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THE *ANATOMY OF MELANCHOLY* AS PROSE SATIRE

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THESIS

THE ANATOMY OF MELANCHOLY AS PROSE SATIRE

(Summary)

Robert Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy has been interpreted in a variety of ways by three centuries of critics, but only lately has emphasis been placed on its relationship to satire. Analysis shows that the Anatomy is deeply indebted to the classical satiric tradition, and, equally, is one of a group of peculiarly English prose satires that flourished in the sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries.

Satire itself is a literary kind the theory of which has been full of contradictions; but in Renaissance England there existed a very precise notion of what satire--in its formal verse manifestation at least--ought to be. Satire was thought to be etymologically related to the "satyr," the shaggy woodland deity, and, accordingly, a decorum demanding crudeness and obscurity was attached to it. A second mark of this formal verse satire was the recurrent use of the image of anatomical dissection, appropriate enough in satire of a virulent sort. The product of these characteristics is clearly visible in such formal verse satires as the notorious Scourge of Villainie by Marston, the relatively milder Virgidemiarum of Joseph Hall, or the waspish, anonymously-written Whipper Pamphlets.

During the same period, however, a body of extremely popular prose works was being produced, including extravaganzas like Harington's Metamorphosis of Ajax, and the vituperative tracts of Nashe and Harvey. These prose works are strikingly similar to the formal verse satires both in tone and technique; they, too, have as their speaker a persona in the satyr-mold; they display an even greater ingenuity in their use of linguistic crudities, colloquial obscenities, and veiled personal references, than their verse counterparts; significantly, also, they employ the image of anatomical dissection with great frequency, in some instances making it the dominant motif. It is to this group of prose satires that Robert Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy belongs.

The Anatomy of Melancholy, first published in 1621 in a relatively compact form, achieved a widespread fame immediately, and went through five editions, all corrected and enlarged, in its author's life; the sixth edition, the last to be proofed and expanded by Burton, was published posthumously in 1651. The Anatomy has unmistakable links with the other prose satires of the day: it is, for example, dependent upon the anatomy-image, and its speaker, Democritus Junior, is a satiric persona with many of the attributes of the satyr. But the Anatomy is also an offshoot of the classical European tradition of satire, and makes abundant use of the great

satirists of antiquity, particularly Lucian, as well as of the modern representatives of the tradition such as Aretino and Rabelais.

That Burton's aim was to produce a satire as early as the 1621 edition can be seen from an analysis of that not-easily-available work. Lacking many of the embellishments of the 1651 edition (it is some 60% shorter), its vision is all the more readily grasped. It reveals a mastery of the techniques of satire that its author had displayed in his first publication, the satiric drama Philosophaster, but it also embodies a philosophy that had darkened with the passing of time: Burton, unlike his persona, is no ingenuous pedant full of unfounded admiration for the human race; rather, one sees him mercilessly dissect the great institutions of Western civilization, as he knew them, and exhibit their futility. Significantly, suicide is defended at several climactic points in the Anatomy, and the first edition closes with a "Conclusion of the Author to the Reader" that reinforces the pervasive satiric vision.

A study of the post-1621 editions consolidates the view that the Anatomy is satire. The additions and revisions, especially to the preliminary matter and the Preface, leave the reader in no doubt as to the tone of what he is reading and the intent of what is to follow; even the apparently "scientific" passages have their function within the overall satiric pattern. Everywhere, the post-1621 editions reveal Burton polishing with loving care, endlessly interpolating the ironic phrase, the incongruous allusion, or weaving long satiric passages to enhance further the original effect.

CHAPTER I

THE VAGARIES OF BURTON CRITICISM AND A THEORY OF SATIRE

There has been a great diversity of critical opinion over the exact nature of Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy. It has been categorized as the disorganized rambling of a pedant who was old-fashioned even in his own day, as a major scientific treatise, as a great Renaissance religious work, or, more commonly, as a hotch-potch whose aim is either confused or confusing.[1] The problem of ascertaining Burton's aim and the nature of his Anatomy, however, is compounded by the lack of a definitive edition of the work. Burton supervised the revision and publication of the first five editions, and had personally

[1]In these introductory pages (1 - 7), I am providing only the barest outline of the variety of critical opinions. Later in the chapter, they will be considered rather more fully. As for the four views exemplified here: a typical proponent of the notion that Burton was an erratic pedant is the anonymous essayist who, in Cornhill Magazine, April 1880, p. 490, patronises the Anatomy by suggesting that it is "a patchwork, stuck together with scissors and paste, a queer amorphous mass, in spite of its ostensible plan." Still, he does find "a real charm in the old gentleman." Foremost among those who suggest that the Anatomy is an important scientific work is Sir William Osler, "Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy," Yale Review, III (Jan., 1914), 252, asserting that it is "a great medical treatise." A number of critics have attached themselves to the opinion that the Anatomy is essentially a religious work; the most recent of these is Miss Patricia Vicari, who has delivered a paper before the 1971 meeting of the Association of Canadian University Teachers of English, entitled "Robert Burton: The Anatomy as Sermon, and the Sermon as Anatomy." The most useful Burton critic, in many senses, Lawrence Babb, Sanity in Bedlam (Michigan State University Press, 1959), considers that there is "serious disunity" in the Anatomy, and suggests a confusion in Burton's mind.

prepared the sixth edition, which was unfortunately not published till 1651, eleven years after his death. Yet the modern standard edition of the Anatomy, Shilleto's, is a version of the error-ridden seventh edition, which Shilleto assumed to be a faithful copy of the sixth.[1] Nor does any modern edition, for logistic reasons, attempt to cope with the problem of somehow illustrating the gradual development of the text, which is some sixty per cent longer in the sixth edition than it was in the first.

The two problems--critical indecision and lack of a comprehensive text--are closely interlinked in the case of the Anatomy, for readers have been deprived of an opportunity to study the growth of the work and the author's continuing preoccupations. Yet a sound critical approach can only be enhanced by such a study, and, conversely, through it, improper emphases stand a good chance of being exposed.[2] With respect to the present thesis, a study of the additions and revisions to the 1621 edition lends weight to the contention that the Anatomy of Melancholy is basically a work whose unity lies in its satiric character.

[1]The dates of publication of the six editions are as follows: first, 1621; second, 1624; third, 1628; fourth, 1632; fifth, 1638; and sixth, 1651. The Shilleto text (George Bell and Sons, London, 1896) was based on the 1660 edition.

[2]R. G. Hallwachs, "Additions and Revisions in the Second Edition of Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy" (Diss. Princeton 1942), casts doubt on Osler's interpretation in this way, showing that Burton makes no effort to expand the much-mooted "scientific" areas in the second edition.

Many readers have detected the presence of satire in the *Anatomy*, to be sure, and one group has gone so far as to describe it as "Menippean satire." This term, however, comes to be a specialised label for a form of extended essay, and lacks the connotations of "satire" in the orthodox sense.[1] Burton's *Anatomy*, in any case, is satiric in a much more basic sense than has been hitherto proposed. Not only does it have the characteristics of satire (in the commonly accepted sense), but it also has specific affinities with a whole school of Renaissance prose writers who certainly regarded themselves as satirists, but whom scholars have generally been loath to classify. The writers of formal verse satire in the Renaissance, on the other hand, have been studied much more intensively, and their work has been shown to contain a number of notable distinguishing features:[2] it uses the "loose" *satura* form;[3] it employs a satyr-figure as its speaker;

[1]Northrop Frye is the leader of this group. His suggestions as outlined in the *Anatomy of Criticism* (New York: Atheneum, 1966), will receive a more detailed evaluation later in this chapter. A more "orthodox" (in my view) definition of satire is proposed below, p. 53.

[2]Chapter II is devoted to the study of Renaissance prose satire. Works dealing with the formal verse are: R. M. Alden, *The Rise of Formal Satire in England* (Philadelphia, 1899); O. J. Campbell, *Comicall Satyre in Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida* (San Marino, 1965); A. Kernan, *The Cankered Muse* (New Haven, 1959); and John Peter, *Complaint and Satire in Early English Literature* (Oxford, 1956).

[3]I am indebted to Irvin Ehrenpreis, *The "Types" Approach to Literature* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1945), for the terms "kind," "form," and "mode," as they will be used throughout this thesis. Northrop Frye, *Anatomy*, and René Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature*

it is distinguished, accordingly, by excessively crude language; its main image comes from medicine, and particularly from the practice of anatomical dissection; it is frequently virulent in its onslaughts despite its protestations of humane concern--so much so, apparently, that in 1599 formal verse satire was outlawed and many volumes of it were consigned to the fire.

The works of the prose satirists of the sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries in England can be characterised in the same way as the formal verse satire. Prose works like Nashe's Anatomie of Absurditie (1589), Harvey's Pierces Supererogation (1593) and Sir John Harington's Metamorphosis of Ajax (1596)[1] contain features similar to some in the most virulent outpourings of the least savoury of the verse satirists, Marston. They usually have as their speaker a satyr-persona who is inclined to vilify his unfortunate enemies with unflagging zest and

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(New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1942) denounce the word "genre" as "an unpronounceable and alien thing," and "kind" seems an acceptable English equivalent for what we normally understand by "genre." "Form" is used to describe the literary vehicles (such as "novel," "short story," "anatomy") for the various "kinds." "Mode" means "the manner characteristic of a kind"; we may find several "modes" operating within one such complex work as King Lear.

[1]In Chapters II and III of this thesis, there is an analysis of the major prose-works of these writers, in which the close relationship between their satires and those of the formal verse satirists is shown. A scrutiny of the revealing "flyting" between Nashe and Harvey makes it clear that each was a master of the satiric arts of invective and abuse.

abundant moral indignation--saeva indignatio is the pass-word; they tend to use the satura form because of the opportunities it provides for tangential abuse of all and sundry; the major metaphor they employ is the pervasive anatomical one; and their language is frequently as crude as their imaginations can make it.

Burton's Anatomy seems to me to be a member of this group of prose satires, and would quite probably be recognized as such by the majority of his contemporary readers. Its speaker, Democritus Junior, is a satiric persona, sublimating the functions of doctor and priest in that of the satirist.[1] The Anatomy is written in the satura form, and parodies the medical treatise which very aptly supplies the basic medical image, the signature of Renaissance satire. It is an epitome, too, of the most sophisticated and explicit satiric devices,[2] assailing multitudes of targets in keeping with its stated aim of examining a universal disease.

The Anatomy's affinities with Renaissance prose satire appear more clearly from an examination of the relatively compact first edition.

[1]For information and speculation upon the origins of satire, I shall rely heavily upon R. C. Elliot's The Power of Satire (Princeton, 1960), the only major work dealing exclusively with the roots of the satiric mode.

[2]Sister Mary Claire Randolph, "The Medical Concept in English Renaissance Satiric Theory," SP, XXXVIII (1941), supplies us with a list of the popular satiric tools of the day, including catalogues, mini-anatomies, mock-odysseys, mock-encomia, irony, ridicule, diminutio, invective, and many others. Burton makes use of them all with superlative effect.

As an analysis of this edition indicates, there was no confusion in Burton's mind, at least, over his aim: it is a satire on the widespread proportions of human folly, and is no more a scientific work than Gulliver's Travels is an authentic traveler's tale. The technical passages are as often as not merely parodic, for they are the crutch upon which the satura must lean, and are not an end in themselves. The first edition also contains exclusively the "Conclusion of the Author to the Reader," a satiric apologia at the end of the work, which brings the Anatomy full circle from the "Satyricall Preface," and shows the consistency in the vision that has informed the entire work. Throughout the first edition, one can see the careful shaping of the persona's character, sometimes as the satirist himself, sometimes as the satirised; and one can savour Burton's mastery of the whole range of satiric devices, from the dominant mock-odyssey motif to the sophisticated irony that marks the interplay between author, persona, and subject.

In the editions after 1621, Burton continues to sharpen and deepen his satiric vision. Passages with potential for further satiric development he augmented with zest, and often, when the satire was not sufficiently explicit, as in the title and preliminary matter of the first edition, he added large gobbets of material to remedy the defect. The early editions were remarkably successful, and Burton, whilst still keeping up the pretence of a scientific purpose, made virtually no additions to the "technical" material after 1621.

Two factors of importance, then, seem to indicate that Burton's _Anatomy_ is a satiric work whose aim is by no means confused: its relationship to the group of prose satires that was popular in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; and the evidence supplied by a study of the additions and revisions to the post-1621 editions of the _Anatomy_, which suggests that Burton's vision was satiric. Since, however, the bulk of Burton critics over three hundred years have not considered the _Anatomy_ to be satire, it becomes necessary and illuminating to examine their opinions more closely, to assess their conclusions, and to ponder whether, in fact, the label "satire," no matter how contentious, is not the most appropriate for a work like the _Anatomy_.

It is always a rewarding pursuit for the student of literature to scrutinize the critical treatment meted out to a particular writer over the years, though it is a well-warranted platitude that, as often as not, one learns more about the critic than about his author from such a study. In the case of one who, in the course of three hundred years, has received a great deal of critical notice, it is all the more illuminating.[1] Burton's _Anatomy of Melancholy_ has run the gamut;

[1]William R. Mueller, in _The Anatomy of Robert Burton's England_ (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1952), and Richard L. Nochimson, in "Robert Burton: a Study of the Man, his Work, and his Critics," Diss. Columbia 1967, have both given rather selective outlines of major trends in Burton criticism, Nochimson's being apparently very much indebted to Mueller's. Mueller shows that the critical trends do indeed mirror the ages in which they occur, Nochimson demonstrates that some very superficial work on the part of biographers has led to misconceptions about Burton. My concern in examining the critics is to evince the notion that it is confusion over the essential nature of Burton's major opus that has led to the conflicting interpretations of it.

on the one hand he is charged, like that unfortunate don of Lord Macaulay's "whose natural spark of wit was smothered by his pedantry," with collecting "the sweepings of the Bodleian,"[1] and on the other hand he is lauded as the foremost exponent of a recently rediscovered literary genre.[2] An examination of the meanderings of the stream of Burton criticism, however, shows little in the way of "progress" in critical appreciation that would give rise to any complacency about the superiority of modern critical approaches, but it does demonstrate effectively the perennial problems which the Anatomy has presented to all who have endeavoured to draw that leviathan out with a hook; from such a realization it is hoped that certain positions will emerge, upon which the superstructure of this thesis will rest.

Critics of the Anatomy of Melancholy have been divided over the true nature of the work. Broadly speaking, there are three main approaches to it, each with the "by streams and rillets" beloved of Burton. The first school has tended to emphasize the utilitarian function of the Anatomy, though often, as with each of the other schools, not completely ignoring all other aspects of the book. The "utilitarians" feel that the Anatomy is, by design, a scientific or educational text-book;

[1]Quoted in F. P. Wilson's amusing and interesting Seventeenth Century Prose (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960), p. 33.

[2]Northrop Frye, The Anatomy of Criticism is the main propounder of the view. Its merits will be discussed below, p. 22, and throughout.

the more sympathetically inclined of them suggest that it is rewarding reading for the student seeking to amass information on an encyclopedic scale. This "utilitarian" group is counterbalanced by a second, for whom the personality of the author is most important. This school finds the Anatomy to be a mirror of an erratic but attractive representative of a once-vital way of life now defunct; also, this group sees in the personality of the author a more positive unifying principle that permeates the Anatomy and explains the book's apparent diffuseness. Finally, there is a group of critics who have concentrated their attention on the literary form of the Anatomy, attempting to define it in terms of its literary affinities; it is upon the approach of this last group that this thesis depends, as I have hinted in the opening pages. I will deal first, however, with the "utilitarians."

The utilitarian approach to Burton, whilst predominating amongst the earlier critics, has had its atavistic modern support. In its original manifestation it appears as either an awe-stricken regard for Burton's erudition, or as a slighting and often spiteful contempt for his "damnable iteration." The Anatomy is called "a book of philology," in which Burton has "piled up a variety of much excellent learning."[1]

[1]Thomas Fuller, The Worthies of England, ed. J. Freeman (London: Allen and Unwin, 1952), pp. 320-21. Unfortunately, one has to suspect Fuller's authority: for instance, in describing Burton's work, he says cryptically and parenthetically, "None to the native to describe a country," and one has a nasty suspicion that he is confusing Robert with William, his brother, and author of A Description of Leicestershire (London: Jaggard, 1622).

Anthony à Wood, the validity of whose information is often questionable, may in this instance be taken safely to reflect the opinion of his age when he tells us that the Anatomy is a book "so full of variety of reading that Gentlemen who have lost their time and are put to a push for invention, may furnish themselves with matter [from it] for common or scholastic discourse and writing."[1] This is a striking foreshadowing of Lord Byron's comment, "If the reader has patience to go through [Burton's] volumes, he will be more improved for literary conversation than by the perusal of any twenty other works with which I am acquainted"[2] --a rather back-handed compliment. Doctor Johnson's comment on Burton is well known, and whilst we may have reason to doubt that he rose two hours earlier in the morning to read the Anatomy--according to Boswell, he never rose early for anything--his remark that it was "overloaded with quotation"[3] strikes the familiar chord and corresponds too much with other contemporary estimations to be dismissed: many critics have

[1]Anthony à Wood, Athenae Oxoniensis (London, 1721), quoted in Paul Jordan-Smith in his edition of Philosophaster (Stanford, 1931), p. 282. à Wood is notoriously inaccurate and speculative in his pseudo-history. One gets the impression that he has read the Anatomy, or at least the Preface, and has taken literally all apparently personal remarks that are there and applied them to the author.

