon it--in fact, to show the irony that that bad site upon the Aegean would be desirable in the North.

Another pattern showing a kind of tentative symmetry within the sentence is the sentence which accumulates force as it goes along. Such a one is this: "Of those diverse gifts which our Apostle Paul saith, God hath bestowed on man, this of Physick is not the least, but most necessary, and especially conducing to the good of mankind."<sup>2</sup> It begins by arousing our expectation; it continues with that unnamed, mysterious quantity given divine sanction. It reaches the center with the word Physick, prolonged still farther with the introductory device this of. At this point we have reached the subject and therefore a kind of balance. The idea continues over the obstacles of alternatives--it is not least, but most necessary--and reaches a peak upon the noble phrase good of

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 435.

<sup>2</sup>Burton, p. 389.

mankind. The term physick is not only part of the subject; it is also a device for propelling the sentence on: it gathers up the previous forces by answering them and provides the way for still another kind of fulfillment of its own.

This kind of sentence implies a degree of external control that we do not see in the type that is among the most common in the Anatomy. The form of the sentence we could call sprawling--or sprouting; the general progress of the ideas is not at all sure and direct. Instead, this kind of sentence is a mimetic representation of the Senecan conception of the mind thinking: we the readers experience the dead ends, the opened vistas, the shuttling back and forth--in short, the reasoning through (or muddling through, depending upon one's point of view) as he explores many possibilities. What Burton is thinking through here is the problem of the relationship of the patient with his physician. To cover the issue, Burton writes, "To this of confidence we may add perseverance, obedience, and constancy, not to change his Physician, or dislike him upon every toy; for he that so doth (saith Janus Damascen), or consults with many, falls into many errors; or that useth many medicines."<sup>1</sup> The link with the sentence that went before is the

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 393.

idea of confidence that a patient owes his physician; Burton's association in this sentence came from a tale Paracelsus told about Hippocrates: that he was a good physician because all trusted him. Burton takes off from that and adds his own triad; he makes constancy definite with the concrete example "not to change his Physician." The shift from the abstract noun to the example, appearing in a parallel list, is signaled by a break in form to an infinitive phrase. This idea branches out into a further expansion of the idea of changing doctors--he qualifies the idea with the advice not even to dislike him for a trivial reason. These ideas then cause him to show the consequences of such unconstant behavior. And here, typically, the proof of the text is provided by an authority; the consequences involve a fall into error. Burton chooses not to end his sentence with the strong word errors. His mind leads him into adding the final clause. Here one suspects that the thinking is less clear solution than search. He sets up a circumstance in which that is ambiguous. Is it that taking many medicines is roughly equivalent to falling into error? Or does the that really belong in a zeugmatic relationship with the he that at the first of the second part? This is more likely the case, because then the sentence would imply that the hypochondriacs are at fault once more. With the ambiguous construction, however, he is able to suggest several possibilities in very few words. But

from the strong break of the semicolon before the final member, from the fact that the climax already seems to have been reached, the other syntactical pulls--the parallel constructions he doth-consults-falls--seem overweighted. But that is the price that a "mind-thinking" sentence must often pay: the general drift is fairly clear, but the precise points may be misunderstood.

Although such a plan may lead to anti-climax and even obscurity, often the kind of sentences Burton prepares to lead his audience through end with a very clear resolution. These are the ones we suspect he has "stage-managed" more carefully than the preceding so that we think we are working through a problem with him, whereas the answer was there all the time. How these sentences were originally composed we have no way of knowing; whether he himself went through the train of thought and then reproduced it just as it came to him, or whether he managed to order just the right set of possibilities so that the readers reached the answer that he did, we do not know. But in this sentence we seem to be arriving at the answer together: "Yes, but you infer that such men have a just cause to fear, a true object of fear, so have melancholy men an inward cause, a perpetual fume and darkness, causing fear, grief, suspicion, which they carry with them; an object which cannot be removed, but sticks as close, and is as

inseparable, as a shadow to a body, and who can expel or over-run his shadow? Remove heat of the liver, a cold stomach, weak spleen: remove those adust humours and vapours arising from them, black blood from the heart, all outward perturbations; take away the cause, and then bid them not grieve nor fear, or be heavy, dully, lumpish; otherwise counsel can do little good; you may as well bid him that is sick of an ague not to be adry, or him that is wounded not to feel pain."<sup>1</sup>

This is an example of a kind of speaking voice that is very typical of Burton in the Anatomy. Here he is not a crusty Democritus nor is he donning another mask temporarily to speak as someone else. Rather, he is here speaking directly to us the audience, responding with a "Yes," attributing ideas to us as though we were in actual conversation. With this sense of talking together we also experience Burton's aim of reasoning together. The sentence follows the track of "our" mind as we attempt to work a problem through to its conclusion. The techniques are obvious--shuttling from one thing to another with a quick so; asking a question which answers itself in the asking; repetitions of such words as remove which both send us out again and peg us in to the previous idea.

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<sup>1</sup> Burton, p. 359.





## CHAPTER VI

### THE ORDER OF THE WHOLE

For too long a time Burton's Anatomy was condescendingly considered an unplanned lump. In the April 1880 issue of the Cornhill Magazine, an anonymous essayist called it a "patchwork stuck together with scissors and paste, a queer amorphous mass, in spite of its ostensible plan."<sup>1</sup> This view was the legacy of the romanticizing revival of interest in Burton after Keats had discovered the writer whom he called "that fantastic great old man." Fortunately, this view is changing. No detailed analyses of the plan of the book appear in any of the current scholarly and critical work, sparse as it is. But two books in particular counteract the older "romantic" tradition. One, William Mueller's The Anatomy of Robert Burton's England, does little more than affirm a belief in its fundamentally rational plan; another, Lawrence Babb's Sanity in Bedlam, describes the organization of the first partition but concerns itself chiefly with a mere listing of the contents. He omits from consideration large section of the book; he names some

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<sup>1</sup>William R. Mueller, The Anatomy of Robert Burton's England (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1952), p. 6.

digressions but does not show how they fit in.

It is imperative that a study of style describe the important bases upon which the author builds his work. The larger form of the work can affect his style: the ways a writer chooses to express himself depend not only upon his own idiosyncrasies. The style of a conscious artist is also formed upon the subjects he deals with and the places he chooses to deal with them. Burton's beginning statements in "Democritus Junior to the Reader", crotchety and abrupt, attract our attention, make us smile, and prepare us for the satire which is to follow. But such a style is only part of the Anatomy; the crustiness only indirectly prepares us for the compassion we find in the last sentences of the book, the moving melancholy of Burton's own awareness that despite his efforts, man's madness will rage forever.

