Burton Handout

ENGL 520

Full Title:

*The Anatomy of Melancholy. What it is, with all the kinds causes, symptoms, prognostickes, & seuerall cures of it, In three Partitions, with their severall Sections, members, & subsections, Philosophically, Medicinally, Historically, opened & cut up By Democritus Junior. With a Satyricall Preface, conducing to the following Discourse.* [By Robert Burton.] 7th edition. London: E. Wallis, 1660.

The Authors Abstract of Melancholy

When I goe musing all alone,
Thinking of divers things fore-known,
When I build Castles in the air,
Void of sorrow and void of fear,
Pleasing my self with phantasms sweet,
Me thinks the time runs very fleet.

All my joyes to this are folly,
Naught so sweet as Melancholy.

When I lye walking all alone,
Recounting what I have ill done,
My thoughts on me then tyrannise,
Fear and sorrow me surprise,
Whether I tarry still or go,
Me thinks the time moves very slow.

All my griefs to this are jolly,
Naught so sad as Melancholy.

When to my selfe I act and smile,
With pleasing thoughts the time beguile.
By a brook side or wood so green,
Unheard, unsought for, or unseen,
A thousand pleasures doe me bless,
And crown my soul with happiness.

All my joyes besides are folly,
None so sweet as Melancholy.

When I lie, sit, or walk alone,
I sigh, I grieve, making great mone,
In a dark grove, or irksome den,
With discontents and Furies then,
A thousand miseries at once,
Mine heavy heart and soul ensconce.

All my grief to this are jolly,
None so sour as Melancholy.

Me thinks I hear, me thinks I see,
Sweet musick, wondrous melodie,
Towns, places and Cities fine;
Here now, then there; the world is mine,
Rare beauties, gallant Ladies shine,
What e're is lovely or divine.

All other joyes to this are folly,
None so sweet as Melancholy.

Me thinks I hear, me thinks I see
Ghosts, goblins, fiends; my phantasie
Presents a thousand ugly shapes,
Headless bears, black men, and apes,
Dolefull outcries, and fearfull sights,
My sad and dismall soul affrights.

All my griefs to this are jolly,
None so damn'd as Melancholy.

Me thinks I court, me thinks I kiss,
Me thinks I now embrace my mistriss,
O blessed dayes, O sweet content,
In Paradise my time is spent.
Such thoughts may still my fancy move,
So may I ever be in love.

All my joyes to this are folly,
Naught so sweet as Melancholy.

When I recount loves many frights,
My sighes and tears, my waking nights,
My jealous fits; O mine hard fate
I now repent, but 'tis too late.
No torment is so bad as love,
So bitter to my soul can prove.

All my griefs to this are jolly,
Nought so harsh as Melancholy.

Friends and Companions get you gone,
'Tis my desire to be alone;
Ne're well but when my thoughts and I
Do domineer in privacie.
No Gemm, no treasure like to this,
'Tis my delight, my Crown, my bliss.

All my joyes to this are folly,
Naught so sweet as Melancholy.

'Tis my sole plague to be alone,
I am a beast, a monster grown,
I will no light nor company,
I find it now my misery.
The scean is turn'd, my joyes are gone;
Fear, discontent, and sorrows come.

All my griefs to this are jolly,
Naught so fierce as Melancholy.

Ile not change life with any King,
I ravisht am: can the world bring
More joy, then still to laugh and smile;
In pleasant toy time to beguile?
Do not, O doe not trouble me,
So sweet content I feel and see.

All my joyes to this are folly,
None so divine as Melancholy.

Il'e change my state with any wretch,
Thou canst from gaole or dunghill fetch:
My pain, past cure, another Hell,
I may not in this torment dwell,
Now desparate I hate my life,
Lend me a halter or a knife.

All my griefs to this are jolly.
Naught so damn'd as Melancholy.

*The Anatomy of Melancholy*

Part. I, Section I, Subsection II: Division of the Body, Humours, Spirits

Of the parts of the body there may be many divisions: the most approved is that of Laurentius, out of Hippocrates: which is, into parts contained, or containing. Contained, are either humours or spirits.

A humour is a liquid or fluent part of the body, comprehended in it, for the preservation of it; and is either innate or born with us, or adventitious and acquisite. The radical or innate is daily supplied by nourishment, which some call cambium, and make those secondary humours of ros and gluten to maintain it: or acquisite, to maintain these four first primary humours, coming and proceeding from the first concocton in the liver, by which means chylus is excluded. Some divide them into profitable and excrementitious. But Crato, out of Hippocrates, will have all four to be juice, and not excrements, without which no living creature can be sustained: which four, though they be comprehended in the mass of blood, yet they have their several affections, by which they are distinguished from one another, and from those adventitious, peccant, or diseased humours, as Melancthon calls them.

