

THE COMIC GROTESQUE AND WAR  
IN SELECTED  
RENAISSANCE AND EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY PROSE

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines how the comic grotesque is used to address the subject of war in selected prose. The Introduction reviews the essential ludicrous-fearful duality of the grotesque. "Comic Grotesque" refers to examples which emphasize the ludicrous. An organic link exists between the nature of war and the grotesque form.

Part One deals with Renaissance selections. The first is the slaughter of the rebels in Sidney's Arcadia, which parodies epic-battle motifs. The princes dispatch the rebels in a series of gruesome and humorous portraits. Nashe's The Unfortunate Traveller contains two grotesque battles. Jack wants to join the stronger side at the Marignano blood bath but soon flies off to the Munster uprising. Jack's grotesque similes and Rabelaisian vitality characterize him as a picaresque hero. Burton's tirade against war in The Anatomy of Melancholy exposes all the absurdities of war but with comic exaggeration. The tirade is part of the greater dilemma of not knowing whether to laugh with Democritus or cry with Heraclitus. To understand Burton's paradoxical view of war, the tirade must be seen within the context of the entire Anatomy.

Part Two looks at eighteenth-century selections.



The pettiness and horror of war are recurrent themes in Gulliver's Travels. Swift is particularly interested in the unreason of war engines and the perverse delight which men take in the spectacle of battle. Smollett's Roderick Random documents the military experiences of another picaresque hero who sees action in the War of Jenkins's Ear and the battle of Dettingen. Like Jack Wilton, Roderick only enlists in the army to support himself. Perhaps the most memorable comic grotesque statement on war comes in Sterne's Tristram Shandy. The bowling green diversion may be harmless play, but it is also tied to Marlborough's actual campaigns. Paradoxically, uncle Toby's war wound is an emblem of love.

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to examine how the comic grotesque is used to address the subject of war in a selection of Renaissance and eighteenth-century prose. My first concern in the Introduction will be to identify the essential characteristics of the grotesque as a literary genre. This study deals specifically with the comic grotesque mode. Then the usefulness of focusing on the subject of war will be pointed out by considering the present state of genre criticism. There is a close connection between the grotesque and satire, and, in the last part of the Introduction, the main features of this connection will be brought to light with particular reference to Northrop Frye's Anatomy of Criticism.

In spite of the fact that the last twenty years have seen a large amount of critical theory about the grotesque, one might still cite the first part of John Ruskin's essay, "Grotesque Renaissance," as being the clearest explication of the genre's essential components:

. . . the grotesque is . . . composed of two elements, one ludicrous, the other fearful; that as one or the other of these elements prevails, the grotesque falls into two branches, sportive grotesque and terrible grotesque: but that we cannot legitimately consider it under these two aspects, because there are hardly any

examples which do not in some degree combine both elements; there are few grotesques so utterly playful as to be overcast with no shade of fearlessness, and few so fearful as absolutely to exclude all ideas of jest.<sup>1</sup>

While generally endorsing Ruskin's ludicrous-fearful duality, modern theorists have tended to quibble with his claim that either one or the other dominates, choosing instead to emphasize the perfect ambiguity between these two elements.<sup>2</sup> Ruskin's concepts, however, may be more applicable to a particular reading experience. For example, Gulliver's description of human warfare to his Houyhnhnm master may initially strike one as being more fearful than ludicrous, but this response could be the reverse on a second reading. In other words, a grotesque passage will more often be thought predominantly fearful or ludicrous than absolutely equal in both respects, even though there is always some degree of ambivalence. Ruskin makes this point without getting too abstract about the aesthetics involved.