Examining the three large partitions of the Anatomy will help us understand the larger patterns, "rhythms", that order the book. In the Anatomy proper, these are devoted to cause, cure, and "practical" effects. The third section is itself organized around patterns of cause and cure, but here the theme of man's active use of reason helps place it where it is. Since, as Burton finally defines it, melancholy becomes almost a metaphor for the condition of fallen man, the last part then gives indirect advice

*Journal of the Modern Language Association*, LXIV (1949), 3074-3082.

and answers to the question, "What must a man do? Although Burton is both coy and condescending in even talking about love, he makes it quite clear that he means love as not just gathering rosebuds but as a force linking man to the divine. For that reason, the introductory section of Partition III makes possible the ironic pattern of the last part of the book. When he reaches the discussion of religious melancholy, he is able to suggest the heights to which man can reach--the love and apprehension of God--but at the same time to show that this same paragon of animals paradoxically sinks lowest when he falls to various forms of religious melancholy. In this aspect of man's complex nature he reveals both his highest and lowest potentialities. Upon this paradox the book ends--expanding upward by descending downward.

Before allowing us to look into the Anatomy, Burton provides several introductions, doors we should open before moving around within the confines of the book itself. The first is the obligatory dedication to Lord George Berkeley. The second, the Frontispiece to the Argument, presents the first of a series of microcosms through which we move into the book. In this Burton makes use of the emblem--a visual representation of complex ideas--to fix within the reader's mind the subjects and aims of the entire book.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mueller, "Robert Burton's Frontispiece," Publications of the Modern Language Association, LXIV (1949), 1074-1088.

It is remarkable that he can suggest and point forward to so many things by means of visual symbols on this one page. In the center column at the top, for instance, is a picture of the man whose mask he adopts, Democritus Senior. He is depicted sitting just above a formal garden with his quill pen held to one side as he rests his head on his left hand, thinking before taking up writing again in a book resting on his knee. The sign of Saturn in the sky above and the several animals at Democritus' foot suggest several complex themes and attitudes developed more fully in the book: the musing, saturnine anatomist smiles pensively at those racing in the garden below. Humor as well as thoughtfulness will characterize the ironic Democritus Junior who is also above the world but better able to speak truly to it, to help the frenzied ones regain another garden.

Directly below this picture is the full title; in the lower third of this center column is a picture of Burton with fitting symbols--an open book, a quadrant, a family crest. The outer columns suggest the pattern of the book; at the top of each are symbolic landscapes of solitude and jealousy; along the side are depictions of the chief types of melancholics to which he devotes space: the lover, the hypochondriac, the superstitious, and the madman. At the bottom of each column are pictures of chief physical cures, borage and hellebore, which are recommended by the physician.

Burton explains the Frontispiece with an Argument in ten parts, written in rather pedestrian couplets. He makes a plea for seeing the Anatomy as an ordered whole in the introductory couplet, "Ten distinct Squares here seen apart,/Are joined in one by Cutter's art." He then devotes a stanza to each, telling us the significance of the emblems he uses. About half of the squares he is correct; we can see Inamorato's lute, Hypochondriacus' pots and glasses. But in others there are discrepancies. Maniacus is not totally naked, unless Burton was using the word in the sense of wearing underclothes. We cannot see the fighting cocks and roaring bulls in the landscape of jealousy. Possibly because he had already filled the available space with a quite provocative heron and a graceful swan, the engraver had no space for the other prescribed emblems. As for the picture of solitude, the wood is so dark it is hard to tell whether the bats, owls, and conies are hidden there. They should have been; as emblems they embody major themes of the book; they help us see Burton's technique. In this the first part of his book the author aims for communication, and here he utilizes the sensory visual symbol as the means by which he aims for the reader's understanding. Furthermore, they are public symbols, a mode of quick communication between himself and his audience. Of course we do not respond to the kingfisher or the swan or the

cosmological signs in the way that his readers, full of lore from the bestiaries and the popular tradition, did; but we see how he intends us to take them when he explains in the Argument, "Symbols are these, I say no more, /Conceive the rest by that's afore." And he remains not satisfied with just the visual symbols; he explains them, if sometimes cryptically, in the Argument.

The third introductory device, the Latin poem "Democritus Junior to His Book," exemplifies what Curtius has identified as the "book" topos.<sup>1</sup> This charge to the personified book is also an indirect charge to the reader telling him how and what to expect. The themes of usefulness and delight predominate: "Gain sense from precept, laughter from our whim." Although the tone is light, the heuristic purpose is unmistakable, and those who formerly dismissed the Anatomy as "an enormous labyrinthine joke" or "a snatching at a pick-me-up which shall be an alternative for lotophagous wamblings"<sup>2</sup> have simply not read this. After the text is addressed, the subject is dichotomized in the next introductory poem, "The Author's Abstract of Melancholy." He sums up the dual nature of melancholy and the texture of experience in the fallen world when, describing

<sup>1</sup>Curtius, pp. 302-347.

<sup>2</sup>Mueller, Anatomy, p. 7.

the many kinds of activities that suit his melancholy moods, musing by running books, moaning in an irksome den, he concludes with the alternating refrains at the end of each stanza of this "dialogue," "Naught so sweet as Melancholy" and "Naught so sad as Melancholy." This device of providing alternatives and dualities is to achieve greater expansion in the rest of the book, as in the dual masks of Democritus and Heraclitus. And it certainly points to his continual awareness that things are not what they seem, that experience is built upon irony, that truth can best be expressed in a paradox.

It is with "Democritus Junior to the Reader" that we reach the broadest and most elaborate of all the gateways into the book. This section, which occupies almost a tenth of the entire book, is a key to what follows. Here we see the mask of Democritus Junior most clearly as Burton shows by direct means and indirect how we are to take the speaking voice he assumes--crusty, satiric, yet learned and compassionate. This guiding purpose he uses to organize the section according to a perceivable and logical plan.

The hundred pages or so of "Democritus Junior to the Reader" show a continual pattern of opening outward. He first speaks of himself as a man; then he presents a panoramic view of other men and, finally, of the kingdoms of men--revealing them all as melancholy, mad, all in need of cure. In the last few



pages of the book he recapitulates this final aim of cure. In the first few pages he establishes a feeling of trust in the author. After startling the reader with his initial crotchiness, he then explains: he is modeling himself upon Democritus, that "little, wearish old man," who is also a topos of wisdom. Once he dons the mask, he is able to move about with greater freedom and respect: he can talk about himself as a member of Christ Church College; he can talk about his style; he can answer possible objections to his "Cento out of Divers writers" by saying that it is still his own; and, finally, he can set forth his role as physician and theologian. Once he has presented this copious amount of material and thus the man before our eyes, Burton mounts Minerva's tower to look beyond himself. In the second part, he begins a lengthy disquisition to prove his thesis that the world is mad. And after reading the pages devoted to the butchery of war--where Burton can even quote the numbers of dead in many battles--or the sections damning religion, or the iniquities and foul practices of doctors and lawyers, or the general topsy-turvy state of society in general, the reader must only agree that the world is mad, that Morea may be Moria.