[2]George Gordon Byron, Letters, ed. T. More (London, 1930), I, 98.

[3]J. E. Brown, ed., The Critical Opinions of Samuel Johnson (Princeton University Press, 1926), p. 300.

felt since that the Burtonian rifts contain too much ore. Amongst the more modern holders of the view, this damning statement is found: "no book bears a closer resemblance to the works of marginal Prynne,"[1] a remark calculated to offend the memory of the Burton who launched the bitter attack upon Prynne and his ilk in the Third Partition.

It is, however, an aficionado of Burton's (and there are many from Lamb onwards--a group who make no notable critical contribution), Paul Jordan-Smith, who makes the definitive statement on Burton's erudition:

> It covers almost every field of human interest: medicine, dietetics, psychiatry, climatology, ethics, education, theology, government, magic, astrology, travel, horticulture, and both the pleasures and pains of love. Add to all this the fact that on every subject the greatest masters of his own and every previous age are summoned to give their testimony; that the whole is enlivened by the poets of England, Greece and Rome, and by a multitude of droll, Decameronian stories, and even then one gets but a slight notion of the inclusive nature of this old book.[2]

[1]Arthur W. Fox, A Book of Bachelors (A. Constable and Co., 1899), p. 434.

[2]Paul Jordan-Smith, Bibliographia Burtoniana (Stanford, 1931), p. 4. Jordan-Smith's critical statements are, to put it mildly, impressionistic: for example, he informs us that given a choice of books to take to a desert island, he would opt for the Anatomy--not the best recommendation for it, one takes leave to suggest. At times, however, in defence of his idol, he becomes witty, as when he dismisses the idea that Bacon is the real author of the Anatomy (p. 67): "It would seem that Bacon, taking a day off from the production of Don Quixote, Montaigne's Essays, Shakespeare's poems and plays, The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia, The Faerie Queene, and other odds and ends of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century literature, on both sides of the Channel, not to make account of the works bearing his own name, did first the Treatise (1586), and then, thirty-five years later, enlarged and revised it into the Anatomy of Melancholy."

Such catalogues of the Anatomy's "ingredients" are the staple of most of the literary histories.

In general, the twentieth-century version of the "utilitarian" approach envisages the Anatomy as primarily an example of Renaissance scientific writing--a view adumbrated as early as 1730 by Thomas Hearne, who, in commenting upon the declining popularity of Burton in the eighteenth century (the nadir of his reputation), voices the standard view we have already noticed: "it hath been a common-place book for filchers" (like Sterne). His next comment is however of more interest to us:

> now, tis disregarded, and a good fair perfect copy (although of the 7th impression), may be purchased for one shilling, well bound, which occasioned a Gentleman yesterday . . . to say that Sir Isaac Newton (he believed) would also in time be turned to waste paper, an observation which is very likely to prove true.[1]

The analogy with Newton the scientist has proved false, in that the reputation of Burton has grown since the doldrums of the eighteenth century, and is now fairly established--a course of events which may indicate that it is not to Burton's scientific contribution that one ought to look in search of his real worth. But the critics with whom

[1]Thomas Hearne, Reliquiae Hearnianae; the Remains of Thomas Hearne, M.A. of Edmund Hall; ed. J. Buchanan-Brown (London: Centaur Press, 1960), p. 409. Again, it has to be admitted that Hearne, picturesque as he may seem is not a reliable source, except insomuch as he reflects eighteenth-century opinion. His comments, with the exception of the ones above, seem to be from à Wood, down to the very language; for example, that Burton was a "most facetious and pleasant companion;" indeed, so careless is he that he mentions à Wood in his next sentence, thus confirming one's suspicions, albeit unwittingly.

I shall now deal are determined that the basis for our continuing to read Burton rests not on his literary merits, but on his importance in the history of scientific advance. And the greatest proponent of this line is the formidable Sir William Osler, who pontificates:

> The Anatomy of Melancholy is a great medical treatise, orderly in arrangement, serious in purpose, and weighty beyond belief with authorities.[1]

The area of Burton's scientific effort has been even further delimited by another observer, who describes him as a pioneer

> who devoted his life to the study of mental aberration, and was concerned with no other branch of medicine, except in so far as it bore on his central interest.[2]

Burton is acclaimed as one of the founders of modern psychiatry in this view.[3]

[1]Osler, "Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy," 252.

[2]Bergen Evans, The Psychiatry of Robert Burton (New York, 1944), p. 1.

[3]Evans' book indulges in the dangerous if once popular practice of explaining the psyche, and thereby the "intention" of the author, through unconscious admissions made in his creative work. Often this method shows nothing more than the insensitivity of the critic to the artistic consciousness of a writer. So we find such irrelevancies as this: "The assumption that she [Burton's mother] was domineering and unaffectionate towards him--or at least that he thought she was--is supported by the intensity of feeling with which he so often alludes in the Anatomy to the cruelty and indifference of parents" (p. 6). Evans continues, "He [Burton] makes it quite clear, in the course of his book, that he had suffered an unhealable narcissistic injury in his childhood, that left him resentful, envious, scornful of himself and of others." The literary value of such comments is very difficult to ascertain, and their psychoanalytical validity seems doubtful, since they rest upon a very imperfect notion of the nature of the work.

Perhaps the most aggressive and uncompromising statement of this scientific branch of the utilitarian school is as follows:

> A scholar who wrote in Latin was assured of an international reputation, and Burton's aim was to write a medical text-book. Burton would be much surprised to find out that his book is read only by those who find it amusing . . . .[1]

Since Burton did not write in Latin anyway, the point is not well taken.

This large and prominently represented group of critics who tend to treat Burton as scientist, or encyclopedist, or commonplace collector, is counterbalanced by a group of critics who are primarily interested in some aspect of the personality of Burton, which, they feel, pervades the work. Some of them regard the *Anatomy* as a case-book which shows what an odd creature its compiler was, others suggest that Burton's personality is that evasive unifying principle in the *Anatomy* which caused so much head-scratching.

One of this group's favourite and most bizarre attitudes has been a protective and possessive feeling towards the "fantastic old great man."[2] Lamb, for example, was full of righteous indignation at the resurrection of his protegé in modern-looking editions--he associated the *Anatomy*'s peculiarly Burtonian flavour with the very appearance of the volume which encompasses his effort, seemingly preferring that he should be dead than read. When, in the present century, we find an

[1]E. L. Black, "Burton the Anatomist," *English*, VII (1949), 26.

[2]Charles Lamb, *Works*, ed. E. V. Lucas (London, 1903-5), V, 27.

article entitled "Quaint Old Treatise of Love," we are sufficiently warned not to be surprised at Burton's being described as "this strange old pedant" or at his work being discussed with good-humoured though misplaced superiority.[1]

An extension of this viewpoint became more popular in the twentieth century, when emphasis was laid on Burton's attractive "personality" as the dominating force and saving grace in the whole "amorphous mass:"

> The Anatomy of Melancholy, like Southey's The Doctor, is essentially a cento, an immense collection of quotations from a very wide reading, moulded into a book by the strong personality of the compiler.[2]

The Anatomy is also referred to as

> The multifarious expression of a nature as quaint, fantastic, various and mocking as that which created, stone by stone, with infinite labour, that great edifice [Notre Dame].[3]

[1]Gamaliel Bradford, "Quaint Old Treatise of Love: Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy," Sewanee Review, XIX (April, 1911), 183.

[2]Richard Aldington, "Burton the Anatomist," Nation and Athenaeum, XXXVI (March 21, 1925), 861. The comparison between the Anatomy and The Doctor is of interest, since there is an implicit recognition of the generic similarity involved. The Doctor bears many resemblances to the picaresque novel, but also has the ingredients of the Menippean satire that Frye prescribes. Southey's doctor, however, is much more akin in temperament to Sir Thomas Browne, and, indeed, one of the chapters is headed, "Points of Similitude and Dissimilitude between Sir Thomas Browne and Doctor Dove." The book might almost be read as the development of a nineteenth-century Thomas Browne. It was about this time that Burton was coming back into favour.

[3]F. Mortimer Clapp, Scribner's Magazine, LXXXVII (1930), 221; This kind of analogy between the arts reaches its apotheosis in Wylie Sypher's work. Burton's Anatomy has some of the characteristics that Sypher would associate with baroque.

The critics who make such statements, since they see the personality of Burton as the unifying principle in the _Anatomy_, devote much of their attention to speculating upon Burton's character. A typical example of this tendency can be found in Middleton Murry's comments; he too finds the personality of the man to be the pervasive force, and, for him, the fascination of the work rests in extricating from it the psyche of its author, who is "always ready to gallop off with the dictionary thundering along behind him."[1]

This attitude can be detected in much more recent critics. One of them, for instance, finds the _Anatomy_ to be the work of a collector and humanist--characteristics that he feels are of value no longer; but, once again, the saving grace is in the man: "Time cannot dull the principal achievement of the _Anatomy_, that of the raconteur."[2] Richard L. Nochimson, in his dissertation, still finds the personality of Burton and not the dissemination of erudition to be the key factor, and one that so comes to dominate the whole work that "he becomes more openly ambitious and (as the book progresses) shows an increasing lack of respect for

[1]John Middleton Murry, _Countries of the Mind_, First Series (Oxford, 1931), p. 77. Murry's perspective is essentially that of don looking at fellow-don; he is not aware of any tradition other than that of the frustrated academic operating in Burton.

[2]Siegbert Prawer, "Burton's _Anatomy of Melancholy_," _Cambridge Journal_, I (1947-48), 687. Prawer sees Burton as clergyman, doctor and social commentator, each role being played separately and unsuccessfully; he is not aware of a possible harmony behind the apparent fragmentation, one that we will discuss when we come to talk about satire and its traditions.

respected and revered figures of the past." Nochimson, too, spends much of his efforts on biographical study, and is intent on challenging the traditional notion of Burton as the man incapable of any self-expression and utterly reliant upon the secondhand advice of "ancients" or "pedants".[1] The converse of Nochimson's approach is found in the view that the "failure" of the Anatomy stems from the inability of the author to find himself: Burton lacks personal vision, the argument runs; his grasp of the world is "untamed, unfocused;" and ultimately:

> His was the trying experience of more than one sensitive scholar of the Renaissance who grappled with mammoth problems, failed to make the necessary reconciliations, and lived out an uncommitted career with an unsettled mind.[2]

The third group of critics consists of those who are concerned with the literary form or formlessness of the Anatomy; they have been attentive to Burton the social critic or satirist, the attacker of the corruptions of his own society, and of mankind in general, through his literary art. Many of the commentators I have already mentioned have shown an awareness of a certain satirical tone in specific passages, but have evidently felt that it was a relatively unimportant aspect of the total work. In the twentieth century, a reawakening interest in the study of genre (or "kinds") has led some of the Burton critics to examine

[1] Nochimson, p. 246.

[2] James Roy King, Studies in Six Seventeenth Century Writers (Ohio University Press, 1966), p. 91.

the _Anatomy_ for the characteristics of the satiric mode. Early in the century we find references to the "lightness" of Burton's vision:

> Did Burton take himself so seriously? Of solemnity he was incapable, and time after time, when he is treading the skirts of gravity, and is on the point of being tripped up, he dances off lightly and cracks his jest as he passes on to his next sleight of hand. He plays with his subject, plays with his folly, plays with his observation of man and his inordinate acquaintance with books, and plays incessantly with his own extravagant sensations.[1]

Such opinions are refreshing in that they allow Burton a sense of humour; but they stop at that, and make the _Anatomy_ into a rather pedantic piece of entertainment. The critic runs away, in this case, with the extensions of his own metaphor and the work of art is an excuse for it. This, however, is progress, and similar statements with a similar bent, crying out for amplification, begin to emerge:

> . . . Burton's theme is as little to his main purpose as Rabelais' fable. Each is a mere excuse for humour and rhetorical embroidery. His attempts to cure the disease which he detected in every manifestation of human folly, are neither serious nor seriously meant. He was less intent to find a remedy for others than to indulge his own genius, and merely rejoiced that he had chosen a subject which should express his erudite fancy.[2]

The analogy with Rabelais marks a significant advance in comparative thinking, but is explored no further. Douglas Bush, with typical

[1]John Freeman, "Burton the Anatomist," _Spectator_ 5073 (Sept., 1925), 451.

[2]Charles Whibley, _Literary Portraits_ (New York, 1920), p. 282.

insight, talks about the omnipresence of the satire, yet is unwilling to accord it major importance: "But though Burton is here and everywhere a realistic satirist, a detached observer of the human comedy, he is much more than that."[1] This final phrase reveals a view of satire by Bush which is full of implied reservations about the merits of satire, a traditional attitude which will be discussed later.

Certain of the critics have concentrated their efforts upon the "Satyricall Preface" of Democritus Junior to the Reader, a satire in a fairly recognizable format. Burton's "utopia" is seen as not just a "witty fancy," but as a clear denunciation of "the idleness of an exploiting class maintained at the cost of the suffering of poor workers," and advocating

> direct pleading before judges, uniformity of buildings, education of children in their fathers' trades, provision of hospitals for the sick, and abolition of pillage and devastation of enemy lands.[2]

Mueller, in three excellent pieces on the Preface, thinks of it as a satire and of the three following Partitions as a serious effort on Burton's part to cure the ills that he has exhibited there. He is in essential agreement with Patrick, reiterating that Burton is no mere

[1]Douglas Bush, English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 297.

[2]J. Max Patrick, "Robert Burton's Utopianism," PQ, XXVII (1948), 345-58. Patrick proceeds to contend that Bacon's utopian vision (as articulated in The New Atlantis) is heavily indebted to Burton.

literary dabbler, enjoying the exercise of his own virtuosity, and quite unconcerned about the abuses he treats of:

> Burton's satire is direct . . . he describes the world as he sees it, hoping to awaken less perceptive and less thoughtful people to its evils. He is neither subtle nor oblique; he demands no suspension of disbelief. His satire bears a marked distinction from Swift's "Voyage to Lilliput," for example. The reader accepts Lilliput as Lilliput before he accepts it as England or as the world of the six-foot man; Burton raises his curtain on the six-foot man. Swift, particularly in the first two voyages of his Travels, places between the reader and the world a naive Gulliver initially impressed by the splendid achievements of the Lilliputians and distressed by the Brobdingnagian Emperor's narrow views on government and warfare. As the reader becomes increasingly aware of the distinction between the sophistication of Swift and the naivete of Gulliver, the gap between the reader and the real world closes. In Burton's satire, 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 stage, as a Comedy of Errors, and himself sometimes as actor, sometimes as spectator and sometimes as director, once removed from the world itself.[1]

The most recently published, extensive treatment of the Anatomy in English[2] is Lawrence Babb's Sanity in Bedlam, a title that is not only

[1]William R. Mueller, "Robert Burton's 'Satyricall Preface'," MLQ, XV (1954), 32. Whilst it is satisfying to those who take the Anatomy as satire to see it treated seriously in this way (and the comparison with Gulliver's Travels is a particularly apt one), yet there are a number of limitations to Mueller's view. He omits any treatment of the satiric persona, Democritus Junior, the complexity of whose role he does not appear to notice, although such distancing of author from reader is the very point of his analogy. I shall be treating the matter at length later in this thesis.

[2]I emphasize "English," for there is a more up-to-date work on the Anatomy in French, Jean Robert Simon's Robert Burton (1577-1740) et l'Anatomie de la Mélancolie (Paris: Didier, 1964). It is a lengthy treatment of almost every aspect of Burton's life and works, clearing up biographical matters, and examining the Anatomy from the historical

applicable to Burton's own position in his society, but to Babb's attempt to decipher the Anatomy's form. As such, his effort is successful, but Babb also proposes his solution to the problem of deciding upon the true nature of the work by attributing a deficiency to the Anatomy. Such a solution surely has to be justified in terms of the individual reader's response to the work's totality; Babb asserts:

> The Anatomy is not just the book which Burton originally planned to write. In the book which he actually produced, a purpose is superimposed upon a purpose. He has written something which is both a psychiatric treatise and a commentary upon men and manners. Many readers have doubtless been confused by the resulting duality, and some may have felt that disunity was a serious weakness in the book.[1]

Yet in the final analysis, Babb's is the most useful piece of introductory criticism that has been produced so far, and helps to fill the gaps that are inevitably left in the absence of a definitive edition of the Anatomy.

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perspective. Simon sees Burton as belonging to the line of Renaissance thinkers that includes Ficino, Pico, Erasmus and Montaigne, all of whom show the same tendency to copia, and who are often distinguished by inconsistency and even apparent negligence. Though extremely formal himself, Simon has little to say on the form that Burton adopts.

[1] Sanity in Bedlam, p. 28. Babb himself is not at all put out by "duality" and "disunity;" he consoles himself thus: "It may be that Burton should have done it differently. But if he had planned and written more rationally and differently, his book might have lacked a good deal of the spontaneity and the peculiar flavour that it has. It is doubtful in any case that the author, being Robert Burton, could have written otherwise than he did." We may find Babb's contention that Burton's strength lies in his weakness to be a bit specious, and his finding that Burton could not have written other than he did is surely an odd kind of literary judgment.