Frances Barasch has made an excellent study of the history of the word "grotesque" and its various meanings. According to Barasch, "grotesque" was first used in English at the beginning of the seventeenth century and "was accepted as an art term."<sup>3</sup> It "became naturalized by the frequent associations of it with the older term 'anticke'," which referred to the skeleton of the *danse macabre* and then more widely to the comic demons and "their Renaissance

evolutions as fools, rogues, and clowns."<sup>4</sup> Later in the seventeenth century, "under French influence, 'grotesque' became a popular figure for low farce and burlesque poetry, so that by the eighteenth century, it was ready to be used as a significant literary and critical term."<sup>5</sup> However, in neo-classical England, it was often used with the pejorative connotations of disorder and irregularity. Barasch's summary of the modern meaning of "grotesque" is an echo of Ruskin's explanation. A writer who uses the grotesque assumes a "detached position" (as we shall see, Ruskin also brings up this idea) and is "simultaneously amused and terrified by what he sees": ". . . the world seen from such a perspective is distorted and absurd. Externally, the degrees of distortion vary from mild caricature to the fantastically absurd."<sup>6</sup> Hence, this study applies the modern meaning of "grotesque" to selected prose of the Renaissance and eighteenth century.

The "comic" designation is meant to reflect a specific concern with selections which seem more ludicrous than fearful, but as mentioned this predominance may dissolve or even reverse itself. Geoffrey Harpham has used the term "comic grotesque" to refer to those examples of the mode which lean toward the "ludicrous or satiric."<sup>7</sup> This category roughly corresponds to Ruskin's "sportive grotesque" (see p. 1 above), and in keeping with Ruskin's fine sense of the limits in applying theory it can be said

that "comic" represents a general directive more than a strict grouping. Furthermore, the word "comic" serves as an explicit signal to the reader who might be unfamiliar with the basic ambivalence of the grotesque. This consideration is exactly what lies behind Robert Hopkin's reference to the "comic grotesque" in an article on Smollett.<sup>8</sup> Since war itself is such a fearful subject, it appears that the ludicrous or comic must be emphasized simply to restore the basic ambiguity.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the modern theory is the examination of how the grotesque operates, or how the fearful and ludicrous elements interact. According to Lee Byron Jennings, the ludicrous element acts as a defense mechanism against the threat posed by the fearful.<sup>9</sup> By laughing at the absurdities of war, for instance, we protect ourselves psychologically against its more frightening aspects. Yet this is only half of what might occur. The provocation of laughter about a horrible subject like war is itself most disturbing or unsettling. Hence as the basic elements of the grotesque are contradictory so is their interaction, or as Michael Steig concludes, "This is the basic paradox of the grotesque: it is double-edged, it at once allays and intensifies the effect of the uncanny."<sup>10</sup> War is terrible; laughing at war can alleviate the terror, but it can also produce guilt. How could you laugh? How beastly! The opposite responses of relaxation and tension

are what makes the grotesque such a rich aesthetic experience.

A critic is apt to regard the mechanics of the grotesque in a sophisticated and intellectual manner. As with much of the recent criticism on "black humor," it may be said that laughter is the only way to respond to the absurd terrors of the human world.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, there remains a brute primitiveness about laughter. Jestings about horrible subjects, such as war, seems cruel. In his history of the genre, Thomas Wright traces the grotesque to "a feeling deeply implanted in human nature" and manifested in the dawn of man's satiric animosity:

When, before people cultivated either literature or art, the chieftain sat in his rude hall surrounded by his warriors, they amused themselves by turning their enemies and opponents into mockery, by laughing at their weaknesses, joking on their defects whether physical or mental, and giving them nicknames in accordance therewith,—in fact, caricaturing them in words, or by telling stories which were calculated to excite laughter.<sup>12</sup>

This fantastic portrait skirts the edge of that dark and expansive subject of laughter. It also serves to introduce a number of ideas which are central to this study. The first of these is the connection between the grotesque and the Renaissance notion of deformity as being risible. We laugh at unnatural or distorted objects, at the ugliness of what is low. This theory of the risible goes back, of course, to Aristotle's definition of comedy but seems to have found its fullest expression in Hobbes, who believed



that the laughter of men was a "*Sudden glory* . . . caused either by some sudden act of their own, that pleaseth them; or by the apprehension of some deformed thing in another, by comparison whereof they suddenly applaud themselves."<sup>13</sup> Secondly, Wright's portrait implies that human laughter, along with enmity, had its roots in the fall of man—which recalls another famous statement in Leviathan, that "during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war."<sup>14</sup> Both of these Hobbesian ideas merge in Wright's picture of the warriors insofar as their joking is a surrogate for battle.