We might think that the enormous catalog would be enough. But no; in a passage in which logic is used wittily to enforce something that certainly seems well enough proved upon our pulses,

Burton demonstrates beyond doubt that not from simple experience alone but from logic, folly is the condition of all. We suspect a tongue in cheek when we see the simplicity of his major premises-- that men think too well of themselves, that all transgressors are fools, that men are carried away by their passions--but we cannot deny them. At any rate, we must agree with the conclusion, which Burton prepares for in this fashion: "Proceed now from the parts to the whole or from the whole to the parts, and you shall find no other issue, the parts shall be sufficiently dilated in this following Preface. The whole must needs follow by a Sorites or Induction. Every multitude is mad, precipitate, and rash, without judgment, and a roaring rout."<sup>1</sup> This overdose of logicity may be a parody of the logician ( he is going to extraordinary lengths to recapitulate the obvious ) - but its humor enforces the rightness of the conclusion: all men are mad.

Not just man alone but men in groups are mad. In the next section Burton expands the scene to kingdoms, first showing that many things in the polis are diseased and thus contribute to the melancholy of each inhabitant. To remedy this he describes his own "paper kingdom." By including his utopia within the Anatomy

<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 64.

Burton is not just capitalizing on the taste for such commonwealths in his time; this apparent digression is no aping of Sir Thomas More and no mere byway. Instead, it provides in miniature a pattern he is to develop in far greater detail in the book: cause and cure.

Furthermore, he shows from the beginning that man's ills are not his alone, that they are shared and indeed caused by forces without. His suggestions for religious, sanitary, legal, and (prophetically, for a man of his time) economic changes provide positive remedies for the many negative symptoms he describes later. Acutely aware of the bonds of community, he is also aware that planning and care can cure.

Having had a vision of the possible, we leave the utopia. The scene of "Democritus Junior to the Reader" now contracts as we circle downward to Democritus Junior himself once more. The last part seems to follow several contradictory directions and to mix a curious variety of tones. In the last part he reaffirms his belief that the book is a search for wisdom. His vituperations against the seekers for vain knowledge are proof of this ruling intention. And he restates the aim he hinted at in "Democritus Junior to His Book" and exemplified in the utopia: he seeks to "reform what is amiss"; he wants "to do good." "Democritus to Sanity!" Burton soon breaks the tone of humble admiration for wisdom and noble

intent, however; Democritus cannot dispense too much treacle. Lashing out at a few fools, he shows one way to discern wisdom: "one may speak in jest, & yet speak truth."

He shifts tone again. Taking off the mask of Democritus with its sardonic smile, he admits that he shares in all man's foolishness; he can sympathize and identify more closely with the reader because he has "anatomized [his] own folly." This tone, too, he breaks as he wakes up from his "dream vision." Disclaiming the book and its intentions as a "raving fit," he promises a "more sober discourse in my following treatise." Yet this discounting is still dead serious: "Let none take these to himself, they're fables all (PLAUTUS) I'll deny all (my last refuge), recant all, renounce all I have said..." The laughing philosopher can seem to throw away those things that are the most important. Much the same tone appears in the final introduction, "To the Mischievously Idle Reader." In the guise of gruffness, threatening to pulverize the reader who will not take him or his work seriously, he still reveals his sober intent. This passage closes with the Latin poem in which, by invoking both Heraclitus and Democritus, he shows the complex vision of detachment and engagement, laughter and tears which is his in the rest of the work.

In the first partition we see a meticulous plan but a great deal of freedom within that plan. The major categories within which he orders his ideas are clear and logical; the digressions provide freedom to roam about. The general patterns of organization we might define as circling inward and looking downward. Of the four sections comprising this partition, the first exemplifies this pattern clearly. Before Burton focuses upon melancholy in particular, he must place it in a larger context. The first member he therefore devotes to a general discussion of the condition of fallen man. He covers this topic with a fairly complete use of the traditional topics of invention: definition, classification, cause and effect, and example. He thus gives us a wide-ranging view of sinful, sick man.

But before he deals more particularly with his chosen province, melancholy, which is but one species of disease, he adds what he calls a "Digression of Anatomy," an encyclopedic treatment of the parts of the body and the mind. A digression he calls it, but it is still a necessary task. Here he introduces psychological and anatomical terminology to be used in the rest of the book; here he makes unmistakably clear his belief that the body and the mind cannot really be considered apart. In the third member of this section he then reaches his stated subject, melancholy. Again the rhetorical places give him a means of investigation: he defines, he differentiates, he divides.

Once he has shown us exactly what it is that he is talking about, Burton is then ready to move to the next large division of Partition I: the section devoted to cause. A general pattern of dichotomies provides an under-structure for this part. He breaks the subject down into dual parts--general and particular, supernatural and natural--reaching almost to infinity, as Ramus counseled. Once we know the causes, we are able to know the symptoms. The pattern of dichotomies gives Burton a basic pattern here. In the last, shortest section of the four he looks outward; he lists the prognostics. Here the division is not dual but triple. First he covers those tending to good, then those tending to evil. And as a kind of peroration he includes some after-thoughts and fore-thoughts he had no space for previously: the "grievousness of this above all other diseases," the greater seriousness of mental over physical disease, and the question of self-destruction by a melancholy man.

It would not be necessary or particularly fruitful to reproduce here the different ways he goes about developing each topic. The synopses at the first of each partition provide a clear guide for that. But, dazzled by the meanderings and overwhelming amounts of information within each of the subsections, we often forget one reason for the synopses. That reason is this: a look at the Anatomy as a whole will show a definite sense that the ideas are

progressing. For example, in the second partition, dealing with cure, we see repeated the pattern of circling downward from general causes to particular ones. But in the passage on general cures we meet a new kind of pattern, from negative to positive. First Burton dismisses the unlawful cures--those from the devil, witches, images, and so on--before he treats at great length the lawful ones: from God, from the saints, and from nature (which includes the physician, the patient, and physic). This last subdivision occupies a great proportion of space; it is under the rubric of physic that he includes those lengthy and often contradictory lists of dietary, pharmaceutical, and "chirurgical" cures. Much of this information he repeats in the second half of the section on cures, the particular cures for the three particular kinds. The repetition can be justified, however; the sick man need consult only one section and he will find the kind of information he requires.