At last we come to what we may perhaps feel to be the most enlightened and enlightening group of contributors to the "literary" school--and they are by far the smallest offshoot. They are principally interested in a re-examination of many of the least clear but most dearly held critical approaches and pieces of jargon in the field of literature. Northrop Frye, the foremost amongst them, sets out to demonstrate the vagueness of much traditional thinking on literature, holding that in questions of genre especially there is a conveniently euphoric haze that generations of critics have been, somehow, reluctant to dissipate:

> Asked what form of prose fiction _Gulliver's Travels_ belongs to, there are few critics who, if they could give the answer 'Menippean satire,' would regard it as knowledge essential for dealing with the book, although some notion of what a novel is is surely a prerequisite for dealing with a serious novelist.[1]

Having introduced the term "Menippean satire," Frye goes on to speak of the _Anatomy of Melancholy_ thus:

> This creative treatment of exhaustive erudition is the organizing principle of the greatest Menippean satire in English before Swift, Burton's _Anatomy of Melancholy_.[2]

Frye is thus the first English critic to place the _Anatomy_ in its entirety within the category of satire. Menippean satire is a special breed with

[1]Frye, pp. 1-14.

[2]_Ibid_., p. 311.

its own peculiarities; it is said to have been the invention of the Greek cynic, Menippus, whose own works are lost. Fortunately, however, Lucian, the Greek, and the Romans, Varro, Petronius, and Apuleius (all of whom are frequently cited by Burton) carried on the tradition. Its most notable stylistic idiosyncrasy is the way in which verse and prose are intermingled, and its method is twofold: the heaping up of tremendous gobbets of information about its themes, and the attack on its pedantic targets with volumes of their own jargon.[1] But its major target is not so much individuals as widespread mental attitudes: "Pedants, bigots, cranks, parvenus, virtuosi, enthusiasts, rapacious and incompetent professional men of all kinds, are handled in terms of their occupational approach to life as distinct from their social behaviour."[2]

Frye, however, with a rather disconcerting stream-of-consciousness-like effect (especially puzzling in that it emanates from one who is interested in making criticism a much more scientific business), having mentioned the term "Menippean satire," decides to withdraw it:

[1]Ibid., 311.

[2]Ibid., 309.

> The word "anatomy" in Burton's title means a dissection or analysis, and expresses very accurately the intellectualized approach of his form. We may as well adopt it as a convenient name to replace the cumbersome and in modern times rather misleading "Menippean satire."[1]

The reason for Frye's decision to scrap his earlier label seems to be, in part, his awareness of the unsatisfactory state of the word "satire" today, a problem I shall have to discuss later. But Frye shows a welcome understanding of the position of satire in the past, and grasps the fact that the problem in attempting to grapple with it is the result of the associations and mutations that have come to affect the word itself:

> The word "satire," in Roman and Renaissance times, meant either of two specific literary forms of that name, one (this one -- Menippean satire) prose and the other verse. Now it means a structural principle or attitude, what we have called a *mythos*.[2]

In a more recent theoretic discussion of "The English Renaissance Prose Anatomy,"[3] Frye's categories are employed, and in the case of Burton, their implications are investigated rather more fully. The *Anatomy of Melancholy* is classified as not only an "anatomy," but a "satiric anatomy" that has a good deal in common with a number of other prominent "non-fictional" works of the period; in addition, some

[1] Frye, pp. 311-12.

[2] Frye, p. 310. I hope to demonstrate in this thesis that Burton's *Anatomy* is a satire both formally and in terms of Frye's *mythos*--that is, in both the Renaissance and the universal sense.

[3] Thomas Edward Wright, Diss. Washington University 1963.

interesting points are made about the structure of the Anatomy and its persona, which, however, owing to the theoretic nature of the thesis and the large number of works considered in evidence, remain suggestive rather than definitive. In this thesis I will be able to deal more fully with the Anatomy's satiric attributes and will use the additions and revisions in the five editions after 1621 to add weight to the case.

All of the critics I have considered so far, with the exception of Babb, have tended to treat the Anatomy as an unchanging monolith. Of course, this is a very understandable phenomenon and parallels the attitudes towards the work already noted; since the Anatomy is placed in the "non-fiction" category, it is felt that any changes that occur simply add to its already impressive intellectual weight, but contribute nothing fresh to our appreciation of its intent. Yet it is surely significant that

> The composition of the Anatomy continued for nearly twenty years after its initial publication. The length of the first edition (excluding the marginalia and the minor introductory pieces) is between 300,000 and 310,000 words. The length of the sixth is between 480,000 and 490,000 words, an increase of about sixty per cent.[1]

In view of the length of the Anatomy and the time required for a careful reading of it, we cannot be too suprised that scholars have tended to eschew any attempt at a comparative study. One dissertation has been

[1]Babb, p. 15.

written on the first and second editions,[1] but it is chiefly concerned with the "content" and not the nature of the work as evidenced by the changes. As I have already mentioned, important work has been done on the Preface, and attention paid to the additions made there. A critical edition has been compiled, too, of part of the Third Partition, the section on "Religious Melancholy,"[2] which gives some interesting insights into the tremendous problems that would arise in the compilation of a definitive edition, as well as providing a method for setting about such a task, and a hint at the value such a work would have for literary scholars. Bensly and Wright did embark upon the job:

> In 1910 Edward Bensly published the information that "W. Aldis Wright has made a collation of all the editions [of the *Anatomy*] from 1621 to 1676; his work is not yet published." Wright died in 1914. In 1927 Bensly announced that "the collations and other materials of the late Dr. W. Aldis Wright . . . have been kindly lent me by the Council of Trinity College Cambridge, for the preparation of an edition of the *Anatomy of Melancholy* by Dr. Wright and myself." Bensly died in 1938. There has been no further announcement concerning a definitive edition.[3]

No one since then seems to have been interested in continuing the task. The only relics of the Bensly-Wright project are a number of *errata* and emendations to existing texts of the *Anatomy* which have been contributed by them to *Notes and Queries* and other journals as

[1]Hallwachs, "Additions and Revisions in the Second Edition of Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*."

[2]D. G. Donovan, "The *Anatomy of Melancholy*: 'Religious Melancholy', a Critical Edition," Diss. Illinois 1965.

[3]Babb, p. 29.

preliminaries to the projected definitive edition. It appears that for the forseeable future we shall have to make do with those editions we have.[1]

Of the various schools in Burton criticism, therefore, I would suggest that the "literary" group has been the more fruitful, and that the movement towards an appreciation of the place of the *Anatomy of Melancholy* in the canon of satire seems the most promising of the literary approaches. This is a claim that the body of this thesis will attempt to substantiate. As I have indicated, however, there has been a vagueness about the notion of satire and its modern implications that makes its attribution to a piece of work only vaguely informative. The matter is further complicated by the fact that Renaissance satire, of which the *Anatomy* is an example, has an added set of special characteristics which merit a close examination of their own. Such an examination is provided in the next chapter of this thesis from the point of view of Burton's near-contemporary practitioners of the mode, and through the pronouncements of Renaissance theorists. But before undertaking that analysis of a specific age's attitude towards satire, it is necessary in view of the many problems surrounding the term to propose a definition that singles out the universal characteristics of the mode, shared by satire both ancient and modern.

[1]See Gilbert H. Doane, "A Checklist of the Editions of the *Anatomy of Melancholy*," *The American Collector*, V (1928), 247-249.

The dangers involved in attempting a definition of satire (rather like the better-known problems attached to trying the same with regard to tragedy) are adequately demonstrated by a glance at the various theories that have been propounded throughout the ages. Benjamin Franklin made a remark about satirists: "Strange! that a man who has enough wit to write a satire should have folly enough to publish it." The same might well be said of those who write theories of satire; they are frequently open to the same kind of analysis as the artists they discuss, and perhaps merit the appellations "schizomythic" and "cyclomythic" even more.[1] We are well-warned: "The writer on satire, like Bunyan's Christian, is confronted at the very outset by a slough: the Slough of Terminology."[2] Richter's amusing remark on the subject is only too memorable: "Definitions of the comic serve the sole purpose of being themselves comic." One of the authoritative works on the matter gives this timely admonition:

> The incongruity inherent in satiric and humorous writing and the elasticity of critical terms in common usage will convert any rigid system into a bed of Procrustes.[3]

[1]"Schizomythic" satirists are egotistical and display a "narrowing of the mind;" whilst "cyclomythic" satirists show "uncharitableness and lack of sustaining moral background" according to W. A. Pannenborg, Satirische Schrijvers: Karakter en Temperament (Assen, 1953). This, and other rather incredible information, including tables in which statistical analyses are drawn up, are to be found in Leonard Feinberg's extremely amusing and useful The Satirist, His Temperament, Motivation, and Influence (Iowa State University Press, 1963).

[2]Peter, p. 2.

[3]David Worcester, The Art of Satire (New York: Russell and Russell, 1960), p. 48.

With due deference to all such words of wisdom, the student must proceed with trepidation at least to look at the problem. The very names "satire" (the form) and "satiric" (the mode) do not have altogether identical connotations. Whereas it is granted that Burton's Anatomy has much in it that is "satiric" there is great unwillingness to call the work a satire: this is not altogether different from the approach of the Irish bishop who said of Gulliver's Travels: "I don't believe the half of it." I have suggested earlier that a comparison with Gulliver's Travels can be very fruitful, and I hope to demonstrate that the notion that some of the Anatomy of Melancholy is satire is a very unsatisfactory literary judgment.

One of the problems in attaching the label "satire" to a literary work arises out of the way in which the meanings of "satire" and "satiric" have developed over the centuries. One has to accept that the terms mean different things to different people, especially in the twentieth century. The looseness of the terminology surrounding satire has developed since the time of "the last great practitioner of the formal verse satire," Lord Byron--through no fault of his. Previously satire had had an honoured and well-defined place in Western literary culture, stretching back into the mists of time--mists I shall be attempting to dispel, or partially dissipate in the next chapter. The word is still used with frequency and in the most unexpected places: "If satires are no longer in fashion, satire is perennial as an attribute

in Western Literature."[1] We may, with impunity, refer to such prose works as Animal Farm, Catch Twenty-Two, and Candy, as satires; plays like Pygmalion and Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf, and products of the "Theatre of the Absurd" generally, court the title; of late, the motion picture has become a very popular and successful vehicle for "satire:" The Graduate, Petulia, and Goodbye Columbus have all been called satires for one reason or another. One recent movie, M.A.S.H., consciously or unconsciously adheres with astonishing precision to those criteria for the "anatomy" form that I shall be discussing later. Fountains of blood gush forth and dissected bodies abound in an aura of gleeful abandon, and the whole cenum tradition is epitomized in one amusing parody of Leonardo's painting of the "Last Supper". Fellini's adoption of the loose satiric form of the Satyricon has also dazed many of his critics.

In poetry, Roy Campbell is the most prominent modern exponent of the traditional formal verse satire (it is possible that his unpopularity politically has helped discourage any emulation by younger poets). It has been said (of poetry at least), that this simply is not an age of satire: yet satire seems to be flourishing in other non-poetic forms, and that may be more revealing about the state of modern poetry, than

[1] Oliphant Smeaton, English Satires (London: Blackie and Son, n.d.), p. xiii.

indicative of the approach of the long-forecast "death of satire."[1] In the last hundred years, the cartoonist (especially the politically-minded practitioner) has ensured the vitality of the satiric mode in its visual form at least. But always it remains hard to pin down: varium et mutabile semper satura; "Satire, to take a metaphor from music, is not a simple melody on the G string, but a symphony in discord."[2] A brief glance through any of the more reliable handbooks of literary terms or dictionaries gives adequate proof of the variety and vagueness of currently held notions on satire.[3]

[1]See such articles as H. Scheffauer, "The Death of Satire," Living Age (July 12, 1913), 82; or, Gilbert Seldes, "The Death of Satire," New Republic (Jan. 5, 1927), 193.

[2]Arthur Melville Clark, Studies in Literary Modes (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1958), p. 33.

[3]I include a few examples at this point from Webster's Dictionary which is substantially the same as definitions in NED and Thrall and Hibbard's Handbook:

"(a) Orig.: in the history of Roman literature, a rambling composition in verse devoted to censure of some prevailing vice or folly.
(b) A literary composition holding up human or individual vices or follies or abuses or shortcomings of any kind, to reprobation by means of ridicule, derision, burlesque or other methods of intensifying incongruities, usually with an intent to provoke amendment.
(c) The branch of lit. ridiculing vice or folly.
(d) The use of trenchant wit, irony, or sarcasm, for the purpose of exposing and discrediting vice or folly."

It is clear that (a) gives a very incomplete notion of the history of satire as I shall show in my next chapter. It is sufficient, at this

Many of the best-known literary theorists--such as Eliot and Read--have given short shrift to satire, or have chosen to ignore its problems completely. But it must be observed that those theorists who have dealt with comedy, have tended to include satire amongst the comic forms. In their view, satire has traditionally had the same nature and identical aims, and differs from other comic forms only in method.[1] For this very reason, students of satire have assumed it to be a part of comedy, and have indulged in description of satire rather than definition, on the supposition that the latter consideration had

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point, to note that (b) gives us very little information about the kinds of composition, and contains a rather dubious statement about "intent." (c) refers to satire as a "branch" of literature, but gives little indication of the debate upon what that branch precisely is. The last category, (d) removes the necessity for confining the term to literature, as I have already noted, and begs the question the remainder of this chapter sets out to answer.

[1]See various works on the theory of comedy, such as Paul Lauter, ed. Theories of Comedy (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1954); Robert W. Corrigan, Comedy: Meaning and Form (Chandler Publishing Co.; San Francisco, 1965); and, perhaps, most valuable, James K. Feibleman, In Praise of Comedy: A Study of Its Theory and Practice (Horizon Press: New York, 1970). In the latter, the theories of comedy are analysed; Feibleman himself insists that satire is simply a branch of comedy: he defines comedy according to his own tastes, and maintains that satire is one of the major ways of achieving "the comic effect" (p. 179).

already been sufficiently dealt with.[1] All of the theorists I am about to examine here take it as given that satire is a form of comedy.

In the later nineteenth century, George Meredith had already made an attempt at a literary analysis of the comic in his "An Essay on Comedy," reviewing the progress of the Comic Muse through Western culture as a preliminary to defining its particular characteristics; he comes to this conclusion:

> . . . whenever they [men] wax out of proportion, overblown, affected, pretentious, bombastical, hypocritical, pedantic, fantastically delicate, whenever it sees them self-deceived or hoodwinked, given to run riot in idolatries, drifting into vanities, congregating in absurdities, planning short-sightedly, plotting dementedly; whenever they are at variance with their professions, and violate the unwritten but perceptible laws binding them in consideration one to another; whenever they offend sound reason, fair justice; are false in humility or mined with conceit, individually, or in the bulk; the Spirit overhead will look humanely malign, and cast an oblique light on them, followed by volleys of silvery laughter. That is the Comic Spirit.[2]

[1] In addition, since the problem has stimulated the interest of "non-literary" thinkers, there has been one noticeable tendency amongst them: "Theories of comedy focusing on the ends of the art run more towards psychology and philosophy than towards literary criticism per se--a fact attested by the number of psychologists (e.g. Lipps and Freud) and philosophers (e.g. Schopenhauer, Bergson, Langer) who have written on the subject from this viewpoint." Lauter, p. xx.

[2] George Meredith, "An Essay on Comedy" in Comedy, ed. Wylie Sypher (Doubleday Anchor, 1956), p. 48.

This is the most frequently expounded theory of satire one comes across: that satire pursues vice and hypocrisy, and has a generally moralistic aim. Meredith feels that in the case of satire the laughter is less "silvery," a qualification that we may find cause to be thankful for. But what is essential to his theory is the necessarily corrective nature of the comic or satiric. There is also the implication that the satirist "strips off" the disguises of men in order to make them confront the essential simplicity of life--a process that is paralleled in tragedy, in which the protagonist is forced ultimately to face up to the basic realities, denuded of the trappings that have been placed around them. In this way, Meredith and the other theorists demonstrate what they feel to be the affinity between the two modes, and account for our suspicion that ultimately, there may not be much between them. One may suspect such reasoning, however. In satire, the "stripping off" may occur, not to reveal a simplicity of vision, but to _get rid of_ simplicity or over-simplification: for example, what vision of life could be more simple than that seen through the eyes of a miser, or of anyone who evaluates by tangible, obsessive, yardsticks? One may feel that the satirist or comedian, whose own artistic productions often display an almost chaotic complexity, is intent upon destroying the masks which simplify life in the eyes of the wearers and upon showing the involved nature of life which men have to confront squarely if they hope to come to terms with it. Nor do the satirists or comedians present any facile solutions: whereas the tragic hero must die, and therefore has no need to struggle

with the problem any further, the hero of the comedy or the satire (Everyman) must live and must do so somehow without his illusions.[1]

The Bergsonian theory on the comic and the satiric in Laughter, has been the most influential upon theorists in this century. It is attractive in its simplicity, and yet is inadequate for the same reason. Bergson sees a formula behind the comic that we immediately feel is an advance on anything that has gone before: after giving us a rather basic example of a man stumbling in the street, he comments:

> He should have altered his pace or avoided the obstacle. Instead of that, through lack of elasticity, through absentmindedness and a kind of physical obstinacy, as a result in fact of rigidity or of momentum, the muscles continued to perform the same movement when the circumstances called for something else. That is the reason for the man's fall, and also for the people's laughter.[2]

[1]This theory about the complexity of the comic resolution is quite important to an understanding of Burton's satire; it will be elaborated upon in the treatment of the Anatomy. At this point, we may feel sympathy for Pasternak's character in Doctor Zhivago who eschewed discussions of the metaphysics because his doctor warned him that they would lead to ulcers. J. Y. T. Greig's Psychology of Laughter and Comedy (London: Allen and Unwin, 1923) lists three hundred and sixty-six titles on the subject, and introduces the student to the most widely held theories about satire and humour such as "the theory of degradation" which involves a sadistic pleasure at someone's animality; and the "theory of incongruity," which is concerned with the discrepancy between modes of thought and of behaviour. Max Eastman in The Enjoyment of Laughter (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1936) has a much less technical approach and deals with such theories with great zest. I shall be looking at the ideas put forward in Bergson, Freud, Lucas and Koestler in the next few pages as the bases for most of the important work that has gone on, and because from them we get some fascinating insights into the social and artistic nature of satire.