Therefore, it should come as no surprise that Ruskin identifies "play" as an integral part of the grotesque.<sup>15</sup> The grotesque does not represent reality; it represents a caricature or exaggeration of the reality. It could be said that as an expression of animosity war is itself grotesque since the animosity appears to be distorted beyond all reasonable norms. However, to convey that grotesque nature in a work of art, a sense of exaggeration and of the ludicrous must be captured. Ultimately, a certain detachment from the real subject must exist and this detachment often takes the form of play or the comic vision. Hence, Chaucer's Troilus laughs at the Trojan War from the detached position of the eighth sphere (Troilus and Criseyde, Bk V, 1809-1825).

Much of our aesthetic enjoyment of literature comes

from perceiving a suitability between subject and form. The satiric attack is not the only basis for linking the grotesque with war. In his famous sociological study, Homo Ludens: The Play Element in Culture, John Huizinga includes a chapter entitled "Play and War."<sup>16</sup> Huizinga associates play with the "irrational" and emphasizes its seriousness both in sport and drama.<sup>17</sup> From a detached distance, or one might say the sidelines, war resembles a game with its teams, strategies, rules, and—most important—winners and losers. A war tends to polarize allied forces. Battle plans are elaborately researched, practised, and executed. Wars are officially declared, conducted according to certain conventions, and concluded by official treaties. All games involve ritualized behavior (handshakes, medal ceremonies) and so do wars, but military organizations seem to be steeped in ritual. There are drills, parades, salutes, ranks, uniforms and all kinds of structures that impose a strict order as if armies were dangerous monsters, which of course they are. There is even a play community that continues after the game. Regardless of side soldiers share the bond of their profession, their common sense of special duty and secret knowledge.

But even if military organizations function according to a game structure, war itself means the death of thousands, sometimes millions—many of them completely innocent, and the immeasurable misery of millions more. This is the fearful

or terrible side of war. To see war as also being ludicrous requires more detachment, but here too the argument is not difficult to construct if one thinks about it. Satirically speaking, war epitomizes human folly and the baseness of human life—so much uncontrolled passion, so many killed before their time. One might again recall Hobbes: "the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."<sup>18</sup> How incredibly absurd, how utterly foolish are wars when seen as petty squabbles blown out of all proportion. But abstract ideals, such as liberty and honor, combine with fear and are enough to rally men into glorious armies and onwards to glorious wars—into the valley of death like so many fools. Of course, in the eyes of those who are personally committed to the cause, the fools are apt to be considered courageous heroes.

Since this study is generic in nature, it recognizes that there are various modes in which a subject may be treated; although one may be more appropriate than another, the literary critic must judge each mode according to its own criteria. We can say, then, that the grotesque contains the paradoxical elements of the fearful and the ludicrous and that the interaction between these elements can produce shadowy guilt or tension-releasing laughter. Furthermore, the grotesque vision distorts reality by means of a detached or playful attitude; a distortion which tends toward the ludicrous side can be referred to as the "comic grotesque."