In the third partition, which he devotes to love and love melancholy, the ruling patterns are not those of circling downward or of contrasted negative-positive. Here, once he has delivered an initial paean in honor of love, Burton uses the traditional tripartite division of kinds of souls to help him form the section. He takes care of natural and sensible love rather quickly, though

a simple mention of the sympathy between the vine and the elm shows the encompassing powers of love as a force pervading the cosmos. Rational love claims the greatest amount of space. Although he divides the varieties of this sort into several other categories, the three dominant sections here deal with heroic melancholy (meaning not love among the heroes but love chiefly erotic<sup>1</sup>); jealousy, or love after marriage; and love of God, which can be perverted into religious melancholy.

Where, then, does the Anatomy finally end? After the series of introductions which show us the subject and the complex ways we are to take the book, its author, and even ourselves, we meet three large bodies of material devoted to cause and cure. It is the last third that has so long been considered an afterthought; hardly anyone talks about it without a patronizing tone; it is just more of Burton's ramblings. The passage on heroic melancholy, in particular, is dismissed as a huge chunk of Burtonian exuberance in which the Oxford bachelor lets his repressed mind rove and his wishes be fulfilled. That may be so, but the reasons why Burton wrote so long of love in all its phases need not be equated with the placement of that material at the end of the book. The theme of

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<sup>1</sup>See John Livingston Lowes, "The Lover's Malady of Heroes," Modern Philology, XI (1914), 491-546.



knowledge in its jokingly serious and harshly comic manifestations helps us see that the ending is not just a series of exuberant after-thoughts by a man who did not know when to draw his book to a close. It is rather a fitting ending to the forces he had set in motion earlier.

In the important preface to the third partition, Burton dons the robes of a laughing philosopher once again to justify in comic terms the inclusion of this section: "After an harsh and unpleasing discourse of Melancholy which hath hitherto molested your patience, & tried the author, give him leave with Godefridus the lawyer and Lawrentius to recreate himself in this kind after his laborious studies."<sup>1</sup> A comic ending he promises, but that is one of his surest jokes: some of the harshest vituperation, the most angry pages appear at the last when he writes of religious melancholy. As a teacher he includes the trivia on love because "most of our students love such pleasant subjects." The passages on heroical melancholy are great fun, ripping along with gusto and charm. "But mine earnest intent is as much to profit as to please," he warns us in the preface, "and these my writings, I hope, shall take like gilded pills, which are so composed as well to tempt the appetite and deceive the palate, as to help and medicinally

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 613.

work upon the whole body; my lines shall not only recreate but recreate the mind." The first third is as a gilded pill which attracts us into the last two, darker sections. Beneath that gilding the pill is bitter: the last part is not funny at all.

How, then, is love the fitting end for the book? And how do heroic love, jealousy, and religious superstitions fit together to form a unified whole? To answer that, let us look, broadly and briefly, at Burton's major subject within the Anatomy. Fallen, diseased man, "thou thyself," is his main concern. And Burton, teacher and stage manager, exhibits man not as a lone statue but constantly moving, whirling dizzily in his frenetic activity. The most important passion which sets man in motion is Love. Love and hatred are "the first and most common passions, from which all the rest arise, and are attendant."<sup>1</sup> Not only other passions but passionate activity arise from these causes. Love, in particular, encompasses more than lustful desire. As Burton dilates upon his subject, he makes clear that it is an appetite

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 617.

<sup>2</sup>Burton, p. 617.

("by which we desire some good to be present"), a "delectation of the heart for something which we seek to win", in sum, a force binding together both mind and body leading us to know and to act. Furthermore, the metaphor of the two kinds of love, the two Venuses, "one from God, the other from the Devil", helps image man's dual nature as well as account for the forces that pull him in two different directions. Love is a force binding the parts of the cosmos together. What we identify as gravitation or magnetism he calls love: "How comes a loadstone to draw iron to it? jet, chaff? the ground to covet showers, but for Love?"<sup>1</sup>

For these reasons Burton's last partition is ironic. The love that ties lover to lover or man to wife is charming, if laden with pain; but the "love which reaches but to dust" is a pale copy of the highest idea of love. He allies himself with the Neo-Platonists when he quotes Leone Ebreo, "Cognitive Love, as Leo calls it, Rational Love, Intellectual Love... By this Love (saith Gerson) we purchase Heaven, and buy the Kingdom of God."<sup>2</sup> When this

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 622.

<sup>2</sup>Burton, p. 622.

love is deformed, as it is twisted by religious melancholy, then man's sickness is at its worst. At the conclusion the Anatomy goes in two directions at once. The lowest ebb is described, but it can point toward the highest. Superstition is horrible because it perverts man's highest powers; but at the same time, the lowest ebb can imply the highest reaches. Here Burton's book calls most strongly for a fit audience: seeing the depths, man should want to turn toward the heights. By now Burton should have trained us all well enough to do so.

Within each of the three major partitions certain large "rhythms" control his minute attention to smaller units of organization and set forth his major concerns of cause, cure, and man in action. Within the larger scheme, however, are embedded several digressions, prose units that could be considered separate essays. The usual view of these set-pieces is that they are again instances of Burton's exuberance as he ranges about, carrying an interest to the point of exhaustion. There is much to be said for this view; certainly there seems to be no particular reason for the Digression upon Exotick Simples in Partition II when there is none on games or sports. And perhaps this very freedom is an effect he wished to give: the Senecan principle of following truth as it comes to shape within the mind should not be restricted to the confines of the

sentence alone. And certainly, given Burton's penchant for authority, the fact that the digression was a recognized rhetorical form of development, giving to a work the desired quality of copiousness, is not least among the reasons for inclusion. But there are others, I think, that allow us to see a conscious artist at work.

The digressions are not spaced evenly through the book. He identifies not one of his sections in the third partition as a digression, perhaps because so much of that third partition is digressive in the first place. In Partition II he includes three. The first is on Exotick Simples and the next on Compounds; the third is the famous Digression of Air. The first two we can regard as either special interests or as areas needing particular development. With the Digression of Air and the four in the first partition-- the Digressions of Anatomy, on the Nature of Spirits and Devils, of the Force of the Imagination, and of the Misery of Scholars-- Burton constructs his most successful essays. But in looking at the context in which he embeds some of them, we might wonder whether they are indeed digressions. Certainly, judged from the surroundings, the Digression of Air is one. The relationship of Burton's trip through the cosmos to the curative powers of good air is tenuous. The Digression of Anatomy is another matter:

following his description of the nature of man as diseased and preceding his analysis of different kinds of melancholy, this description almost demands to be there. In describing man's body and mind and the way they are put together, he introduces terminology he will use later; he informs us fully about his subject. Later references to the meseriack veins, to the dictamen rationis require no further explanation after this complete analysis. Burton was writing to an intelligent audience, but an audience of laymen.