[2]Henri Bergson, Laughter, trans. Cloudesley Brereton & Fred Rothwell (London: Macmillan, 1911), p. 9.

Bergson contrasts this comic inertia, this mechanical rigidity of our machine-like physical motion, with our minds, which he feels to be capable of subtle gymnastics which the body can never emulate: it is that discrepancy which we recognize when we laugh. But the laughter is not an end in itself:

> . . . society holds suspended over each individual member, if not the threat of correction, at all events the prospect of a snubbing, which, although it is slight, is none the less dreaded. Such must be the function of laughter.[1]

And Bergson never allows us to forget the "corrective" function of laughter. He pays a great deal of attention to disguises, and we are not surprised when even nature is included as a possible disguise (p. 42), one that the satirist constantly attacks. But for him morality is at the back of it all, for the didactic role is the major one of the humorist:

> A humorist is a moralist disguised as a scientist, something like an anatomist who practises dissection with the sole object of filling us with disgust. (p. 128)

Aside from the rather inappropriate use of "disguised" in the sentence, which raises extraordinary problems in the light of Bergson's own ideas on "disguise," his analogy with the anatomist is an interesting one for students of satire.[2] There is a long and interesting peroration to Laughter in which Bergson rhapsodizes on "art," but it is rather misleading:

[1] Laughter, p. 135.

[2] Again, a discussion of the implications of the word is reserved for the next chapter.

> So art, whether it be painting or music or sculpture or poetry, has no other object than to brush aside the utilitarian symbols, the conventional and socially accepted generalities, in short, everything that veils reality from us, in order to bring us face to face with reality itself.[1]

I say "misleading," because the reader assumes that comedy is an art-form, and that Bergson is leading us up to it. But he then makes the rather damning remark, as a sequel to his reflections on art: "Altogether different is the object of comedy;" and goes on to remove comedy (and satire)[2] from the field of art, to some kind of subsidiary social mechanism, although he tries to avoid the commitment thus:

> . . . comedy lies midway between art and life. It is not disinterested as genuine art is. By organizing laughter, comedy accepts social life as a natural environment, it even obeys an impulse of social life. And in this respect it turns its back upon art, which is a breaking away from society and a return to pure nature.[3]

[1] Laughter, p. 157.

[2] For Bergson, the ridiculous seems to be the major ingredient of both comedy and satire, and so I lump the two together. The examples of the comic that he chooses are frequently from satire: he uses Don Quixote, the plays of Molière, and the novels of Dickens and Twain. Paul Lauter points out that such an identification of satire and comedy is nothing new: ". . . as long ago as the rise of Roman practicality and Christian moralism critics found they had to devise a more social and ethical function for comedy than raising a laugh. Comedy bowed in as a schoolmaster whose stern task it was to teach men virtue. How this most desirable goal was achieved then became the focus of critical debate. Some pictured comedy brandishing a whip wherewith to scourge evil-doers; others saw him (emphatically a male "Muse") earnest behind his mask mocking fools, deviants from accepted norms, to ridicule. And at the same time, comedy was to hold up models of honorable behavior, right rhetoric, and proper duty for emulation by the young and impressionable. In short, the function of comedy was identified, confused, with that of satire" (p. xix). Of course, Lauter's implication about the nature of satire is being challenged in this chapter.

[3] Laughter, pp. 170-71.

Bergson thus effectively demonstrates his feeling that comedy and satire depend upon the mechanical, both as the material they work upon, and as the basis for their function: they are not art forms but institutions that serve first and foremost a social purpose, and that is their major end. Of course Bergson pays too much attention to the stated purpose of the comic writers, and tends at the same time to transfer the implications of real happenings into the values underlying an artistic performance. At one point, it seems as though he is aware of another level of the comic:

> So there is a logic of the imagination which is not the logic of reason, one which at times is even opposed to the latter,--with which, however, philosophy must reckon, not only in the study of the comic, but in every other investigation of the same kind. It is something like the logic of dreams, though of dreams that have not been left to the whim of individual fancy, being the dreams dreamt by the whole society.[1]

But he pursues the notion no further, unwilling to examine the vista that his comment on dreams (a striking anticipation of Freud) opens up. He simply leaves the comic more or less beyond the pale of art.

I have spent rather more time on Bergson than may have seemed warrantable for the simple reason that any theories since are similar to his though perhaps emphasizing aspects of the problem that Bergson may only have glanced at. Freud's position is essentially of this nature.

[1] _Laughter_, p. 41

He is more interested in the role of the emotions in the comic than is Bergson. We laugh, he feels, from an economy in imaginative energy[1] which leads to a surplus of psychic energy that releases itself in laughter--a release of tension that becomes (theoretically) a raucous outburst. But the "corrective" notion that Bergson stressed is very much involved in what Freud feels to be our sense of superiority in comic situations to those who are worsted. Freud pays virtually no attention to the comic as art, but does remark once that its aim "is to draw pleasure from mental processes;" he excuses himself from further comment on the basis of a self-confessed ignorance about aesthetics.[2]

With Arthur Koestler and F. L. Lucas, the comic writer or the satirist is restored to that pedestal upon which he had stood throughout the centuries; they refuse to see the comic as a mainly didactic pursuit, and expand Freud's suggestion about the deliberately structured aesthetic

[1] Sigmund Freud, Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious, trans. A. A. Brill (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1916), pp. 180-81. One fairly clear explanation of what he means comes in a passage in which he describes the effect upon us of seeing some comic action: "In the case of an immoderate or inappropriate movement on the part of the other [person], my greater expenditure for understanding becomes inhibited statu nascendi during the mobilization as it were, it is declared superfluous and stands free for further use or for discharge through laughing. If other favourable conditions supervened this would be the nature of the origin of pleasure in comic movement--an innervation expenditure which, when compared with one's own motion, becomes an inapplicable surplus." (Freud, pp. 311-12).

[2] Freud, p. 137.

nature of the comic in art. Koestler's theory of bisociation[1] as fundamental to great art significantly broadens the function of comedy; he insists that it is indeed art, and he shows the fragility of the division between it and the tragic:

> the artist . . . experiences the trivial in the perspective of the tragic, in the light of eternity "looking through time." And therein can probably be found the essence of the artist's approach. This interlacing of the Tragic and Trivial planes is implicit in all great works of art; it is the ultimate quality of the creative mind by means of which it is able to transcend the narrow limits of the self.[2]

This, of course, denies the Bergsonian evaluation of the comic and elevates the mode to its traditional heights. Lucas in his remarks upon wit, having disagreed with Freud quite vehemently over its "corrective" function, goes on to assert:

> Wit seems to me . . . a kind of extempore artistry, employing many devices--epigrammatic brevity, symbolism, allusiveness, ambiguity, comparison; and all this with a nuance of comedy. The result is something that suddenly challenges the hearer's intelligence by its compression and pleases him by its artistic economy, its simplification, its juxtaposition of unexpected ideas. The challenge is easily met if it is a good witticism--for good wit is neither muddy nor cloudy; the mental energy the hearer has summoned up, but now finds he does not need, may then be resolved into laughter; especially if there is a marked comic collapse, or if inhibited aggressive or sexual impulses are simultaneously released. But there need not always be laughter: wit can be mordant or melancholy. The hearer is

[1]Arthur Koestler, Insight and Outlook (London: Macmillan, 1949), p. 37. He defines that rather difficult concept as, "any mental occurrence simultaneously associated with two habitually incompatible contexts." We can easily see how this is related to Bergson's notion about rigid body and subtle mind: but Koestler widens its application much more meaningfully.

[2]Insight, p. 380.

> more likely to laugh than the utterer; the utterer may laugh also, but his essential pleasure remains that of a minor form of artistic creation.[1]

Lucas feels that the literary formulation of such a sensation is art of the highest form, the result of the artistic impulse. If this bears any relation to Hobbes' "sudden glory", it is not the glory of self-satisfaction or superiority, but the glory of the creative perception that informs all great comedy and all great satire, which possibly results, in the case of the latter, in our enjoyment of those bouts of invective, or those cutting remarks, which, without losing their potential malevolence become amusing rather than malicious.

The development from Bergson to Lucas in modern theory on the comic, therefore, has been significant, for, traditionally, theorists of the comic, including those we have examined, have attempted to take satire (which they deemed to be a specific form of the comic) into account in their analyses. It was generally felt that satire, because of the devices it employed, was the most emphatically didactic form of comedy, though, as we have just seen, many theorists justified all comedy as being essentially didactic and corrective. The psycho-philosophical analysts have discarded the punitive, corrective concept of its nature, and substituted for it the much more positive, artistic one. The attribution to comedy, and, hence, especially to satire, of a merely "didactic"

[1]F. L. Lucas, Literature and Psychology (London: Cassell and Co., 1951), pp. 163-64.

role has been challenged, and satire restored to the corporate body of art. However, the matter has been debated by many theorists and practitioners of art over the centuries. As early as 1718, Edward Bysshe was making a claim for as much latitude in theories about satire as was permitted in the less "direct" modes:

> As no thought can be justly said to be fine, unless it be true, I have all along had a great regard for truth; except only in passages that are purely satirical, where some allowance must be given: For Satire may be fine and true Satire, tho' it be not directly and according to the letter, true: 'Tis enough that it carry with it a Probability or Semblance of Truth.[1]

This indicates the importance that the satirist attaches to his art: satire must not only "teach", for genuine art, in Bysshe's eyes, must teach and delight; satire's function to Bysshe is exactly the same as that of the other arts and its "Truth" is a by-product of its art.

De Quincey, at a time when the "art for art's sake" feeling was abroad, made a telling statement about the notion of didacticism in

[1] Edward Bysshe, The Art of English Poetry (London, 1718), i, sig. *A4. Bysshe is not an altogether impressive figure, according to A Literary History of England, III, ed. A. C. Baugh (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967), p. 845. He is placed amongst the minor critics and there is some skepticism as to his influence: "The Art of Poetry [of Charles Gildon] was for a time kept in memory by a couplet in The Spleen by Matthew Green, who asserts of his Muse that she

> Draws from the spring she finds within;
> Nor vainly buys what Gildon sells,
> Poetic buckets for dry wells.

Such buckets, however, had a market; for one Edward Bysshe had brought out the Art of English Poetry in 1702, which ran to ten editions by 1739."

poetry that is all the more true for satire in the light of that mode's unfortunate reputation:

> What is didactic poetry? What does 'didactic' mean when applied as a distinguishing epithet to such an idea as a poem? The predicate destroys the subject; it is a case of what logicians call contradictio in adjecto--the unsaying by means of an attribute the very thing which is the subject of that attribute you have just affirmed. No poetry can have the function of teaching. It is impossible that a variety of species should contradict the very purpose which contradistinguishes its genus.[1]

De Quincey allows the didactic element to function only secondarily in a genuine work of art.[2] For him, therefore, it would be absurd to claim that the Anatomy of Melancholy was a medical or educational text-book (the claim made by some of the "utilitarian" school of Burton critics) and at the same time a work of art. To those theorists of the comic who emphasize the didactic element (especially in the satiric form), De Quincey would be just as hostile, suggesting that art simply cannot teach in the way that they imply.

Such assumptions about the satirist's "intention," which have raised a furore in the study of other artists, have gone virtually unchallenged in the satirist's case. Mark Twain says:

[1]The Collected Writing of Thomas De Quincey, ed. David Masson (London, 1890), XI, p. 88.

[2]Peter, p. 10, makes a similar claim when considering the effects of satire: ". . . Satire tends to be scornful, often reflecting only a token desire for reform, whereas Complaint is corrective and clearly does not despair of its power to correct. In reading satires our reaction is one of pure 'enjoyment': we appreciate the satirists' virtuosity and the trimming of the butts he chooses. In reading complaints we ourselves are trimmed, for the simple reason that all men are."

> Humour must not professedly teach, and it must not professedly preach, but it must do both if it would live forever. By forever, I mean thirty years . . . I have always preached. That is the reason that I have lasted thirty years.

There is so much irony even in his "confession" that one is inclined to consider it as another example of his satiric bent rather than as an indication of the motivation behind a satire. Nor ought too much credence be given to such early avowals as Hall's:

> The satyre should be like the Porcupine,
> That shoots sharp quills out in each angry line,
> And wounds with blushing cheeks, and fiery eye
> Of him that heares, and readeth guiltily.

In terms of motivation, is it not possible that his boast of being England's first satirist is much more to the fore in his scale of values?[1] Yet critics have tended to take these men at their word, claiming that the satirist's purpose "can only be described as moral."[2] Sometimes even common goodness is not enough:

> He [the satirist] must fully possess, at least in the world of the imagination, the quality, the lack of which he is deriding in others.[3]

Swift, however, made a great deal of the subject. In A Tale of a Tub, this rather bitter comment on satirists appears:

[1] Collected Poems of Joseph Hall. ed. A. Davenport (Liverpool U.P.: 1949): "I first adventure: follow me who list,
And be the second English Satyrist."
(Prologue to "Virgidemiarum").

[2] Ellen Leyburn, Satiric Allegory: Mirror of Man (New Haven, 1956), p. 13.

[3] Rebecca West, The Strange Necessity (London, 1928), p. 275.

> Now, if I know anything of mankind, these gentlemen might very well spare their reproof and correction; for there is not, through all nature, another so callous and insensible a member as the world's posteriors, whether you apply to it the toe or the birch.[1]

And we remember the rather ironic phrase in his letter to Pope: "I have finished my Travels; they will wonderfully mend the world;" or the words put into Gulliver's mouth in the letter to "his cousin Simpson," which precedes Gulliver's Travels, where the insanely misanthropic Gulliver, who is being ridiculed for his pride, expressed his disappointment:

> I do in the next place complain of my own great want of judgement, in being prevailed upon by the intreaties and false reasonings of you and some others, very much against mine own opinion, to suffer my travels to be published. Pray bring to your mind how often I desired you to consider, when you insisted on the motive of public good, that the yahoos were a species of animals utterly incapable of amendment by precepts or examples, and so it hath proved; for, instead of seeing a full stop put to all abuses and corruptions, at least in this little island, as I had reason to expect: behold, after above six months warning, I cannot learn that my book hath produced one single effect according to mine intentions . . .[2]

Much of Swift's ironic emphasis upon the mission of the satirist closely resembles, both in language and sentiment, Burton's own rather pompous remarks upon the aim of his book:

> . . . I had a just cause to undertake this subject, to point at these particular species of dotage, that so men might acknoledge their imperfections, and seek to reform what is amiss.[3]

[1]Jonathan Swift, A Tale of a Tub, ed. Herbert Davis (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), p. 29.

[2]Jonathan Swift, Gulliver's Travels, ed. Herbert Davis (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1959), p. 6.

[3]The Anatomy of Melancholy, p. 137. Later, I shall be speaking about eighteenth-century plagiarism, and I hope to show that there is much in Swift that is very similar to his predecessor's work.

The whole apologetic nature of the remark is in fact a part of the satirist's traditional equipment. Even Dryden, in the Essay on Satire, so qualifies his statement on the aim of satire that it becomes difficult to consider it as principally moralistic; he uses the words of Heinsius:

> Satire is a kind of poetry, without a series of actions, invented for the purging of our minds; in which human vices, ignorance, and errors, and all things besides, which are produced from them in every man, are severely reprehended; partly dramatically, partly simply, and sometimes in both kinds of speaking; but for the most part figuratively and occultly; consisting in a low, familiar way, chiefly in sharp and pungent manner of speech; but partly also, in a facetious and civil way of jesting; by which either hatred, or laughter, or indignation is moved.[1]

The "purging of our minds" to which Dryden refers is no more "moralistic" a notion to a classicist than Aristotle's tragic catharsis, and anyway, the aim is then subsumed in the rather more interesting comments he makes upon the artistic techniques involved: it is these, not the "aim," that, in the eyes of the Augustan, separate the satirist from other artists.

Dryden, again after an obeisance to his master, Aristotle, sets us off on another line of approach to the nature of satire:

> Aristotle divides all poetry in relation to the progress of it, into nature without art, art begun, and art completed.[2]

If, indeed, there is any truth in Aristotle's contention, then an examination of the origins of the satiric art may prove to be an extremely

[1] Essays of John Dryden, II, ed. W. P. Ker (New York: Russell & Russell, 1961), p. 26.