As both a fearful and ludicrous escalation of animosity, war may be described as grotesque. It also resembles a game or play structure. Hence, content and form are organically linked. One of the intentions behind this study is to explore a new direction in genre criticism which considers mode and content in conjunction. This approach attempts to answer questions which were recently raised by Jeffrey Beusse about the usefulness of descriptive modes. In his article, "An Investigation of the Value of Genre Analysis," Beusse points to the weakness of not relating, in a significant way, the subject with the genre in which it is treated:

But what does it [descriptive genre theory] tell us? That a war novel is about war? That a novel about war which is true to life and not idealistic is a realistic war novel, or that if it contains irony, humor, and ridicule that it is a satiric war novel? Such descriptive criticism not only makes a point of the painfully obvious, it also implies that the author can choose his generic form apart from the contents; that is, that he might have selected the genre of idyll for his war story.<sup>19</sup>

The appropriateness of using the comic grotesque mode to address the subject of war will become even more evident as this study progresses. For the moment, it is enough to cite Willard Farnham's excellent analysis of the decorative grotesque of the early middle ages to suggest how the mode is organically connected to the idea of strife. Farnham locates a "moving spirit" in medieval grotesque illustrations which "is preoccupied with dramatically opposed forces in life":

It makes the grotesque sensible of, and impels it to represent, pervasive conflict in nature. The conflict as represented has its simpler aspects in brutal conflict between living beings. It shows subtler aspects . . . when a monster seems to be the result of a breaking down of normal creatures and a recombination of parts of them in a form where the parts must be at war with each other in their incongruity.<sup>20</sup>

Many of the abstract features of the grotesque—fragmentation, distortion, conflict—are also characteristic of war.

The grotesque is closely related to satire and irony. Harpham contends that "[a]mong rhetorical modes, the grotesque is most congenial to irony, which, rippling up beneath the surface, undercuts and subverts language itself."<sup>21</sup> Several of the critics on the grotesque have discussed its connection to satire.<sup>22</sup> Confusion arises when no distinction is made between literary works and modes ("satiric" or "grotesque" may both describe an entire work or a specific mode). Definitions also overlap and this can cause difficulty. In his Dictionary of World Literary Terms, Joseph Shipley points out that traditional definitions of satire tend to emphasize its "moral or reformative function."<sup>23</sup> Satire is an attack on corruption, and the satirist may see his work as "reformative," as well as punitive, if he believes that the corruption is corrigible. On the other hand, he may see it as only punitive if he means to indict the fallen nature of man.<sup>24</sup> This singular function does not make the satire inferior to the reformative

type, because it may be an indication of a broader perspective while the reformative type may be largely political. In addition, the satire itself possesses merit and purpose simply as a form of art, or as Shipley goes on to say: "Man may not win, but he must go on fighting: in the fight is life."<sup>25</sup> Combat images such as "fight" and "attack" are standard in definitions of satire and point to another organic link between the subject of war and what might be called the satiric grotesque. Writers of the grotesque often have belligerent attitudes and feel hostile toward mankind or the general human condition.

One is tempted to associate the grotesque with Northrop Frye's concept of satire and irony in his "Theory of Myths." According to Frye's overlapping categories, the phases of satire correspond to the initial phases of comedy while those of irony have affinities with the latter phases of tragedy.<sup>26</sup> Frye calls satire "militant irony" and claims that two things are essential for it to exist: "one is wit or humour founded on fantasy or a sense of the grotesque or absurd, the other is an object of attack."<sup>27</sup> Efforts to locate what we have called the comic grotesque in any one of Frye's phases, which often seem to be products of a relentlessly symmetrical mind, would be meaningless. Suffice it to say that the grotesque may appear in the most political satire, that wholly intends to move one to

action, as well as in the most fatalistic irony, that only intends to move one to laughter. When Frye says that "any denunciation, if vigorous enough, is followed by a reader with the kind of pleasure that soon breaks into a smile,"<sup>28</sup> he is commenting on the aesthetic experience of satire or the grotesque as a self-contained artistic form. Frye even touches on the apparently primitive and malicious joy which is derived from the satiric attack: "invective is one of the most readable forms of literary art . . . we like hearing people cursed."<sup>29</sup> The significance of this statement becomes more obvious when one considers it in light of Robert Elliot's The Power of Satire: Magic, Ritual, Art which traces the genre back to the ancient curse and the belief that such curses could cause death.<sup>30</sup> Parallel to the aesthetics of the satiric attack is the seemingly perverse delight that men take in the spectacle of a physical battle. How violence draws the human eye and captures attention becomes a major theme in this study.