Another question remains: assuming that some fit less well than others, do they still fit in? The answer here is positive: he pastes none in without some pretense of relation to the others. The Digression of the Air is perhaps less easily associated with the discussion of health measures, but the Digression of Spirits carries on with a topic he has previously begun, supernatural causes of melancholy, and that on the misery of scholars is certainly a valid extension of the category into which he inserts it, love of learning. It even introduces another kind of melancholy. One reason for the naming might simply be that Burton, aware that these set-pieces were related to the surroundings but aware, as well, that the development was disproportionate compared to his treatment of other categories, decided to call them by another name to show the reader that he realized the essays might be disunifying.

Considering their participation in concerns of the Anatomy as a whole, we can certainly see that they provide a thematic accompaniment to Burton's aim of discussing and transmitting knowledge. It would not be imposing an extraneous pattern upon them to say that each amplifies certain aspects of this theme and aim. The Digression of Anatomy reveals what Burton thought about how man learns; the descriptions of man's physical and mental powers and the process of faculty psychology help us understand his conceptions about how words act upon the mind. Learning is not a simple matter, however; in the Digression upon the Force of the Imagination he points out the ways in which man's mind can delude itself and be deluded; in the Digression on Spirits he shows how external forces can lead the mind astray. But at least knowledge of the enemies, both internal and external, can empower man to resist them the better. The Digression on the Misery of Scholars lets us see still another facet of the many-sided problem. Here he gives us a long rollcall of hindrances--unfeeling patrons, lack of appreciation, physical ills, hypocritical colleagues--which face any man entering the world of the scholar. "To say truth," he says,

'tis the common fortune of most scholars to be servile and poor, to complain pitifully, and lay open their wants to their respectless Patrons, as Cardan doth, as Xylander, and many others; and, which

is too common in those Dedicatory Epistles, for hope of gain, to lie, flatter, and with hyperbolical elogiums and commendations to magnify and extol an illiterate unworthy idiot for his excellent virtues, whom they should rather, as Machiavel observes, vilify and rail at downright for his most notorious villainies and vices. So they prostitute themselves, as fiddlers or mercenary tradesmen, to serve great men's turns for a small reward. They are like Indians, they have store of gold, but know not the worth of it.<sup>1</sup>

But he counters this grim picture with the last and longest digression in the book, the Digression of Air. It is not my place here to describe Burton's wealth of knowledge about geography, nor to discuss his own delusions or common-sense analyses of the theories of cosmology available to him.<sup>2</sup> But in showing us his views on knowledge, this is a key digression. First, his joyous excitement is infectious as, like a "long-winged Hawk," he circles around the world, dipping down to look at Teneriffe, stopping for a moment to puzzle over the possibility of people on other stars. At the same time, even after the pages and pages of soaring prose,

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 265.

<sup>2</sup>In "Robert Burton and the New Cosmology", Modern Language Quarterly, XIII (1952), 13-48, Robert M. Browne analyses Burton's use of the theories available to him. Both he and Babb (in Sanity in Bedlam) point out his wide knowledge and the sane logic of his partial adoption and dismissal of current cosmological theory as well as his errors.



this digression becomes almost an exemplum demonstrating the Christian humanist theory of vain knowledge. It ends as follows:

But hoo! I am now gone quite out of sight, I am almost giddy with roving about: I could have ranged farther yet, but I am an infant, and not able to dive into these profundities, or sound these depths, not able to understand, much less to discuss. I leave the contemplation of these things to stronger wits, that have better ability, and happier leasure, to wade into such Philosophical mysteries: for put case I were as able as willing, yet what can one man do? I will conclude with Scaliger: We are by no means men, -- rather fractions of men; through the agency of it all it is possible to accomplish something, though nothing very great: from a single person--absolutely nothing. --Besides, (as Nazianzen has it) God desireth us to be inconspicuous; and with Seneca (on Comets): How much should we marvel at those rare spectacles of the world, not to be set in bounds by fixed laws, not yet to be understood? Many races there are that are familiar with the face of the sky: the time hasteneth when that which is now hid shall, by the diligence of longer ages, be brought forth to the light of the day; one age sufficeth not, --the future, &c. ---When God sees his time, he will reveal these mysteries to mortal men, and shew that to some few at last, which he hath concealed so long.... God in his providence, to check our presumptuous inquisition, wraps up all things in uncertainty, bars us from long antiquity, and bounds our search within the compass of some few ages.

<sup>1</sup> Burton, p. 430.

I agree with Mueller that these three styles appear in Burton, but I disagree with the basis of his categories. Instead, I would look at Burton in more traditional terms, from the three levels sanctioned by the rhetorical tradition and part of the language of literary criticism, such as it was, of Burton's time. The high style, or the grand style, is the first of these. Reserved for noble subjects, it generally denotes a heightening of language and idea to fit the subject. More elaborate tropes and figures within the sentence contribute to the artifice, as does purer and more noble diction. The homoioteleuton, the Latin polysyllable, characterizes the resonance of this voice. The grand style tends toward the Ciceronian in its premediated grandeur. Although this is not the predominant style of Burton, he is capable of it. He can use it as an aside, as when he adopts a mask temporarily to sing of arms and the man. In a consolatory passage in the section on Remedies against Discontents he embeds this quotation: "For know this, in conclusion, it is not as men, but as God will. The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich, bringeth low, and exalteth, he lifteth the poor from the dust, and raiseth the begger from the dunghill, to set them amongst Princes, and make them inherit the seat of of glory."<sup>1</sup> He did not write this, of course, but the choice of a

<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 517.

quotation from the Bible exemplifying simplicity and sublimity shows an ability typical of the man with many masks: Consoling the man of little fortune in a style that is otherwise wholly conversational, in this parenthesis he shifts to the voice of a preacher. Cumbered with care, man might forget his Christian fate: in this section the style reminds him.

The first extended appearance of the high style is in the first paragraph of Partition I. Here, singing of man's original and potential excellency--a passage whose grandness will be quickly broken in the next paragraph, where he will show what man has become--diction enforces the splendor. Words like Viceroy, marvels, righteousness, immortal, and other similar terms with rhythmic and connotative grandness characterize the passage; no word breaks this tone. Punctuation sustains the sweeping rhythm as semicolons prolong the list of man's glories. The entire paragraph is one sweep; we hold all ideas in suspense until we reach the end.