[2] Dryden, p. 45.

useful pointer to both its aims and its methods.[1] Dryden, ironically, finds its origin in the Garden of Eden; with mock gravity, he admits that hymns of praise may have come first, then

> After God had cursed Adam and Eve in Paradise, the husband and wife excused themselves, by laying the blame on one another.[2]

Thus the depravity which the satirist is supposed to be attempting to eradicate is, according to Dryden, part of man's fallen condition, and beyond cure. At the same time, it is implied that part of the satirist's motivation stems from his own fallen nature which uses satire as an expression of an integral vindictive urge: the satisfaction that comes from the well-wrought manifestation of it is aesthetic and not moral (and this is what Lucas implies).[3]

An extension of Dryden's argument appears in the notion that satire "kills symbolically;"[4] the oft-mentioned Archilocus[5] is the archetypal "killer" in the mode. His name recurs frequently in satiric

[1]Nor has the approach been ignored; Worcester, Highet, and Kernan have used it; but perhaps the most interesting work on the subject is Robert C. Elliot's The Power of Satire.

[2]Dryden, p. 44.

[3]See above, pp. 40-41.

[4]R. C. Elliot, p. 4.

[5]Archilocus is said to have lived in the seventh century B.C. and to have invented the mordant iambic poems. He fell in love with Neobule, daughter of Lycambes, but her father would not allow them to marry. Archilocus avenged himself with such biting satires that father and daughter, according to tradition, hanged themselves. Hence his position in the history of satiric "slaying".

works as a precedent in "nature" for what the satirist is doing in art--"art completed" in Dryden's phrase. We meet him in Jonson's Poetaster:

> I could doe worse
> Arm'd with Archilocus' fury, write Iambicks,
> Should make the desperate lashers hang themselves.
> Rime 'hem to death, as they doe Irish rats
> In drumming tunes.[1]

Originally, the satirist, through his power over words in a society that was not fully articulate, could and did kill,[2] and the image of the satirist, however moderated and de-fanged by time, retains its power in the collective unconscious:[3] we have strong evidence as to how cautiously men like Aretino and Pope (miles apart in method, yet very close in achievement) were treated by their contemporaries; writers like

[1]Ben Jonson, eds. C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932), IV, 322. The significance of the "rhyming of Irish rats" is fascinatingly unveiled for us in Sister Mary Randolph's "The Medical Concept in English Renaissance Satiric Theory," SP, XXXVIII (1941), 135-57.

[2]Elliot and Sister Mary Clair Randolph, amongst others, deal with this notion of the satirist's origin.

[3]Elliot's reference to the concept of a "collective unconscious" might not be acceptable to many readers, yet it is a useful way of accounting for the effect of satire. "I am arguing," he says (The Power of Satire, p. 92), "that it [satire] is a sublimation of magic. Not until concern shifts from ritualistic efficacy to aesthetic value does art become free and the individual artist a maker."

Hugh MacDiarmid and Roy Campbell[1] still write as though their power were as strong in reality as it may be symbolically--though Chesterton assures us that the age of satire has gone forever because we are no longer capable of hating our enemies with the vigor of our ancestors.[2] It is noticeable that often the words used to describe satire are redolent with ideas of physical violence, such as "blistering," and "scathing." Modern medical researchers have suggested that satire may still have the ability to inflict actual physical damage.[3]

In these preceding pages, I have tried to analyse the fundamental nature and function of satire, and to show the difficulties involved in producing a definition that would be generally acceptable. These difficulties are nowhere more apparent than in the very question of satire's supposed didactic approach; it, therefore, seems clear that one must go along with Lauter's remark, ". . . nothing would be more ludicrous . . . than to claim that some new formulation will reconcile

[1]Two contemporary British satirists. Campbell was born in South Africa. He supported the fascists in Spain in the Thirties--a stance from which his reputation has never recovered. He wrote vicious, reactionary satires, notably Terrapin and the Georgiad. MacDiarmid (Christopher Grieve) is, of course, well-known, both for his political sorties, and for his poetry, satirical and lyrical.

[2]Gilbert Keith Chesterton, Twelve Types (London, 1906), p. 58.

[3]This extraordinary idea comes from the book: Emotional Factors in Skin Disease (New York, 1953), in which Doctors Witt, Rower, and Russell see a direct connection between satire and physical ailments of its victims.

the schools of criticism that have been so long beating at one another like Punch and Judy."[1] Before attempting, then, to supply a definition, I will consider that one aspect of satire over which critics have been most in agreement--its methods. They, at least, are much more self-evident, and writers on satire, from the early rhetoricians to the most modern theoreticians have always been much more secure in this approach: "Rhetorical devices . . . are all important for the study of satire. The skill with which they are employed serves as a criterion between good and bad satire."[2] The characteristics of the mode have been catalogued with a great deal of thoroughness:

> Satire is a continuous piece of verse, or 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, topical subjects, and the general intention of improving society by its vices and follies.[3]

All of this is rather general but gives an accurate picture of the satiric vista. Other critics are a little more specific: satire contains

> Miniature dramas, sententious proverbs, and quotable maxims, beast fables (often reduced to animal metaphors), brief sermons, sharp diatribes, series of vignettes, swiftly sketched but

[1]Lauter, p. xv.

[2]Worcester, p. 14.

[3]Gilbert Highet, The Classical Tradition (Oxford, 1949), p. 305.

> painstakingly built up satiric "characters" or portraits, figure-processions, little fictions and apologies, visions, apostrophes, and invocations to abstractions.[1]

Devices that are employed to give satire its own rather special tonal flavour are, "Wit . . . Ridicule . . . irony . . . sarcasm . . . cynicism . . . the sardonic . . . invective."[2] And as a guide through all of this we may usefully think in terms of a satiric "scene, character and plot."[3] The usefulness of such terms to the subject of this thesis will be demonstrated when we come to discuss the place of the Anatomy in the satiric mode.[4]

In the course of this chapter, I have touched upon various theories in the hope that thus the ground might be paved for a generally acceptable definition of satire. It is unlikely, as I have shown, that any definition is going to be completely satisfactory; the very nature of the problem seems to prohibit absolute comprehensiveness despite the sanguine words of Lauter:

[1] Mary Claire Randolph, "Formal Verse Satire," PQ, XXI (1942), 373.

[2] Clark, pp. 46-49.

[3] The Cankered Muse, p. 7.

[4] In chapters X, XI, and XII of Peri Bathous, there is an interesting and amusing satire on the methods of writing poetry misused, which by inference we may take to be the methods of the satirist, who often "misuses" conventional techniques for his own ends. In a more serious vein, Rosemond Tuve considers the decorum of satire in Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery (University of Chicago Press, 1947), pp. 238-43 and elsewhere.

> . . . when all is said and done, writing about comedy and comic theory is not an exercise in literary ingenuity, nor a make-work for lean and hungry critics. One likes to think that theorizing has at least the virtue of helping readers to understand and enjoy works of art and, even, of aiding artists to exploit most fully the forms with which they are engaged.[1]

This may be so, but in the case of satire much remains to be done. The terms "satire" and "satiric" have not even the same etymological roots (an oddity which I shall be discussing in the next chapter), and things are labelled "satire" today with a generosity that is confusing for the student. The subject of satire is given only sparse treatment by the major literary theorists of our day, who find it an awkward, hybrid species, and seem to doubt its respectability; it has been regarded in the past mainly as a corrective mode, though such an assessment of it is in conflict with what for many is a major canon of art, that it should not have a didactic aim as its principal end. I have suggested that rather than being a form that presents an ultimately "simple" view of life, it unveils in fact a complexity that one tries to avoid. Despite the influence of Meredith and Bergson, more recent treatises on the comic have restored it to its former glory by insisting that it is one of the major manifestations of art available to us.

A lot of the misapprehensions about satire come from the claims made by its very practitioners, which ought to be regarded with

[1]Lauter, pp. xxvi-xxvii.

some suspicion. Satirists often avow themselves to be much more "moral" than proves to be the case under objective appraisal; satire itself stems from a ritualistic origin to which little trace of morality seems to have clung. It is much simpler to describe than to define it; it is a task more appropriate to the practical critic than to the aesthetician. Bearing in mind, however, what appear to be the key issues, I have formulated the following definition:

> Satire is a literary mode or kind which has the apparent and often stated aim of arousing ridicule or concern in order to amend, reprehend or castigate some deficiency, real or imagined; but whose achievement depends primarily upon its evoking a response that is aesthetically and psychologically satisfying, rather than morally affecting.

I have deliberately mentioned "mode", since I hope to show that Burton's _Anatomy_ is permeated by the mode for the good reason that it is a sample of a satiric form. The reason for the phrase "real or imagined" is to allow the inclusion in our definition of such seemingly disparate efforts as Burton's highly practical social critique (in the "Preface") which reflects some rather grim contemporary grievances, and works like _Gulliver's Travels_ which would be more suited to Frye's ironic category, "fiction." I have stressed "aesthetic," since it is to this nebulous commodity that the art of the satirist must finally make its appeal; and "psychological," because I have indicated agreement with the theory that the implicit aggression of the satirist is not stirred by some external evil, but by a universally shared relish for

such abusiveness;[1] hence, I have placed the traditionally-stressed "moral aim" of satire last, since, by common consent, satirists admit their work has no noticeable effect anyhow.

Whilst the above formula may have universal application, the vision of satire in some ages emphasized particular aspects of the mode which led to the neglect of other perfectly valid manifestations of satire. This is a not-unfamiliar phenomenon in the arts generally,[2] and one of the major contributions of the historical approach lies in its power to demonstrate that the fashionable and the contemporary may indeed be very confining too. In Renaissance England a particular form of satire was popular and has so absorbed the attention of modern critics that they have paid scant attention to the symptoms of satire in works that do not conform to the pattern that was prevalent. In the next chapter I shall deal with the satiric tradition and the more immediate reasons for the flourishing of satire in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, paying particular attention to the abundant satiric crop that grew apart from the fashionable pasture.

[1]One thinks of the old "flytinges" of, say, Dunbar and Kennedy.

[2]We see it especially in the tendency of individual artists to break away from the fashion and revert to some almost forgotten technique which has the effect of re-invigorating a whole movement; one thinks of Wordsworth, who attempted to restore the "common language of men" to poetry; Hopkins, who found a fresh vision in Anglo-Saxon and Medieval poetry; Picasso, who claimed he was trying to remember how he painted as a child in order to cut through the fashions that had suffocated him; all these and other more apposite examples might be summoned to show the tyranny of fashion in art as well as life--hence the archetypal genius confined in the garret.

CHAPTER II

SATIRE IN THE RENAISSANCE

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England, there existed a form of verse satire whose characteristics were very pronounced, and whose existence scholars have long acknowledged. This formal verse satire has a respectable origin in antiquity and claims to share the commonly-accepted aim of all art in the Renaissance, the double goal of teaching and delighting. During this period too, however, there flourished a body of prose which seems to share the characteristics of the formal verse satire, but which has received relatively little critical attention. Of this group, the _Anatomy of Melancholy_ is a member. What exactly Renaissance theorists thought about the function of all satire, verse or prose, is, in fact, summed up early in the _Anatomy_:

> Though a man be liable to such a jest or obloquy, have been overseen, or committed a foul fact, yet it is no good manners or humanity to upbraid, to hit him in the teeth with his offence, or to scoff at such a one; 'tis an old axiom, _turpis in reum omnis exprobatio_. I speak not of such as generally tax vice, _Barclay_, _Gentilis_, _Erasmus_, _Agrippa_, _Fishcart_, &c., the _Varronists_ and _Lucians_ of our time, Satirists, Epigrammatists, Comedians, Apologists, &c. but such as personate, rail, scoff, calumniate, perstringe by name, or in presence offend.
>
> Ludit qui stolida procacitate,
> Non est Sestius ille, sed caballus;
>
> 'tis horse-play this, and those jests (as he saith) _are no better than injuries_, biting jests, _mordentes & aculeati_; they are poisoned jests, leave a sting behind them, and ought not to be used.

Set not thy foot to make the blind to fall,
Nor wilfully offend thy weaker brother:
Nor wound the dead with thy tongue's bitter gall,
Neither rejoice thou in the fall of other.[1]

This pronouncement of Burton's constitutes the classical reaction of the learned Renaissance scholar to the satiric tradition, and occurs in an important section of the Anatomy of Melancholy, where an implicit justification of Burton's own contribution is made; it is very much the consequence of a theory of literature's purpose and value that is much mooted in the period.

In this chapter I shall attempt to establish the links between the formal verse and the prose satires, and the place of each in the Renaissance scheme of literature. But, because satire is most frequently, and, in my view, wrongly, regarded as the most didactic form, it is important to examine the concept of the "useful" function of literature as it seems to have been understood in the Renaissance.

Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci runs the motto of the third edition of the Anatomy. The phrase is from Horace, and the tradition goes at least as far back as Aristotle; it permeates the quite appreciable number of works on literary theory written in the Renaissance, both in England and on the Continent.[2] Certainly, the

[1]The Anatomy of Melancholy, I, 395-6

[2]See Elizabethan Critical Essays, ed. G. Gregory Smith (Oxford University Press, 1904) and Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century, ed. Joel E. Spingarn (Indiana University Press, 1957). The introductions of Spingarn and Gregory Smith to their respective collections bear ample

Christian Humanists, whether one stresses their "Christianity" or their "humanism", avowed their commitment to the maxim. The Dutchman Gerhard Geldenhauer for example prefaced the revered Utopia of More thus:

> Dulcia lector amas? sunt hic dulcissima quaequae.
> Utile si quaeris, nil legis utilius.
> Siue utrunque uoles, utroque haec insula abundat,
> Quo linguam exornes, quo doceas animum.[1]

Much later, in Discoveries, Ben Jonson, who is much more "humanist" in the pagan sense, says that "A man should so deliver himselfe to the nature of the subject whereof hee speakes that his hearer may take knowledge of his discipline with some delight . . ."[2]. Throughout the sixteenth century, the extremely influential preface to Terence by Donatus insists that art, and especially comedy, has the prime function of demonstrating "what is of use in life . . . and what may be avoided."[3]

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testimony to the validity of this observation; and it may be of some interest to this thesis to notice that the same motto is attached to Robert Greene's Arbasto, The Anatomie of Fortune . . . Wherein also Gentlemen may find pleasaunte conceytes to purge Melancholy (London, 1584). Burton was familiar with Greene's work.

[1] The Complete Works of St. Thomas More, ed. E. Surtz and J. H. Hexter (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), p. 30. Translated it reads: "Reader, do you like what is pleasant? In this book is everything that is pleasant. Do you hunt what is profitable? If you wish both the pleasant and the profitable, this island abounds in both. By them you may polish your expression and improve your mind."

[2] Ben Jonson, VIII, 566.

[3] Donatus, "On Comedy and Tragedy," European Theories of the Drama, ed. B. H. Clark (New York: Crown, 1947), p. 43.

This same didactic view of art was propounded by Boccaccio and Cinthio, both of whom had considerable influence on the English theorists of the day.[1] Boccaccio claimed that the aesthetic pleasure serves simply as the sugar-coating on the pill,[2] while Cinthio assured us that "good morals" is the aim of art.[3]

Sir Philip Sidney, in the Apologie for Poetrie, is the first major proponent of the concept in Elizabethan critical theory:

> Poesie therefore is an arte of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in his word Mimesis, that is to say, a representing, a counterfeiting or figuring foorth--to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture: with this end, to teach and delight.[4]

That English writers throughout the Renaissance appeared to take the dictum seriously is clear from such statements of intent as we find prefixed to works like The Faerie Queene, whose purpose is to "fashion

[1]Men like Sidney, Harington and Daniel, according to G. G. Smith, were indebted to them, down to the very phraseology they used.

[2]Boccaccio, "The Life of Dante," Literary Criticism, ed. A. H. Gilbert (New York: American Book Co., 1940), pp. 209-11.

[3]Cinthio, "On the Composition of Comedies and Tragedies," Literary Criticism, p. 252.

[4]Smith, I. 158. We find, too, in such apparently independent works as Webbe's Discourse of English Poetrie (Smith, I, 295-6), such statements as: "The ende of Poetry is to wryte pleasant thinges and profitable. Pleasant it is which delighteth by beeing not too long, or uneasy to be kept in memory, and which is somewhat likelie, and not altogether forged. Profitable it is which styrreth up the mindes to learning and wisedome."

a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline."[1] Nor ought we to forget Milton's desire of writing for the "honor and instruction" of his country.[2] The theorist Puttenham (if he is indeed the author), in the Arte of English Poesie, is equally explicit, claiming that comedy, tragedy and satire have as their aim "the reprehension of vice."[3] Sir John Harington is not speaking of satire alone when he insists on poetry's function of "reproving all vices,"[4] though his own Metamorphosis of Ajax, a Rabelaisian revel, shows little sign of corrective zeal. Ben Jonson claims that the function of art is "the correction of manners," and adds, in the Introduction to Volpone, that it is "to imitate justice and instruct to life."[5] Marston makes no distinction between his comedy and his satires; he follows Juvenal's advice:

> Quidquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas,
> Gaudia, discursus, nostri farrago libelli est. (I, 85-6)[6]

It is evident that this disparate collection of writers is in essential agreement on several matters; they all claim, first, that poetry is designed to teach morality; secondly, that the giving of

[1] The Works of Edmund Spenser, ed. E. Greenlaw, C. G. Osgood, and F. M. Padelford (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1966), I, 167.