The grotesque is surely related to Frye's idea of the "ironic mode" which, like the *mythos* of satire and irony, possesses either a comic or tragic pattern.<sup>31</sup> His association of ironic comedy with play especially brings to mind Ruskin's theory of the "sportive grotesque," which we have amended to "comic grotesque":

But the element of *play* is the barrier that separates

art from savagery, and playing at human sacrifice seems to be an important theme of ironic comedy. Even in laughter itself some kind of deliverance from the unpleasant, even the horrible, seems to be very important. We notice this particularly in all forms of art in which a large number of auditors are simultaneously present, as in drama, and still more obviously, in games.<sup>32</sup>

Jenning's belief that the ludicrous element of the grotesque serves as a defense mechanism against the threat posed by the fearful (see p. 4 above) is contained in the reference to "laughter" as a "deliverance from the unpleasant." Humor can be therapeutic and regenerative. Frye goes on to claim that "cyclical theories of history" are "a typical phenomenon of the ironic mode,"<sup>33</sup> and, as we shall see, they also typify how certain writers of the comic grotesque see war.

Ultimately, it must be said that while Frye's Anatomy of Criticism can serve as a useful touchstone for various aspects of the grotesque, any direct association between Frye's forms and the grotesque should be made cautiously. One should also remember that Frye's modes, myths, and genres are pure forms of which no perfect example exists. Although one form may dominate and characterize a specific literary work, that work is usually a complex mixture of various forms.<sup>34</sup> Hence, applying Frye's Anatomy remains an extremely tricky business. Likewise, a prose work may contain comic grotesque passages but, as a whole, be part of a completely different generic category.



The Arcadia is a good example. On the other hand, the author's comic grotesque vision of war may be only properly understood by considering the entire work. The scope of my approach for each selection will be clearly outlined beforehand.

That Renaissance and eighteenth-century selections are chosen is a reflection of the continuity of theme and treatment between these periods, each in its turn demonstrating echoes of classical motifs. The use of the comic grotesque within these periods is itself enormously wide. Even though my selections are all from prose works, the basis for this study on the comic grotesque has to do with "modes of perception" as opposed to "genres of composition" to use Schiller's distinction.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, in spite of the fact that many of the selections happen to fall into Frye's genre category of "Menippean Satire" (also called "anatomy") and show a verbal exuberance or "display of erudition" which characterizes this category,<sup>36</sup> no clear relationship exists between it and the use of the comic grotesque in a prose form. Rather than force preconceived structures on the literature, I will treat each selection as a unique example of the comic grotesque. Each of the six chapters deals separately with specific passages or works of Sidney, Nashe, Burton, Swift, Smollett and Sterne. Cross references will be made wherever it is deemed most useful to do so. Introductory comments to Part One

(Renaissance) and Part Two (eighteenth century) outline the contemporary attitudes toward war and satire which related directly to the comic grotesque vision. If there is a general difference between the comic grotesque of the Renaissance and that of the eighteenth century, then it would have to be that the first tends toward a rhetorical incongruity (fearful aspects of war expressed in a ludicrous language) while the second favors an abstract incongruity (fearful aspects of war exposed as ludicrous). This shift reflects the movement away from ornate prose and the growth of rational skepticism. The ultimate intention of this study is to show a new approach in genre criticism by investigating how one of the most intriguing artistic modes is used to treat a subject for which it is particularly suited.

## NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

<sup>1</sup> "Grotesque Renaissance," in The Complete Works of John Ruskin, Vol. III (New York: Byran, Taylor & Company, 1894), pp. 126-127.