Except for occasional sentences, like the one cited above, Burton does not use the grand style in the rest of Partition I and II. The subjects (causes and cures) and the surrounding terrain (dietary restrictions and varieties of exercise) do not demand such treatment. The second extended passage in the high style appears

at the first of Partition III, devoted to Love. Like the preceding, it, too, exists to show man his potentiality; but it also exists to be broken when Burton demonstrates how this force has been perverted. In this imitation of I Corinthians 13 Burton does not require the use of reverberating polysyllables; instead, simplicity of diction creates the sense of grandness. Here is a typical sentence: "As the Sun in the Firmament, (I say) so is Love in the world; and for this cause 'tis Love without an addition, Love pre-eminent, Love of God and Love of men."<sup>1</sup> Quoted out of context, this sentence loses much of its heightening. Even so, the smoothness of rhythm displays what Burton is capable of when the subject and the placement demand it. Here the theme of man's use of reason helps control the arrangement: at the first man must be shown what he fell from. Burton recapitulates the myth of the fall from Eden in his style. Once he has covered the problems of cause and cure, he can then in Partition III exhibit by a style that mimes its subject what man in action can accomplish. By the force of rational love he can reach infinite truth and goodness.

But these passages Burton reserves for special places. He moves most freely in the middle register, the conversational

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 637.

"mind-thinking" style. Mueller allows for this traditional level under the term "scientific"; to me it seems that accounts for only half the middle range. Within this level he can be smooth and effectively informative, as, certainly, many of the sentences in the Digression of Anatomy are. But in the more typical style of Burton the raconteur, he frisks about from one idea to another, not always caring whether he covers a topic with absolute clarity. Even within some of the scientific passages we see glimmers of wit; but more often, the sense of a man engaging us in delightful conversation is the rule. Here the conversational devices appear-- the parentheses, the sudden breaks, the mimicking, the slang. Of course, if we were to use Mueller's term in the older sense, the conversational style is scientific, although Mueller does not use the term in this sense. Even at his chattiest Burton is attempting to make us know, whether it be frivolous love-tales or proper purges. Behind that smile lies a serious intent; between those gaps there are connections to be made, causing us to participate, to reach ideas on our own.

And Burton is master of the third level, also. A book as lively as the Anatomy is hard to divide into passages which exemplify the three levels exclusively; Burton is so full of language that he will often break a conversation to sound like a tragedy

queen or growl away at the Papists. Often the three levels co-exist in the same paragraph, if not sentence. But there are certain passages where he uses the low level alone. Scurrilous terms and imagery, broken and jagged syntax characterize this level. Paradoxically, the intensity of the emotion might ally this with some aspects of the grand style. One difference lies in the subject: the grand style aims for the mind and nobler emotions, the low style for the solar plexus. He does not intend to mesmerize or ritualize when he vituperates against the "fat fustilugs" or the chitty-faced bawd. And in his invective against the Theologasters we can sense an admirable purpose in exposing the frauds, but the glee with which he does that exposing is somewhat less than noble. The street fights require the weapons of the street, and when Burton lumps together jargon, slang, and insult we have a superb example of the scurrilous, low style: lawyers, for example, are "gowned vultures, who live by violence and bloodshed, thieves and seminaries of discord; worse than any pollers on the highway side, gold-hawks, gold-borers, money-fishers, temple thieves, market-jinglers, horrible wretches, slave-traders. . . a company of irreligious Harpies, scraping, griping Catchpoles."<sup>1</sup> Burton shares with the earlier Elizabethans a mastery of abuse.

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 69.

Burton spoke through many voices, for one reason, because he shared the conceptions of the traditional body of rhetorical theory. He accepted not only the three levels of style; still others helped from his own style. For instance, he agreed with the notion that art in language rests upon precepts derived from nature, that artful language could communicate ideas directly from mind to mind through words, and that language could express and convey ideas about reality in its simplest and most complex forms from mind to mind. Knowledge could be embodied in language. For that reason man's highest duties--seeking to know God and to act well--could be accomplished, partly at least, by the study of language. For Burton and those in his tradition this study had been codified in the study of rhetoric. Initiation into this discipline involved awareness of the powers possessed by words, by images and tropes, and by the form of the sentence. And knowledge of rhetorical tools meant that the practitioner was actively seeking the truth kept in the ancient storehouses of wisdom, his for the seeking.

In addition to stating chief assumptions of rhetorical theory, Burton could be almost an exemplum of traditional rhetorical practices. Virtually all the schemes of sound and thought occur within his sentences; in his adoption of the mask of Democritus Junior he uses nearly all traditional techniques of gaining ethos

and pathos. He also employs traditional devices of organizing his ideas into larger units by way of the rhetorical topics of invention.

The first of the devices most commonly used to develop a topic is "inartificial arguments," or what we call testimony. This is certainly one of the most common ways Burton fills up his book (he enlists thousands of such arguments) but it is not simply to bolster his own ideas. Rather, he sees himself as a transmitter of past learning and wisdom summed up in the testimony given by men of former times. And since the past was closer to the Golden Age and hence wiser than the present, to Burton this function alone would be reason enough for compiling his cento. In addition, Burton felt that the past could speak to present times, with greater relevance than we believe today. Because of the conception that time had been redeemed in the birth of Christ, that which followed was considered to be chiefly repetition of past patterns: time is cyclic. Unlike the moderns who accepted the idea of progress, to the ancient the course of history was not at all a continually expanding spiral but more a completed circle. For these reasons Burton continually cites the ancients not to pad out his work but to enforce the truth of the information he is advancing. Attention should be paid to the wise men of old.



When "Valescus de Taranta, Aelian Montaltus, Felix Platerus, (and) Guianerius, put Jealousy for a cause of Melancholy," it must be so.

Other forms of "inartificial" arguments or testimony include reference back to general experience (we have all been there, so it must be true) and to the writer's own experience. Two kinds can support each other; Burton did not accept his mother's remedy of a spider lapped in silk until he read that Dioscorides testified to its efficacy. Another variety is the gnome, or apophthegm--the "mother wit" of human beings which sums up truth in a short phrase. After a dozen examples showing how like tends to fall in love with like, he concludes with "Birds of a feather flock together." This kind of truth Burton will often inject in a longer sentence as a temporary version of truth which he can argue from; sometimes the gnome will provide the resolution to a problem he has puzzled over for a long time. This sort of resolution does not mean that Burton is giving up the fight for the answer; rather, it implies that he can find within common experience a solution to a vexing concern. And sometimes the "mother wit" can simply enforce what he has just been arguing; in the following sentence he goes from concrete examples to a "concrete" image which is an embodiment of abstract truth: "Plato commends the beauty of Socrates; yet who was more

grim of countenance, stern and ghastly to look upon? So are and have been many great Philosophers, as Gregory Nazianzen observes, deformed most part in that which is to be seen with the eyes, but most elegant in that which is not to be seen. Often under a threadbare coat lies an excellent understanding."<sup>1</sup>

The other topics of invention--definition, division, subject and adjuncts, contraries and contradictories, similarity and dissimilarity, comparison, cause and effect, notation and conjugates--Burton uses throughout the Anatomy. They are natural ways in which to cast ideas; their codification in the earlier rhetoric books is to be expected. The difference between our view and theirs is that earlier rhetoricians thought that the topics of invention could help a writer reach the truth; the technique was sanctioned by the ancients. We see them more as merely helpful devices.