[2] The Works of John Milton, ed. Frank A. Patterson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), III, i, 236.

[3] Smith, II, 32.

[4] Smith, II, 209.

[5] Ben Jonson, V, 21; and III, 208-9.

[6] Juvenal, Satirae XIV, ed. J. D. Duff (Cambridge University Press, 1957), p. 3.

pleasure must be subordinated to that moral aim; and thirdly, that there is no clear distinction in aim between the various modes. Satire is no different from the others in these respects. Gregory Smith's words are apposite:

> Poetry (in the Renaissance) is the sugar coating on the pill, the candy with the dose of rhubarb; the sugar coating of the candy is there _because_ there is the necessary pill or rhubarb; In other words, the allegorical usefulness of poetry is its _rationale_, and for that reason it is defended as a good thing.[1]

Smith's last words, "defended as a good thing," reinforce the idea that much Renaissance theory is in reaction to Plato's condemnation of the poet in his _Republic_:

> . . . therefore we shall be right in refusing to admit him into a well-ordered State, because he awakens and nourishes and strengthens the feelings and impairs the reason.[2]

There is no doubt, then, that for the majority of writers in the Renaissance, art has a clear didactic purpose, all other functions being secondary. In an age, however, that could find Odysseus to be a Christian hero, and the _Metamorphoses_ to be a moral tract, one must consider the possibility that such philosophic discussion of the utility of art is only of theoretic significance to the writers, and that their actual performance is based upon other criteria that consciously or sub-consciously have dominance. One hesitates to propose such a view, as it has frequently been regarded as little more than romantic twaddle,

[1]Smith, I, xxiv.

[2]_The Dialogues of Plato_, tr. Benjamin Jowett (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1875), III, 501.

or at best, misguided, anachronistic twentieth-century criticism; yet those who suggest that the stated aims we have been discussing really were vitally significant to the Renaissance artist are left to explain that inevitable discrepancy between what they claim is the intention, and what they admit is the achievement of art in the period. Milton himself is charged with being guilty of the paradox in his chef d'oeuvre, Paradise Lost; in addition, we may feel that Spenser's Bowre of Blisse oversteps the mark of Christian modesty. The satirists of the decade before 1600 enjoyed their "reprehencioun" far too much for some of their contemporaries: indeed, as we shall see, even the Puritans denounced the enthusiasm of their own champion, "Martin Marprelate", preferring the dull sobriety of the unsuccessful opposing divines--an idea that must surely give us pause. How much of the moralizing is mere lip-service to the orthodox ideal? In the case of satire, which has, if anything, the most overtly didactic aim (indeed, as I shall show later, the frequency with which the satirist makes his claim may be suspicious in itself) there is a corresponding dearth of "morality" in the execution. As early as Webbe's Discourse (1586) we find proof that even some of the theorists are making pleasure the foremost aim of art.[1] When the

[1]Such a view had, of course, already been anticipated by continental writers. Spingarn shows the relationship between theory at the beginning and at the end of the English Renaissance: "Another writer of the sixteenth century, Bernardo Tasso, tells us that in his poem Amadigi, he has aimed at delight rather than profitable instruction. 'I have spent most of my efforts,' he says, 'in attempting to please, as it seems to me that this is more necessary, and also more difficult to attain; for we find by experience that many poets may instruct and benefit us very much, but certainly give us very little delight.' This agrees with what one of

Puritans attacked art, they claimed that their hostility was aroused by this very "abuse"--namely, the establishing of "delight" as more important than "profit" within contemporary art--and in order to avoid any misunderstanding in the matter, Stephen Gosson felt constrained to defend his theses in the Schoole of Abuse by appending an "apologie" later in which he clarified his position:

> My Schoole of Abuse, hath met with some enemies, bicause it correcteth unthrifty Schollers; Demosthenes orations smelt of lampe oyle, because his candle burnt brightest, when theeves were busiest. They that are greeved, are Poets, Pipers and Players: the first think that I banish Poetrie, wherin they dreame; the second judge, that I condemne Musique, wherein they dote; the last proclaim, that I forbid recreation to man, wherein you may see, they are starke blinde. He that readeth with advise the book which I wrote, shal perceive that I touche but the abuses of all these.[1]

The most forceful statement and logical climax of the orthodox didactic view appears in Milton's opinion that a man cannot hope to be a good poet without first being virtuous; yet Milton's own "virtue" has not gone unchallenged: for instance, by Matthew Arnold:

> If there is a defect, which, above all others, is signal in Milton, which injures him even intellectually, which limits him as a poet, it is the defect common to him with the whole Puritan party to which he belonged--the fatal defect of TEMPER;

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the sanest of English critics, John Dryden (1688), has said of verse, 'I am satisfied if it caused delight, for delight is the chief if not the only end of poesie; instruction can be admitted but in the second place, for poesie only instructs as it delights.'" Literary Criticism in the Renaissance (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1963), p. 35.

[1] Stephen Gosson, The Schoole of Abuse, ed. E. Arber (Westminster: Constable & Co., 1895), p. 65.

> he and they may have a thousand merits, but they are unamiable. Excuse them how one will, Milton's asperity and acerbity, his want of sweetness of temper, of the Shakespearian largeness and indulgence, are undeniable.[1]

Ironically, much of that Romantic "sweetness of temper" has palled too, and we recognize "virtue" to be a commodity that changes from age to age. In one of Milton's own pronouncements on satire, he paradoxically displays the implicit contradictions in his position; he is discussing Hall's contributions to the satiric "kind" and launches into a diatribe worthy of full quotation, as it demonstrates the flagrant contradiction between the academic debate on the function of art, and the traditional practice of the satirist who pays lip-service to his didactic aims and then proceeds to ignore them:

> For this good hap I had from a carefull education, to be inur'd and season'd betimes with the best and elegantist authors of the learned tongues, and thereto brought an eare that could measure a just cadence, and scan without articulating: rather nice and humourous in what was tolerable, then patient to read every drawling versifier. Whence lighting upon this title of _toothlesse Satires_, I will not conceale ye what I thought, Readers, that sure this must be some sucking Satir, who might have done better to have us'd his corall, and made an end of breeding, ere he took upon him to wield a Satirs whip. But when I heard him talk of _scouring the rusted swords of elvish Knights_, doe not blame me if I chang'd my thought and concluded him some desperate Cutler. But why his _scornefull muse could never abide with tragick shoos her ankles for to hide_, the pace of the verse told me that her maukin knuckles were never shapen to that royall buskin. And turning by chance to the sixth Satyr of his Second book, I was confirm'd; where having begun loftily in _heavens universall Alphabet_, he fals downe to that wretched poorenesse and frigidity, as to talke of _Bridgestreet_

[1]Matthew Arnold, _Mixed Essays_ (London: Smith and Sons, 1903), p. 243.

> in heav'n, and the Ostler of heav'n, and there wanting other matter to catch him a heat (for certaine he was in the frozen Zone miserably benummed), with thoughts lower than any Beadle betakes him to whip the signe posts of Cambridge Alehouses, the ordinary subject of freshmens tales, and in straine as pittifull. Which for him who would be counted the first English Satyr, to abase himselfe to, who might have learnt better among the Latin, and Italian Satyrists, and in our own tongue from the vision and Creed of Pierce plowman, besides others before him, manifested a presumptuous undertaking with a weak and unexamin'd shoulders. For a Satyr as it was born out of a Tragedy, so ought it to resemble his parentage, to strike high, and adventure dangerously at the most eminent vices among the greatest persons, and not to creepe into every blinde Tap-house that fears a Constable more than a Satyr. But that such a Poem should be toothlesse I still affirme it to be a bull, taking away the essence of that which it calls it selfe. For if it bite neither the persons nor the vices, how is it a Satyr, and if it bite either, how is it toothlesse, so that toothlesse Satyrs are as much as if he had said toothlesse teeth. What we should do therefore with this learned Comment upon teeth and horns which hath brought this confutant into his Pedantick kingdome of Cornucopia, to reward him for glossing upon hornes even to the Hebrew root, I know not. . . .[1]

In this passage, many of those complexities that were discussed in Chapter One concerning the nature of satire and the satirists' motivations are illustrated. Milton, ostensibly, has set out to attack Hall as a man unworthy of the powerful position he holds. He will do this by ridiculing the "eminent vices" of this "great person" (Hall); in the process, he will "teach" his audience about such vices, and will "delight" them (obviously not Hall) by his artistry; perhaps, even, he will convert Hall himself to a more upright life. His satire will thus satisfy the major critical stipulations of "teaching and delighting."

[1]"Apology for Smectymnuus," Works, III, i, 328-9.

In fact, however, Milton chooses to vilify Hall, not by pillorying his great vices, but by ridiculing his abilities to write satire (abilities which many later readers have admired); simultaneously, Milton seems to relish the opportunity of indulging his personal vindictiveness and displaying his wit. This, in my view, is a concise example of that abuse complained of by Renaissance theorists of literature; even the non-precisian Webbe writes:

> . . . as the very sum of chiefest essence of Poetry did always for the most part consist in delighting the readers or hearers with pleasure, so, as the number of Poets increased, they still inclined this way rather than the other, so that most of them had special regard to the pleasantness of their fine conceits, whereby they might draw men's minds into admiration of their inventions more than they had to the profit or commodity that the readers should reap by their works.[1]

Nor is there any sign of compliance, in Milton's passage, with the obligations a satirist ought to have to charity, which he elsewhere feels to be a necessary component of satire. The passage strikes one, ultimately, as a vicious, though amusing personal aside, in an otherwise rather serious thesis; its moral purpose is, at least, obscure, and though it may "delight" the reader, it satisfies its perpetrator even more. It deviates from the classical _caveat_ against personal attacks in satire, and violates Milton's own criteria. It is almost as though Milton, whilst adept at

[1] _Elizabethan Critical Essays_, I, 235-6. Gregory Smith's very valuable introduction to these essays deals at some length with the pleasure-profit dichotomy in Renaissance literature, and cites numerous instances of contemporary awareness of it. Pleasure, it seems, far from being the "sugar coating" on the moral pill, becomes the complete aim of many of the writers whom the Puritans attacked.

theorising on one thing (satire in the general, classical sense) practices something quite other which he knows to be anathema in terms of his own Christian beliefs, and contrary to the most respected theory. In this, he is no exception, as the remainder of this chapter will illustrate. The danger, however, lies in taking too seriously the satirist's professed aims: though Milton's practice may conflict with his theory, we can scarcely attest that the scathing attack here is not a considered and deliberately contrived one. With this kind of qualification in mind, it is of considerable importance to re-examine the various notions about satire and "satyre" that are to be found in the writing of the period.

There is an abundance of information in Renaissance verse and prose about satire: more often than not it refers specifically to the so-called formal verse satire--"satyre";[1] but descriptions of the attributes of "satyre" (and, as I shall show, the word has wider use in the Renaissance than specialists in general have been willing to concede) tell the student a lot incidentally about satire generally, as both writers and commentators conceived of it. The power of satire seems to have been regarded in the Renaissance with suspicion, and its reputation for salacity (or some such thing) was responsible for its "prohibition" (though it is hard to see any notable decline in output) in June, 1599.

[1]The form is variously spelt "saytyre", "satyr", "satyre" and "satire" (less frequently); I shall distinguish them from satyr, the woodland deity, and satire in its modern, inclusive sense, by the use of quotation marks.

As a result of the ban, satire fled to the drama to escape annihilation.[1] Yet the fact remains that it was an important enough kind in the Renaissance to merit stringent prescriptions--as the plethora of opinions amongst practitioners and theorists indicates. The first appearance of "satyr" as a literary label in English is in Alexander Barclay's Ship of Folys of the World in 1509. The work is a translation, however free, of Sebastian Brandt's Narrenschiffe and the term appears in a Prologue annexed by Barclay himself:

> This present Boke myght have been callyd nat inconvenyently the Satyr (that is to say) the reprehencion of foulysshnes, but the neweltye of the name was more plesant unto the fyrst actour to call it the Shyp of foles: For in lyke wyse as olde Poets Satriens in dyvers Poesys conjoyned repreved the sinnes and ylnes of the peple at that tyme lyvynge: so and in lyke wyse this our Boke representeth unto the iyen of the redars the states and condicions of men.[2]

The word "satyr" as Barclay uses it does not apply only to so restricted a form as the verse satire. The latter, however, has so gripped the attention of scholars since as to lead to the relative neglect of other interesting manifestations of the kind in the English Renaissance.

[1]There is a lot of speculation about what exactly did cause the ban of 1599, whether the salacity, personal abuse, libel, or the atheism of the satirists. Works dealing with this matter and with satire in the Renaissance generally, are: R. M. Alden, The Rise of Formal Satire in England (Philadelphia, 1899); O. J. Campbell, Comicall Satyre and Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida (San Marino, 1965); A. Kernan, The Cankered Muse; G. R. Owst, Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England (Cambridge, 1933); and J. Peter, Complaint and Satire.

[2]Ship of Folys of the World, quoted in Alden, p. 19. There is general agreement amongst scholars that this is the first use of "Satyr" as a literary term.

Whereas, in his Preface, Barclay traces the origins of satire to Aristophanes and later, the New Comedians,[1] there was another more widely acknowledged source, to be found in Aelius Donatus' discussion of the history of the kind, which was often attached to Elizabethan grammar-school editions of Terence, and hence, presumably, was fodder for every schoolboy. Donatus also penetrates beyond the New Comedy, and suggests that the scandalous Old Comedy, which was apparently suppressed because of its excesses--so much for the aesthetic liberalism of the ancients--was replaced in effect by a kind of satyr-play in which the same vicious personal attacks (for no good "moral" reason) occurred, but this time under the mask of the satyr, the uncouth and priapistic woodland deity of mythology. This satyr-play too was prohibited, and the New Comedy became its even more diluted substitute;[2] hence, satire had acquired the kind of "respectable" background (no matter how seedy), the search for which was so dear to the hearts of Renaissance men. (A similar phenomenon was the desire, no matter how perverse, to find roots for England in the mythical soil of Troy.)

[1] I am not so much interested in showing the actual historical or etymological sources of "satyre"--a problem cleared up since the time of Casaubon--as in exploring the connotations of the word itself in the Elizabethan artists' minds.

[2] Most of this material has already been suggested in Alden, Campbell, Peter, and Kernan; I am indebted to them. It is interesting to note, however, how "history" has a habit of repeating itself: the hypothetical flight of "satyre" into drama in 1599, bears a striking similarity to Donatus' theory about the dramatic origin.

Barclay and Donatus indicate the nature of the central tenets of most Elizabethan theory on the verse-"satyre": a hypothetical dramatic origin, a moralistic purpose, and a crude methodology. Thomas Langley's formulation is typical of those current throughout the century:

> A satire is a Poesie, rebuking vices sharpely, not regarding anye persones . . . [it] is very railing, onely ordained to rebuke vice . . . The Satires had their name from uplandyshe Goddes, that were rude, lassivious, and wanton of behavior.[1]

Despite the fact that variants in etymology were considered, there was a preconception about the fundamental qualities of satire which ensured the propagation of a rather circumscribed view of its nature. Thomas Drant's prefatory poem to Horace's first two satires (1566) bears testimony to the ingenuity and learning of the Renaissance scholar, and shows a great deal of insight into the possibilities of satire:

> A Satyre is a tarte and carpyng kynd of verse,
> An instrument to pynche the prankes of men . . .
>
> A name of Arabique to it they gave:
> For Satyre there, dooth signifie a glave. . . .
>
> Or Satyra, of Satyrus, the mossye rude,
> Uncivile god: for those that wyll them write . . .
>
> Satyre of writhled waspyshe Saturne may be namde . . .
>
> Or Satyra of Satur, thauthors must be full
> Of fostred arte, infarst in ballasde breste.[2]

[1] Thomas Langley, An Abridgement of the Notable Works of Polidore Vergile (1570), sigs. cii-ciii.

[2] Thomas Drant, Medicinable Morall (London, 1566), sig. $A4^v$.

The suggestions of an Arabic origin are especially interesting, as we shall see, and the reference to "satur" seems to be the first step towards Casaubon's definitive findings. The "glave" or "butcher's cleaver" that the "arabique" etymology suggests can obviously be tied in with the notion of the "anatomist",[1] and in view of Elliot's contention about the historical relationship between satirist, priest, and doctor ("medicine man"), is not to be discounted too easily.[2]

Thomas Lodge takes the more orthodox view of the origins of satire in his Reply to Gosson's School of Abuse; he returns to the drama as its source. Anticipating Milton, he sees the archetypal drama as being a tragedy.[3] Tragedy in ancient times was merely a thanksgiving to the gods--a notion, he avers, to which even Gosson cannot object. But "as the dayes wherein it was used dyd decaye"--the passing of the

[1]Cf. Peter, Complaint, p. 303.

[2]See Elliot, p. 154. Mary Claire Randolph would partially support Elliot's stance, as we can infer from her article "The Medical Concept", p. 157, where she says that though "No attempt has been made to prove that there exists any positive generic affiliations between Celtic and English satire," yet "certain similarities have been noted." And she does not preclude similarities that may be even more universal regarding the whole kind. Drant's theories are implied in Burton's Anatomy too: there we have the melancholiac, born under Saturn, anatomizing with his cleaver in a literary form that is replete with variants in the "pudding" manner; and at the same time, we have a persona who claims to bring medicine for the spirit. These are some of the aspects of Burton's Anatomy that will be dealt with in the next chapter.