Blood is a hot, sweet, temperate, red humour, prepared in the meseraic veins, and made of the most temperate parts of the chylus in the liver, whose office is to nourish the whole body, to give it strength and colour, being dispersed by the veins through every part of it. And from it spirits are first begotten in the heart, which afterwards by the arteries are communicated to the other parts.

Pituita, or phlegm, is a cold and moist humour, begotten of the colder part of the chylus (or white juice coming out of the meat digested in the stomach), in the liver; his office is to nourish and moisten the members of the body which, as the tongue, are moved, that they be not over-dry.

Choler is hot and dry, bitter, begotten of the hotter parts of the chylus, and gathered to the gall: it helps the natural heat and senses, and serves to the expelling of excrements.

Melancholy, cold and dry, thick, black, and sour, begotten of the more feculent part of nourishment, and purged from the spleen, is a bridle to the other two hot humours, blood and choler, preserving them in the blood, and nourishing the bones. These four humours have some analogy with the four elements, and to the four ages in man.

To these humours you may add serum, which is the matter of urine, and those excrementitious humours of the third concoction, sweat and tears.

Spirit is a most subtle vapour, which is expressed from the blood, and the instrument of the soul, to perform all his actions; a common tie or medium between the body and the soul, as some will have it; or as Paracelsus, a fourth soul of itself. Melancthon holds the fountain of these spirits to be the heart, begotten there; and afterwards conveyed to the brain, they take another nature to them. Of these spirits there be three kinds, according to the three principal parts, brain, heart, liver; natural, vital, animal. The natural are begotten in the liver, and thence dispersed through the veins, to perform those natural actions. The vital spirits are made in the heart of the natural, which by the arteries are transported to all the other parts: if the spirits cease, then life ceaseth, as in a syncope or swooning. The animal spirits, formed of the vital, brought up to the brain, and diffused by the nerves to the subordinate members, give sense and motion to them all.”

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Part I, Section I, Subsection VII: Of the Inward Senses

Inner senses are three in number, so called because they be within the brainpan, as common sense, phantasy, memory. Their objects are not only things present, but they perceive the sensible species of things to come, past, absent, such as were before in the sense. This common sense is the judge or moderator of the rest, by whom we discern all differences of objects; for by mine eye I do not know that I see, or by mine ear that I hear, but by my common sense, who judgeth of sounds and colours: they are but the organs to bring the species to be censured; so that all their objects are his, and all their offices are his. The fore-part of the brain is his organ and seat.

Phantasy, or imagination, which some call estimative, or cogitative (confirmed, saith Fernelius, by frequent meditation), is an inner sense which doth more fully examine the species perceived by common sense, of things present or absent, and keeps them longer, recalling them to mind again, or making new of his own. In time of sleep this faculty is free, and many times conceives, strange, stipend, absurd shapes, as in sick men we commonly observe. His organ is the middle cell of the brain; his objects all the species communicated to him by the common sense, by comparison of which he feigns infinite other unto himself. In melancholy men this faculty is most powerful and strong, and often hurts, producing many monstrous and prodigious things, especially if it be stirred up by some terrible object, presented to it from common sense or memory. In poets and painters imagination forcibly works, as appears by their several fictions, antics, images: as Ovid’s house of Sleep, Psyche’s palace in Apuleius, etc. In men it is subject and governed by reason, or at least should be; but in brutes it hath no superior, and is *ratio brutorum*, all the reason they have.

Memory lays up all the species which the senses have brought in, and records them as a good register, that they may be forthcoming when they are called for by phantasy and reason. His object is the same with phantasy, his seat and organ the back part of the brain.

The affections of these senses are sleep and waking, common to all sensible creatures. ‘Sleep is a rest or binding of the outward senses, and of the common sense, for the preservation of body and soul’ (as Scaliger defines it); for when the common sense resteth, the outward senses rest also. The phantasy alone is free, and his commander, reason: as appears by those imaginary dreams, which are of divers kinds, natural, divine, demoniacal, etc., which vary according to humours, diet, actions, objects, etc., of which Artemidorus, Cardanus, and Sambucus, with their several interpretators, have written great volumes. This ligation of senses proceeds from an inhibition of spirits, the way being stopped by which they should come; this stopping is caused of vapours arising out of the stomach, filling the nerves, by which the spirits should be conveyed. When these vapours are spent, the passage is open, and the spirits perform their accustomed duties: so that ‘waking is the action and motion of the senses, which the spirits dispersed over all parts cause.’