A passage introducing Jealousy shows the way in which Burton works in to his subject by way of the traditional topics:

Valescus de Taranta, Aelian Montaltus, Felix Platerus, Guianerius put Jealousy for a cause of Melancholy, others for a Symptom; because Melancholy persons, among these passions and perturbations of the mind, are most obnoxious to it. But me thinks for the latitude it hath, and that prerogative above other ordinary

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<sup>1</sup> Burton, p. 630.

Symptoms, it ought to be treated of as a Species apart, being of so great and eminent a note, so furious a passion, and almost of as great extent as Love itself, as Benedetto Varchi holds, No Love without a mixture of Jealousy; who's not been jealous, loves not. For these causes I will dilate, and treat of it by itself, as a bastard-branch, or kind of Love-Melancholy, which, as Heroical Love goeth commonly before marriage, doth usually follow, torture, and crucify in like sort, deserves therefore to be rectified alike, requires as much care and industry, in setting out the several causes of it, prognosticks and cures. Which I have more willingly done, that he that is or hath been jealous, may see his error in a glass; he that is not, may learn to detest, avoid it himself, and dispossess others that are any wise affected with it.

Jealousy is described and defined to be a certain suspicion which the Lover hath of the party he chiefly loveth, lest he or she should be enamored of another: or any eager desire to enjoy some beauty alone, to have it proper to himself only: a fear or doubt, lest any foreigner should participate or share with him in his love. Or (as Scaliger adds) a fear of losing her favour, whom he so earnestly affects. Cardan calls it, a zeal for love, and a kind of envy lest any man should beguile us. Ludovicus Vives defines it in the very same words, of little differing in sense.<sup>1</sup>

The passage pursues its course smoothly; when we see the number of topics of invention Burton employs to develop his ideas

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<sup>1</sup>Burton, p. 821.

we can begin to sense still more the richness of his prose as he utilizes rhetorical devices. He introduces the subject with one of the inartificial arguments: the testimony of the wise men of old brings out the subject. A reference to common experience fixes the matter: we all know that melancholy men are most "obnoxious" to the power of jealousy. Narrowing the focus, Burton answers objections when he argues from his own experience. Although we might think his own individualism daring, he does not depart from the common fund of knowledge; he believes it should be treated by itself. But even here Burton is not arguing completely alone, for Benedetto Varchi provides a kind of back-stop for his own position.

Justified in his own stand, he can then continue his course with the assistance of the topics of similarity and dissimilarity, cause and effect. The final effect he hopes to accomplish is heuristic: learning what jealousy is, man can then avoid it and dissuade others from its perils. Once the subject is justified, he can backtrack somewhat. A definition--here by contrary example--leads into further definition from authority. Scaliger, Cardan, and Vives all said something pertinent about the subject and they agreed on nearly all points. Following the second paragraph Burton breaks the subject down still further: he divides

the subject into its many forms. This topic of division will provide him a means of ordering the rest of this section; this topic, with cause and effect, can be said to control not just individual sentences or paragraphs but the book as a whole.

The topic appearing in this passage can be considered a set of tools which the writer and speaker has at his command, to be brought out when needed. Certainly the rhetoric manuals have the appearance of a too-easy system, one which could lend itself to empty treatment of many subjects. In the wrong hands the manuals could, and doubtless did, encourage formal development at the expense of content and of genuine unity. But well used, as they are in Burton, these forms of development can be seen as "forms of thought" and even as metaphors for the plan of his book as a whole.

The device of inartificial arguments, or testimony, could seem, from a superficial view, a mere collection of what everyone else had to say about the subject, as padding. But one of Burton's temper would not consider that device a shallow one. Instead, the proof from the past was to be honored above current argument because it came from a time closer to the golden one. And to Burton, attempting to reason his audience into a state of health by every means possible, the technique might convince someone

who might not believe him; if Galen said so, then at least one reader could accept it as true. Burton saw his book as a preserver of past tradition, and this device assists in its becoming so.

The topic of contrast helps to give structure to the entire book. In large, the patterns of sickness and health, cause and cure, provide the themes which are seen in small in this passage when he contrasts kinds and view of jealousy. To see contrast at its most encompassing, we must remember Burton's conception of the shape of the world--with nature part of, but set against, super-nature, with good actively opposed by evil, and sickness against a clearly defined health. When the geography--or cosmography--of belief is more neatly mapped out, contrasts can be made more surely. And, despite his profound awareness of the difficulty of discerning one from another in this realm, Burton knew that within another, goodness and truth prevailed.

Even in the small-scale discussion of the causes and effects of jealousy is a miniature treatment of another pattern which helps to control the book. Understanding more about the operation of the physical universe today, we are far less sure of stating actual causes and effects; too many influences might be responsible for a phenomenon. Burton is in some ways more naïve than we when he lists such overwhelming kinds of causes of melancholy; at the same time, presenting

such a variety of causes forces us to diagnose our own problems more actively, to seek causes other than those we had impetuously decided upon. And he does not always credit his authorities with the final answer. It is on the basis of effect that Burton intends his book to be most efficacious; it testifies to his own beliefs in the traditional powers of language that he thought that through individual words and the shape of his sentences he could effect a change in his reader from sickness to health. This topic of invention is not just an empty form; Burton aims to cover causes and to create effects. This book is not just to be tasted; it should nourish the reader into physical and mental health.

Burton, then, worked from the closed, fixed rhetorical tradition. Not only does he give credence within his book to the chief principles we can call traditional; he also follows through with traditional forms. The fact that he does not call attention to his own practice (there is no E. K. in the margin praising his epanalepses) shows that he was accustomed to an encompassing view toward rhetoric that we, not he, would call outdated. But in Burton's lifetime views were being transformed. It is inconceivable that he could not be aware of some of them. But the changes lay not only in the metaphors men used to name the universe--and Burton was certainly aware of the new ideas of

Copernicus, Galileo, and Tycho Brahe. To reflect their shifting opinions of the world outside, men began to review their conceptions of the world within, the world that could be expressed in the words. The extent to which Burton accepted these changes and the influences they had upon his style are important.

As the new maps and discoveries resulted in men's seeing the cosmos as larger than they had thought and guided by different controls, the world of language was lessening in space and power. Radical shifts in men's views of language came about as they began to assess more carefully what words could do. Modern scholars have identified two of the most crucial shifts as the rejection of universals and a consequent lessening power of words and, second, a replacement in techniques of investigation of disputation by experiment.