[3]Above, p. 66.

Golden Age, presumably--and "witt" developed (a consequence of the Fall?), the tragedy became a drama in which were depicted "the sower fortune of many exiles, the miserable fal of haples princes, the reuinous decay of many cou[n]tryes," and the lives of satyrs were presented "So that they might wiselye under the abuse of that name, discover the follies of their folish felow citesens."[1] Lodge describes his satyr to us in the Discontented Satyre which is appended to Scillaes Metamorphosis (1589):

> Stearne were his lookes, afflicting all the feelds
> That were in view; his bushie lockes undrest
> With terror hang, his haviour horror yeelds . . .[2]

This is the standard description of the melancholiac that merges with that of the satyr-persona in many Renaissance satires.[3]

Puttenham is the best-known exponent in the sixteenth century of the traditional view--but with a difference; in the Arte of English

[1] Complete Works, ed. E. W. Gosse (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1966), I, 36.

[2] Ibid., I, 32.

[3] There is an important factor in those satires that are not simply crude and vicious; the mingling of satyr and melancholiac can be used to account for the puzzlingly composite personae of such satires as Burton's and Donne's Anatomies, the latter of which is represented to us by Paulson as the best of the Renaissance satires (in The Fictions of Satire: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967). G. L. Hendrickson, in "Archilocus and the Victims of his Iambicks," AJP, XLVI (1925) adds fuel to the fire by claiming that "satire" and "satyr" stem from two different roots, and that our word "satire" stems from "satura" whilst "satirize" and "satirical" come from "satyre".

Poesie (1589), he indicates that the satyr-play is the source of both comedy and tragedy. Puttenham's preference is the converse of Lodge's and, later, Milton's theories, and indicates that, for him, the didactic element is the most fundamental in the literary arts.[1] Nor does he neglect to mention the father of English satire, the author of Piers Plowman:

> There was yet another kind of Poet, who intended to taxe the common abuses and vice of the people in rough and other speaches, and their invectives were called Satyres and them selves Satyriques. Such were Lucilius, Juvenall, and Persius among the Latines, and with us he that wrote the booke called Piers plowman.[2]

Passages in the satirical writing of the period seem to indicate that the satirists took the theories seriously: they assert repeatedly that they speak as satyrs, "rag'd and bare," emerging from a "hollow vast desertful den," with faces "rough and hayrie like a goat."[3] The stereotype appears again and again with monotonous predictability.[4]

[1] George Puttenham, The Arte of English Poesie, ed. G. D. Willcock and A. Walker (Cambridge University Press, 1936), p. 31 ff.

[2] The Arte, p. 26. John Peter in Complaint and G. R. Owst in Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England have some interesting things to say about the native element in English satire in their respective works, though later investigators like M. C. Randolph and Elliot have discovered a universality in the attributes of the kind that are of more striking significance.

[3] These phrases are from Hall, Virgidemiarum (London, 1597), I, 76; Rankins, Seaven Satyres (London, 1598), I, 1-4; Wither, Abuses Whipt and Stript (London, 1613), I, line 6.

[4] I will show later that the prose satirists present an image of their role that is even more unprepossessing than this.

To conclude this part of the treatment of the influential theories proposed about satire, it might be wise to deal briefly with those seventeenth-century writers apart from Burton (whose contribution will be treated separately) who had something to say on the matter. Their positions tend to emerge in the practice of satire rather than in theoretic statements. They still acknowledge the tradition but inveigh against its abuse--another tradition. Ben Jonson, who "quarrelled with Dekker, quarrelled with Marston, quarrelled with Inigo Jones, quarrelled with everybody,"[1] protested that his _Epigrammes_ would not conform to the expected malignant norm:

> It will be look'd for, booke, when some but see
> Thy title, _Epigrammes_, and nam'd of mee,
> Thou should'st be bold, licentious, full of gall,
> Wormewood, and sulphure, sharpe and tooth'd withall;
> Become a petulant thing, hurle inke and wit,
> As mad-men stones: not caring whom they hit.[2]

This very claim of innocence imputes guilt to others. But, like all his satirical forbears, he proceeds to ignore his own precept in many of the poems that follow. He comments upon virulent satire in _Discoveries_, too, when discussing poetry's decline:

> Hee is upbraydingly called a _Poet_, as if it were a most contemptible Nick-name. But the _Professors_ (indeed) have made the learning cheape. Rayling and tinckling _Rimers_, whose Writings the vulgar more greedily reade; as being taken with the scurrility, and petulancie of such wits. Hee shall not

[1] A. H. Cruickshank, _Ben Jonson_ (Durham, 1912), p. 18.

[2] _Works_, VIII, 27.

> have a Reader now unless he jeere and lye. It is the food of men's natures: the diet of the times! Gallants cannot sleepe else. The Writer must lye, and the gentle Reader rests happy, to heare the worthiest workes misinterpreted; the clearest actions obscured; the innocent'st life traduc'd; And in such a licence of lying, a field so fruitfull of slanders, how can there be matter wanting to his laughter? Hence comes the Epidemicall infection. For how can they escape the contagion of the Writings, whom the virulency of the calumnies hath not stav'd off from reading?[1]

The charges of "railing" and "scurrility" are familiar-sounding, as is the protest against "calumny"; these, of course, are all forgotten as he mounts his own attack on John Taylor, the unfortunate "Water-Poet". The image of an "epidemical infection" is one that occurs often in satire, and the related image "contagion" takes us squarely into that debate that raged on the double effect of satire: it may be seen as the curer of vice and as infector or inciter to vice, in that it inculcates into its readers vices previously unknown to them. The "Coney-Catching" pamphlets, for example, were thought to be teaching confidence tricks whilst claiming to expose them.

There are other interesting but not entirely novel contributions to the debate about satire in the earlier part of the seventeenth century. But, in its later stages, according to Randolph, much of the fury has gone:

> Man's critical attention is fastened for the most part on his reason, his will, the workings of his mind, and his place in and relation to society; and satire acquires a new and quieter vocabulary of comparatively exact philosophical and psychological terms.[2]

[1]<u>Works</u>, VIII, 572.

[2]<u>Medical Concept</u>, pp. 125-6.

Men like Milton (in his comments on Hall), and Michael Drayton (in his remarks on Nashe), however, show a keen appreciation of the attributes associated with the kind. Etymologically, Isaac Casaubon gave definitive grounds in theory for what had been the practice for centuries anyway. He recognized that satire was originally a Latin word "satira" anciently "satura" (medley, hotch-potch) and was certainly not from the Greek σάτυρος "a satyr".[1] J. Wight Duff sums up succinctly:

> The supposed connection with the Satyrs of Greek mythology, countenanced by ancient grammarians, but exploded by Casaubon's famous essay of 1605, led to a great deal of confused thinking and fanciful speculation in the past, and died all the more slowly in England because the old spelling of 'satire' was 'satyr'--Dryden's form in fact spelt and pronounced indistinguishably from the English form of the Greek word with which it has no kindred. It is noteworthy that the derivative adjectives 'satiric' from 'satire' and 'Satyric' from 'Satyr' still sound exactly alike to the ear. This confusion led in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to the curious notion that the half-bestial woodland demons, the Satyrs, were endowed with the gift of censoriousness.[2]

Whether as a direct result of the "satyr" concept or no (and, after all, Juvenal, a major acknowledged influence upon all the satirists, fits pre-eminently into the "satyr" category though his age did not share the etymological confusion), certain attributes were looked for in the satirists' work that showed compliance with accepted satiric

[1] Cf. Isaac Casaubon's De Satyrica Graecorum Poesi et Romanorum Satira Libri Duo (Paris, 1605).

[2] J. Wight Duff, Roman Satire (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1936), p. 3.

decorum. Barclay suggested that "mery speche" must be used, and that his satyr must be "eloquent" and "jocunde"--necessary tools for the proper arousing of "reprehencioun." But since there was a heavy dependence upon the Aristotelian notion of mimesis, any treatment of base matter (especially by a satyr), plumbing the depths of folly and error, requires an appropriate style. As Spenser says in *Mother Hubberd's Tale*:

> No Muses aide me needes heer to call:
> Base is the style, and matter meane withall.[1]

Whilst there are many contemporary comments upon the decorum,[2] it is Marston who makes the most interesting statement in defence of his own work, which incidentally reveals a lot about the decorum of the *kind*:

> Know I hate to affect too much obscurity, and harshnes, because they profit no sence. To note vices so that no man can understand them is as fond as the French execution in picture. Yet there are some (too many) that thinke nothing good, that is so curteous as to come within their reach. Tearming all Satyres (bastard) which are not palpable darke, and so rough writ, that the hearing of them reade would set a man's teeth on edge. For whose unseasoned pallate I wrote the first Satyre in some places too obscure, in all places mislyking me . . . Persius is crabby, because antient, and his ierks (being perticulerly given to private customes of his time) dusky. Juvenall (upon the like occasion) seemes to our judgement, gloomy. Yet both of them goe a good seemely pace, not stumbling, shufling. Chaucer is hard even to our understandings: who knowes not the reason? How much more those old

[1] *Works*, II, 108.

[2] For example, Adrianus Junius, *Nomenclator*, tr. John Higins (London, 1585), p. 11: "Satyra, invectum in mores poema Σατυρα a Satyrorum petulantia dicta. Un esguillon des vices. A nipping kind of poetry tawnting and sharplie showing men their faults."

> Satyres which expresse themselves in terms, that breathed not long even in theyr dayes. But had we then lived the understanding of them had beene nothing hard. I will not deny there is a seemely decorum to be observed, and a peculier kind of speech for a Satyres lips, which I can willinglier conceave then dare to prescribe; yet let me have the substance rough, not the shadow. I cannot, nay I will not delude your sight with mists; yet I dare defend my plainnes against the veriuyce face of the crabbed'st Satyrist that ever stuttered.[1]

For his own part, Marston scrupulously avoided one kind of "obscurities" to the extent of naming names, and his satires do more than just hint at the vices they claim to analyse. Yet he does point to the ancients as exemplars of this "difficult" aspect of the satiric art, finding the satyr-figure in them also, though its existence was a Renaissance illusion. The mention of Chaucer is important--the English satirists did not see him as the originator or perpetuator of some specifically "native" satiric strain,[2] but place him with Langland in the European tradition of the satiric kind, to which lineage a universality is attributed. The "obscurity" of Chaucer and Langland stems from the "tearmes" they employ--colloquial, non-literary language which has been one of the attractions as well as one of the stumbling-blocks of satire. (Marston himself, Nashe, and renowned figures like Rabelais have suffered

[1]John Marston, The Scourge of Villainie, ed. G. B. Harrison (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1966), pp. 9-10.

[2]Owst and Peter would have us believe in the native strain--as would such extravaganzas as Cazamian's Development of English Humor (New York, 1965).

as a result of their employing so many colloquialisms and slang. In Chaucer's case, the subsequent development of the English language has not helped matters). As for Marston's comment on "substance" and "shadow", we have to decide for ourselves whether the former is his main concern. Certainly the Augustans felt that Marston was enjoying himself just a little too much to be taken seriously as a reprehender of vice.[1]

The entire idea of the need for "difficulty" sounds more odd to us today than to those in the pre-modern era; over-affection for obscurity is a criticism that might be applied to the whole system of ancient rhetoric if we can credit the tale of the old rhetorician who encouraged his pupil, "you're writing so well now I can hardly understand it myself." The tradition that demanded obscurity was a hallowed one, even outside satire.[2] But there was some debate as to how far it should be tolerated; Gascoigne, for instance, felt that whilst "obscure and darke phrases" might be all right in their place, they are gravely indecorous "in a pleasant sonet." It may be that the inability to grasp the personal references in Horace, Persius or Juvenal was responsible for the notion that satire was deliberately obscure.[3] But countering this there

[1]See A. Jose Axelrad, Un Malcontent Elizabéthain: John Marston (Paris, 1955), pp. 313-330, for a survey of Marston's reputation after his death.

[2]See Arnold Stein, "Donne's Obscurity and the Elizabethan Tradition," ELH, XIII (1946), 98-118.

[3]Stein, p. 105.

was a feeling that does more credit to the intellect of the Elizabethan artist--namely, that the difficulty would lead the reader to ponder more deeply the import of what was being said, and profit the more from it. On the other hand, the device could be abused, and obscurity could be utilised to cover lack of content. There was too, a notion that popularity ought to be eschewed as something plebeian and undesirable, and deliberate obscurity was a sure means of avoiding universal approbation. Donne has been assessed from both points of view in the context of this debate; Ben Jonson avowed that he would go unread because of his difficulty, yet Arthur Wilson praised him for it:

> Thou dost not stoppe unto the vulgar sight,
> But, hovering highly in the aire of Witt,
> Holdst such a pitch that few can follow it.[1]

This feeling about the need for difficulty is shared by T. S. Eliot, who claims in our century, perhaps for different reasons, "poets in our civilization as it exists at present must be difficult."[2]

In prose, one can see the move towards the Senecan or "Hopping Lipsian" style--rather unsatisfactory labels, but indicative of a frame of mind that tended away from the often mellifluous complacency of Euphuism to a more tortured and tortuous mode of expression.

[1]John Donne, Poems: 1633 (Menston: Scolar Press, 1969), p. 394, lines 14-16.

[2]T. S. Eliot, Homage to Dryden (London, 1924), p. 31.

It has been observed, "There is noticeable towards the end of the sixteenth century a growing taste for difficulty in art, and this, like the basic attitude towards expression and the changing taste in sound, first becomes evident in prose."[1] It is entirely possible that in studying the development of satire, too, we may learn much from the prose of the period that would indicate its precedence to poetry in terms of significant change, in time if not in quality.

Another contemporary of Marston, Guilpin, makes this provocative assertion about the nature of satire:

> No, No, avaunt bace Feare, it cannot bee,
> Tell him, the Satyre may not be deposd,
> So long as Trueth sings his Apologie:
> Nor is he of so bace a mould composd,
> As to be subject to a slight impression,
> For a true Satyre's guyltles of transgression.[2]

One becomes rather skeptical about the satyr's "guyltles" pursuit of "Trueth" when other motives for writing appear with conspicuous regularity: Hall writes not least for fame, Lodge for exercise, Harvey for spite, Nashe for fun. Campbell makes an interesting comment on what he feels may be the real aim of many of the satires: "In writing them, their authors were consciously devising an antidote to the influence of the popular poetic cult of Petrarchism and its manifold developments."[3] It might not be

[1]Stein, p. 115.

[2]The Whipper Pamphlets, ed. A. Davenport (Liverpool University Press, 1951), II, 48, lines 223-8.

[3]Campbell, p. 33.

irrelevant in the context of this argument to consider the escalation of philosophic skepticism generally in the era and the other intellectual and religious upheavals; they seem pertinently related to the emergence of satire as a potent force (correspondingly later in England than elsewhere--witness the earlier appearance of Aretino and Rabelais on the continent). This involves a paradox; satire may be regarded as a conservative reaction against these phenomena--and this would be Campbell's stance--or it may be taken as expression of the liberty or licence that must have seemed to accompany them.[1]

Many sixteenth- and seventeenth-century men of letters in England had spent time in Italy in the pursuit of culture or worse, and in addition to contracting the somewhat novel disease of melancholy[2] had fallen under the influence of such men as Minturno and Cinthio. The latter was concerned amongst other things with the mixed emotions that satire arouses in its readers. It is "rappresentata a commovere gli animo a riso, ed a convenevole terrore e compassione . . .".[3] This notion about the laughter, pity and fear that we are supposed to feel relates satire again to its origins in the drama. But often we are

[1]Again, a topic for later consideration.

[2]Babb, The Elizabethan Malady, p. 73: "The vogue of melancholy began to make its mark upon Elizabethan literature about midway in the reign of Elizabeth."

[3]Quoted in Campbell, p. 33.

left with an impression of "railing for railing's sake" that is very difficult to dislodge, and that may be the final antithesis to the Petrarchan "love for love's sake;" both were perpetrated in the name of Charity.

The Italian Pietro Aretino's name is so formidable that it is one to be almost literally conjured with amongst satirists in England:

> We want an Aretine here among us, that might strip these golden asses out of there gaie trappings, and after he had ridden them to death with railing, leave them on the dunghill for carion.[1]

Aretino reminds the satirists of the power that the word still has; in the tradition of Archilocus, he could so terrorize his victims that they would pay "protection money." The "killing" tradition (as I shall show later) was not yet forgotten, and some scholars see the obscure fate of Gabriel Harvey as indicative of its potency.

John Davies, the satirist, considers one of the crimes of which his profession is accused:

> As couterfeit coyning is put upon Alchemists,
> So labelling lightly is set upon satyrists.[2]

However "lightly" the "labelling" was done, there are a number of topics, set pieces, as it were, that recur in satire throughout our

[1] The Works of Thomas Nashe, ed. R. B. McKerrow (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966), I, 242.

[2] John Davies of Hereford, The Complete Works, ed. A. B. Grosart (1878; rpt. Hildesheim: George Olms, 1968), p. 5.

period.[1] On questions of morals, women, with their traditional treachery and frailty (they were, after all, responsible for the Fall), are the subject of constant abuse and amusement--as often as not the same thing. But other prominent abuses put on display are avarice, cheating, usury, slander, hypocrisy, gluttony, bribery, over-ambition, drunkenness, and gambling: in short, all of the follies and sins of humanity.[2] Amongst fashions that the satirist attacked most frequently was the habit of theatre-going, and theatres and players generally; the most sustained attack was the vituperative Histriomastix by "marginal Prynne", the man who roused Milton's wrath, though since the time of Gosson the subject was grist for anyone's mill. The use of tobacco was a convenient new topic for the satirists' attack,[3] as was the general behaviour of gallants, which was ruthlessly exposed in the "coney-catching" pamphlets.

[1]Alden has paved the way for this work in his treatment of the verse satire: he has pretty thoroughly catalogued the various topics that arise with frequency in the work, for example, of such men as Gascoigne, Donne, Hall, Marston, Guilpin, and Rowlands. I have discovered amongst the prose-satirists too, the same farrago of subjects.

[2]Some notable prose works on these topics are: Thomas Nashe's Anatomie of Absurditie, which has as part of its running title, 'Conteining a breefe confutation of the slender imputed praises of feminine perfection, with a short . . .' (this work will be examined later in the chapter); Stephen Gosson's Quip for an Upstart Gentlewoman (a corollary to Greene's earlier work); Joseph Swetnam's Arraignment of Women; Thomas Lodge's Alarum against Usury; Thomas Adams' The White Devil, or the Hypocrite Uncased.

[3]In such works as King James' Counterblast to Tobacco--an amusing document today.

Perhaps the major problem in what we might call social affairs was the enclosures question, which also gave most scope for the utilization of the Piers Plowman tradition. But official corruption generally, and such public disasters as plague and famine were recurrent topics.[1]

Amongst the classes in society, the predictable targets were principally the lawyers, doctors, and clergymen (still sitting-ducks today, all three); the poor pedant and the ivory-tower scholar were mocked as always. The soldier and his relative the courtier were abused; also we might include the Puritans and the Papists with their respective tenets, who were the butts of the "liberal" majority.[2] But the satirists reserved their most vicious and effective attack, appropriately enough, for the class to which they themselves belonged--the artists and the abusers of art, in particular the abusers of satire. Only contempt, they felt, is good enough for such parasites, and they lard it on with unstinted generosity. The controversy between Nashe and Harvey is one of the major examples of this internecine strife, and will be dealt with later in this chapter.

[1]The enclosure problem was dealt with in such utopian schemes as More's _Utopia_ and Burton's "Preface", but there are more blunt suggestions proposed in efforts like Robert Crowley's _Informacion and Petition against the Opressours of the Pore Commons of this Realme_ (1548). Dekker's _Wonderful Yeare_ (1603) is an impressive chronicle as well as a powerful satire about the plague.

[2]Amongst the more interesting satires on such matters are Barnaby Riche's _Farewell to the Military Profession_ (1581), and Thomas Powell's _Tom of all Trades. Or the Plain Man's Path-way to Preferments_ (1631). There are innumerable attacks on Puritans and Papists; for example, William Bradshaw's _English Puritanisme_ (1605), and Robert Abbot's _The Mirrour of Popish Subtilties_ (1594).

There is a very large body of "uncategorized" prose lying about in the Renaissance, and it becomes clear, on examination, that much of it is a close relative of the formal verse satire, characteristics of which we have examined above. Contemporary theorists never say very much about the mechanics of the formal verse satire; what they say about its nature, however, is often applicable to the prose satires too. These are in the satura tradition, consciously contrived it seems to me, in the awareness of certain broad guide-lines, foremost amongst which is the acknowledgement of their satiric precedents.[1] In the next few pages, I hope to elicit from some of the prose satires of the period the characteristics according to which they are composed and to show that they are chiefly differentiated from the formal satire in a formal way: they are productions of the satiric kind and their writers are just as aware of that as the creators of the shaggy satyrs of the formal verse pieces. I intend to concentrate this analysis on the works of Nashe, Harvey, and Dekker, straddling as they do the decades on either side of 1600, and preparing the way for "the greatest Menippean satire in the English language," the first edition of Burton's Anatomy in 1621.[2] After

[1]Gilbert Highet, The Anatomy of Satire (Princeton, 1962), pp. 15-16, suggests as a sure sign of the conscious satirist at work, what he calls "pedigree," and the repeated reference to satirical precedent either by allusion, or by quotation.

[2]The phrase is Frye's. A brief glance at Burton's library list (by no means an exhaustive catalogue of his reading) shows his familiarity with two of the writers in question: of Dekker's output he had The Magnificent entertainment given to King James, A Knight's coniuring, Westward Hoe,

examining their theory and their practice, I hope to show the basis on which that edifice was constructed.

The word "satyre" did not take on any delimiting connotation of a rigidly formal structure till late in the century--a point that has been neglected in discussion on this subject. Barclay uses the word to describe his Ship of Folys, as we saw earlier, and Lindsay quite unabashedly calls his play A Saytyre of the Thrie Estates. Even in 1576 George Gascoigne in the introductory epistle to The Steele Glas does not feel obliged to follow any predetermined regulation, and calls his poem "a satyr without rime," whose aim is "to give a ribbe of roast" to his enemies.[1] Indeed, in The Whipper Pamphlets, Jonson's plays and Guilpin's epigrams are considered as "satyres" along with Marston's more orthodox efforts. In the Stationer's Register of June 1st, 1599, it is commanded that "noe Satyres or Epigrams bee printed hereafter," and this is followed by the remark that "all Nasshes bookes and Doctor Harvyes bookes be taken

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The Belman of London, The deade Tearme, The Guls Horne-booke, The Ravens Almanacke, If it be not Good the Divel is in it, O per se O; under Nashe only Summers Last Will is noted, and it is part of an incomplete volume containing others of Nashe's work. Familiarity with Nashe implies knowledge of Harvey, and one assumes a man of Burton's reading and curiosity was aware of the problems his fellow-scholar had encountered--as he is aware of other squabbles of the sort, for example, the Scioppus-Scaliger controversy in Europe. (Information on Burton's library comes from the Oxford Bibliographical Society Proceedings and Papers, I (1922-6).)

[1]Steele Glas (London: English Reprints, 1901), p. 45.

wheresoever they may be found and that none of their bookes be ever printed hereafter." The implications are that they belong to the same category.

All of this seems to indicate only one thing: that the formal verse satire was regarded as being only one outgrowth of the satiric kind, not comprehensive, and certainly not exclusive; although its avowed aim (like all literature) is moral, its implied and indeed sometimes stated motive is often personal and joyously vindictive; frequently there is a confession that the writer is simply trying his hand at another form:

> . . . I have thought good to include Satyres, Eclogues and Epistles: first by reason that I study to delight with varietie, next because I would write in that forme, wherein no man might challenge me with servile imitation, (wherewith heretofore I have been unjustlie charged). My Satyres (to speak truth) are by pleasures, rather placed here to prepare and try the eare, than to feede it: because if they passe well, the whole centon of them, already in my hands shall sodainly be published.[1]

Lodge's admission certainly removes us far from the field of moral aims: he wants to indulge his reader's desire for variety, to show that he is not a plagiarist, and to gauge the potential for a further edition by noting the reception that this one gets. By no stretch of the imagination can we convert this into a declaration of moral indignation: rather it connotes commercial prudence and something of hurt pride. Like many of his fellows, Lodge writes in the morally indignant "railing"

[1]Thomas Lodge, A Fig for Momus, III, 6.

style as part of his artistic apprenticeship, and not out of conviction that he can amend the corruptions of his society.

It might be charged that there is a certain invalidity to such a conclusion. I appear, basically, to be accepting some statements of the satirist as genuine reflections of his motivation, and high-handedly discarding the others as mere convention. So that, for example, I choose to believe Lodge's avowal that he is simply trying out his satires to assess public response to them, but I do not take seriously his protestations of moral indignation within them. This is a fundamental objection, and one to which, in anticipation, I have laid the basis of an answer throughout the early part of this thesis, where I have dealt with the motivation and origin of satire, with particular reference to the Renaissance. I shall try, briefly, to recapitulate.

In claiming a moral end for his work, the satirist is identifying himself with the traditional aim of _all_ literature, whose purpose, following the Renaissance interpretation of Horace's famous and ambiguous line "_aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetae_," was, first of all to teach, and only secondly to delight. Many modern theorists (and some not so modern) feel that the performance of Renaissance artists runs quite counter to this claim in many instances, in that they very obviously make teaching a secondary part of their work. In the case of the satirist especially, there is, at any rate, an insoluble moral dilemma, a clear conflict of end and means. The satirists often make only token attempts

to disguise the impression that for them the pursuit is much more enjoyable than the edification of the reader; nor do they show very much concern for the conversion of their victim, as I hope this chapter will demonstrate--particularly the treatment of the Harvey-Nashe dispute. Milton, as I tried to show earlier, in advocating an impersonal, "Christian" approach to satire, very deliberately and premeditatedly attacks Hall in the most savage personal terms; and Nashe and Harvey seem to be egging each other on, in the traditional way, to fresh outbursts of vitriol rather than to repentance. Such instances lead one to assume that these satirists are consciously (they often admit to it) acting in violation of the moral principles which they otherwise claim to advocate. If one feels that it is at such moments that they excel as satiric artists, the conclusion is surely inevitable that disregard for the moral niceties seems to be one of the major requirements for the best satire. The final appeal can be made to the satiric tradition which presents innumerable examples of the _apologia_ of the satirist, many of them included, it seems, for the sole purpose of showing how radically the writer can deviate from the moral boundaries which he therein sets himself.

As I discuss each of the writers following, I shall not attempt to veil the apparent clash between theory and practice in their works. It occurs with such overriding frequency that it can scarcely be excused as an occasional lapse; indeed, it seems somehow to be the very _raison d'être_ of their satires, the tension upon which they build to such effect.

Stephen Gosson's School of Abuse (1579) is often (and possibly wrongly) praised backhandedly for incurring Sidney's wrath sufficiently to provoke the famous Defence of Poesie; but it is a tour de force in its own right, and represents the use of the prose satire to attack, paradoxically, the validity of literature itself (or, as he later claims, the abuse of art). One feels that the School, judged as a piece of literature, is as fine a production in artistic terms as the much-vaunted Defence: Gosson knows the tradition in which he writes, and besides, there is much in his case that seems original as opposed to Sidney's derivativeness. We are bound to think that it is the unpopularity of what he is saying that relegates his work to an inferior position in the eyes of students of literature. Yet the whole is tinged with irony, by the use of which Gosson seems to ask us not to take his words too seriously. The running title describes his effort as "an pleasant invective"--a word that recurs frequently to label the prose satire of the Renaissance (Harvey and Nashe employ the term often to abuse each other's productions, and there is an insulting connotation attached to it throughout the period). Gosson claims to be concerned with the misuse of literature even in its most elevated functions as reprehender of vice: he very perceptively observes the paradoxical results that may arise out of over-zealous description of vices:

> And so wading too farre in other mens manners, whilst they fill their Bookes with other mens faultes, they make their volumes no better than an Apothecaries shop, of pestilent Drugges; a quacksalvers Budget of filthy receites; and a huge

> Chaos of foule disorder. Cookes did never long more for great markets, nor Fishers for large Pondes, nor greedy Dogges for store of game, nor soaring hawkes for plentie of fowle, then Carpers doe nowe for copye of abuses, that they might ever be snarling, and have some Flyes or other in the way to snatch at. . . . he that loves to be sifting of every cloude, may be strooke with a thunderbolte, if it chaunce to rent; and he that taketh upon him to shew men their faults, may wounde his own credite if he goe too farre.[1]

This is directly related to the Platonic problem, and Gosson knows that he himself is subject to the very criticism that he is attacking in others. The satirist is teacher in two ways--he teaches the necessity for moral behaviour, but also illustrates (in order to be effective) in detail the practice of immorality; satire is seen as a double-edged weapon, and such reasoning may possibly be related to the eventual banning of satire in 1599. Yet at the same time as he launches out at all plays, he rather coyly defends his own contributions:

> The last [one of his own plays] because it is knowne to be a Pig of my own Sowe, I will speake the lesse of it; onely giving you to understand that the whole mark at which I shot . . . was to show the reward of traytours in Catalin . . . These playes are good playes and sweete playes, and of all playes the best playes and most to be liked, worthy to bee sung of the Muses, or set out with the cunning of Roscius himself . . .[2].

Yet even the best plays (like his own) are "not fit for every man's diet: neither ought they commonly to be shewen." Thus he neatly shifts his ground from the viciousness of art to the depravity of some human

[1] Schoole, pp. 53-54.

[2] Ibid., pp. 40-41.

beings, and even implies that a good artist (himself) will never be appreciated by the general run of play-goers. Confusions are thus confounded, and the appended Apologie becomes a patent denial of some sentiments in the original work. Re-examined, the Schoole appears so tinged with wit and irony that we have to suspect Gosson's avowed motive; the dedication to Sidney is so obviously inappropriate and ironic that it must be considered as deliberate provocation or as a satiric stroke.[1] The validity of this reading is further suggested by the fact that in the Apologie, he indulges in a shower of personal abuse against the hypothetical nonsense that his potential answerer--who turns out to be Sidney--will be forced to use to defeat Gosson's own logical case.

Gosson's Schoole seems to be an early, clear example of the use of a satiric speaker who is not just the gruff satyr of the formal verse; he has, indeed, his "satyric" moments, but is also a witty, intelligent, erudite man who manipulates his assumed character for deliberate effect; he is aware of the contradictions in his position and his resolution of it is specious, for ultimately there is no philosophic solution, only an artistic one. For deliberate "obscurity" of language, he substitutes confusion in ideas and the satura structure: his satiric speaker is, in

[1]C. S. Lewis, English Literature in the Sixteenth Century (Oxford, 1944), p. 394, feels that it would be folly to take Gosson's Schoole too seriously: "In the Schoole he is still the artist, still indeed the commercial artist, catering for a well established taste in rhetoric."

my view, a forerunner of the persona of the Anatomy of Melancholy.[1] It is of some interest that in addition to the Schoole, Gosson is also responsible for a pleasantly satiric poem in the Speculum tradition.

It is, however, from the writings of Thomas Nashe and Gabriel Harvey, both men of considerable erudition, that we learn most about the theory and the practice of satire in Renaissance England. The "sharply satirick" Thomas Nashe[2] dwells with immodest frequency upon his function

[1]An archetypal example in the debate about satire's unfortunate double effect is St. Jerome, who had the additional problem of reconciling his satire with the doctrine of Christian charity: "The ambiguity of St. Jerome's attitude towards vitriolic ridicule reveals that as a Christian satirist he faced a problem which had not confronted the pagans: he was keenly aware that malevolent backbiting was unchristian and he consequently experienced a feeling of deep guilt over his irrepressible penchant for abuse. The result of this feeling was that throughout his works, he inserted warnings against the evil of malevolence even while himself continuing to indulge in invective" (David S. Wiesen, St. Jerome as a Satirist, Cornell University Press, 1964, p. 258). Wiesen's comment reflects my own feelings about the reiterated moral aim of Renaissance satirists: the more it is repeated, the more one suspects its sincerity. Wiesen's book contains some interesting material on the whole history of Christian satire, and in particular on the emergence of the prose form; Jerome was known as "satiricus scriptor in prosa", and, though he leaves no verse compositions, "refers to himself as a satirist in the larger sense of a penetrating and vituperative critic of human behaviour. Since Jerome himself did not restrict his concept of the satiric to its narrower and more formal meaning, he provides justification for regarding as satire and studying as a unit those elements in his writings which express caustic, scurrilous, and abusive judgements of society in general or of individual men" (pp. 2-3). Jerome himself, apparently, believed firmly in the concept of the prose satire, and Wiesen demonstrates quite clearly his ready familiarity with the traditions of the great satirists of antiquity.

[2]So described by Drayton in his Epistle to Henry Reynolds; Spingarn, I, 137.

as a writer and identifies himself not only with the producers of "satyrs", but also with the great satiric writers of the Western tradition. That he regards his work as satire is clearly implied in his statement in the Anatomie of Absurditie:

> What I have written, proceeded not from the penne of vain-glory but from the processe of that pensiveness which two Summers since overtooke mee: whose obscured cause, best knowne to everie name of curse, hath compelled my wit to wander abroad unregarded in this satyricall disguise, and counsaild my content to dislodge his delight from traytors eyes. (Works, I, 5)

With conscious irony he leaves the precise nature of his disease unnamed: we imagine he means melancholy, though Harvey would have it something just as common, but contracted outside the area of spiritual conflict. Nashe claims that he has deliberately adopted the persona of the satyr for his particular purposes, and it is of some interest to us to see what they may be. He wishes to "anatomize Absurditie",

> to take a view of sundry mens vanitie, a survey of their follie, a briefe of their barbarisme, to runne through Authors of the absurder sort, assembled in the Stacioners shop, sucking and selecting out of these upstart antiquaries, somewhat of their unsavery duncerie, meaning to note it with a Nigrum theta, that each one at the first sight may eschew it as infectious to show it to the world that all men may shunne it. (Works, I, 9)

He constantly shows himself to be a past-master of the satirist's "rough" language, but, like Marston later, he attacks the kind of "obscuritie" for its own sake that was sedulously contrived by some satirists and sought after, for various reasons, even by men like Donne; and he is ever