The first change Ian Watt considers as the most important for literary style: the modern period beginning at the last part of the Seventeenth Century was a time "whose general intellectual orientation was most decisively separated from its classical and medieval heritage and by its rejection--or at least its attempted rejection--of universals."<sup>1</sup> As the medieval model began to break

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<sup>1</sup> Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1959), p. 12.



up, a model which provided that an almost mystical tie bound words to the things they signified, the conception of the power of language diminished. Metaphysical conceits, wittily linking natural and supernatural, were trimmed away and forsaken. A newer skepticism called for a sparer vocabulary in prose and verse. Watt shows how the concomitant, the newer outlook toward the weakened power of words, was held: "Modern realism found itself faced with the semantic problem. Words did not all stand for real objects, or did not stand for them in the same way, and philosophy was therefore faced with the problem of discovering their rationale. Locke's chapters at the end of the third Book of the Essay Concerning Human Understanding are probably the most important evidence of this trend in the seventeenth century."<sup>1</sup>

To imaginative literature--Frye's "fiction"--some of the strictures need not apply. But to the works that lie in the shadow-land between pure mimetic fiction and scientific formula, the shifts were highly important. The second change, then, what Howell identifies as the demand for "experiment rather than disputation as the chief instrument in the quest for the truth,"<sup>2</sup> has much

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<sup>1</sup>Watt, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>Howell, p. 346.

relevance to the non-fiction treatise. A cliché of late Seventeenth-Century style is Glanville's conscious trimming away of metaphor in his scientific writing. And this shift is certainly related to the first. Words are regarded as weaker in power because disputation according to ancient rhetorical modes no longer resulted in finding true conclusions. Too many times had simple experiments shown that argument by the accepted rules proved only old error; it did not square with the actual facts of velocity, the shapes of the stars, and the circulation of the blood that the scientists were investigating. For that reason, language was seen as a handmaiden; well-sterilized words could best be used to report experimental findings--if they were sufficiently trimmed of metaphoric suggestiveness.

Like Bacon, often imaged as Janus, Burton is one who lives in both divided and distinguished worlds of ancient and moderns though he was doubtless not aware that the chasm separating them was so deep. The statements he makes about the power of words, for example, could place him with either. When he says, "I respect matter, not words," he seems almost to be speaking in the voice of Sprat, who pleaded for a "close, naked, natural way of speaking." Yet this statement was made by a man who did not forsake the older ways to rebel for the new. As discussed earlier, Burton's respect for matter involves a respect for all levels of the world he thought

man could live in, natural and supernatural. It is true that he eschews Ciceronian harmony and emptiness, but because he still believes that, if words were used properly, according to Seneca's dictates, they could still embody many levels of matter.

A similar Janus-like image characterizes his conceptions about the power of sentence. He writes in the Senecan "mind-thinking" or "free-thinking" forms which were to provide some of the bases for later scientific prose. Like the virtuoso Sir Thomas Browne he lets his mind leap and ramble as it will. Like the libertine Montaigne he seems to find truth chiefly within his own, particular, self. But these postures are not new. The Senecan amble was a recognized form long before Galileo set himself against the old truths. And for Burton the freedom is there, but within a circumscribed limit. The impulsive freshness of his private notions is intended to be shared with others; if he has found something true, then others partaking of the traditional bond of community can find it so, too. And he is not enough of an experimenter to reach any conclusion genuinely revolutionary. He reached the old conclusions. Here the Digression of Air provides proof. He soars away both literally and metaphorically, but he returns to the traditional position: Tycho and Copernicus are only men, after all, and their theories do show some discrepancies

and illogicalities. Only in God's good time can we ever hope to have all the answers.

As one who saw his role as a transmitter of knowledge from the past to the present, and who did so with great copiousness and gusto, Burton uses an interesting image to define his role. A dwarf standing on the shoulders of a giant, he says, can see farther than the giant alone. This choice is interesting because the moderns later in the century chose it to prove their paradoxical belief that they were more ancient than the ancients. The direction they faced is the distinguishing feature: the moderns facing forward, Burton backward toward what he considered the source of knowledge. He even faced backward in the choice of the image, which came originally from Bernard of Chartres. For Burton this figure points out that he can choose from old and new, can exemplify them both. The important difference is that the truth he reaches is generally the old truth--reached, however, by some new channels.

Burton's ability to walk in the newer ways as well as the old has troubled one contemporary student of Burton. Much upset with Burton's inconsistency, Leonard Goldstein has attributed what he considers chief characteristics of his style, "confusion" and "peculiarity," to his mixing of ancient and modern ways. First, Goldstein finds the "manifestations of the scientific method" when

Burton uses the methods of the newer science: Goldstein regards the copious examples as the equivalent of the scientist's data. The second influence he calls "intuition...devoid of the inner compulsion towards coherence and conceptual precision."<sup>1</sup> It seems to me that in damning Burton for being what he is, Goldstein has failed to see that some of the bases of his style--the catalogs, the general copiousness--belong as much to the older tradition as to the new; that the lack of coherence is often only playfully so: behind the book is a clearly logical structure. Most unfair are the criticisms of "quaintness." It is a species of provincialism to see men of other times as "quaint"; in doing so we impose upon them our own standards of consistency, which are not necessarily consistent themselves. Burton's mind worked upon the materials at hand; that he failed to see all the implications of the new science is not as serious a condemnation as Goldstein thinks. Doubtless we will be proved gargoyles one day.

We should therefore examine Burton from internal, not external standards of consistency. And internally, his style exemplifies what we might characterize as order in the midst of apparent disorder. The wealth of words jumbled together results

<sup>1</sup>Goldstein, p. 68.

not in confusion; there is always a point to the juxtaposition of slang with grandiose terms, of Latin with Anglo-Saxon. That point could be related to one of many purposes in the Anatomy-- satire, irony, sympathy. And although some of the catalogs common to Burton appear to be just struck off, closer examination reveals careful attention to sound and rhythmic effects. In the catalog including "breviaries, bulls, and hallowed beans" examined earlier, for instance, the satiric effects are too obvious to cause us to dismiss Burton as an unconscious artist. Within the myriad of sentence types in the Anatomy, sentences which seem to dart this way and that, there can be found recurring types, forms which show Burton's fundamental clarity of vision and sense of direction in his ideas. The quick breaks are there for a purpose: to draw in the audience, to sound out other aspects of the topic, to show his own deep involvement in the material. And in seeming to express only his own personality, the sentences of Democritus Junior lead the audience through a variety of experiences to arrive at the conclusions he would have them reach. Constantly making adjustments to the parentheses and broken syntax, answering the rhetorical questions he tosses out, smiling ironically at the fools he exhibits by understatement, the readers engage actively in experiencing the book. And they come to appreciate the learning and wisdom, the gusto and deep sympathy within his lifetime work, The Anatomy of Melancholy.

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