<sup>2</sup> See Lee Byron Jennings, The Ludicrous Demon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), p. 17: ". . . it seems that there is more to be gained by preserving the unity of the concept 'grotesque,' and the basis of this unity is the undisturbed functioning of the disarming mechanism and the preservation of the balance between the fearsome and ludicrous aspects"; and Sylvie Debevec Henning, "*La Forme In-Formante*: A Reconsideration of the Grotesque," Mosaic, 14, No. 4 (1981), 117-118: "The different conceptions of the grotesque proposed . . . appear as a replay with some differences of the reduction of the grotesque to either the merely horrible or the merely comic. . . . I would like to propose that the ambiguities and tensions are not resolved."

<sup>3</sup> Frances K. Barasch, The Grotesque: A Study in Meanings (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1971), p. 56. For briefer histories of the word and its meanings, see Wolfgang Kayser, The Grotesque in Art and Literature, trans. Ulrich Weisstein (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963), pp. 24-95; and Philip Thomson, The Grotesque, The Critical Idiom No. 24 (London: Methuen, 1972), pp. 14-15.

<sup>4</sup> Barasch, pp. 56, 45.

<sup>5</sup> Barasch, p. 56.

<sup>6</sup> Barasch, p. 163. Barasch endorses "the New Critics' way of seeing old things as . . . a vision of the modern artist." This dissertation takes a similar approach with respect to the application of the term, "comic grotesque."

<sup>7</sup> He calls the grotesque "the slipperiest of aesthetic categories" and divides it into four subcate-

gories: "caricature," "comic grotesque," "fantastic grotesque," and the "macabre." See Geoffrey Harpham, "The Grotesque: First Principles," Journal of Art and Aesthetic Criticism, 34 (1976), 464. Harpham goes on to say that "[a] perfect formula for most grotesque satire or comedy is Goethe's dictum, '[l]ooked at from the height of reason, life as a whole seems like a grave disease, and the world a madhouse'," p. 464.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Hopkins, "The Function of Grotesque in Humphrey Clinker," The Huntington Library Quarterly, 32 (February 1969), 163, 165, 167-168.

<sup>9</sup> Jennings, p. 17.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Steig, "Defining the Grotesque: An Attempt at Synthesis," Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 29, No. 2 (1970), 258.

<sup>11</sup> The similarity between the grotesque and black humor has been recognized by critics of both. Pointing to the universality of the grotesque vision, Michael Steig suggests that it is at the root of "the recent upsurge of 'black humor' in America"; see Steig, p. 253. Meanwhile, Bruce Janoff has made use of Wolfgang Kayser's idea of the grotesque as a "disquieting mixture of the familiar and the fantastic" in an effort to define black humor; see Bruce Janoff, "Black Humor: Beyond Satire," The Ohio Review, 14, No. 1 (1972), 14. As we shall see, some of the selections examined in this study have been associated with black humor.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Wright, A History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art (London: Virtue Brothers, 1865), p. 2. See also Thomson, pp. 8-9: ". . . the possibility that our laughter at some kinds of the grotesque and the opposite response—disgust, horror, etc.—mixed with it, are both reactions to the physically cruel, abnormal or obscene; the possibility . . . that alongside our civilized response something deep within us, some area of our unconsciousness, some hidden but very much alive sadistic impulse makes us react to such things with unholy glee and barbaric delight."

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, ed. Michael Oakeshott (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946), p. 36.

<sup>14</sup> Hobbes, p. 82. For an elaborate discussion of laughter as having originated in the fall of man, see Charles Baudelaire, "On the Essence of Laughter," in The Mirror of Art, trans. and ed. Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon Press, 1955), pp. 133-153.

<sup>15</sup> Ruskin, pp. 128-140.

<sup>16</sup> J. Huizinga, Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture (Boston: Beacon Press, 1950), pp. 89-104.

<sup>17</sup> Huizinga, pp. 4, 13.

<sup>18</sup> Hobbes, p. 82.

<sup>19</sup> Jeffrey Beusse, "An Investigation of the Value of Genre Analysis," Interpretations: Studies in Language and Literature, 7 (1975), 45-46. It is important to note that Beusse concludes his comments with an appeal for genre critics to "search for a better language" and not to abandon their field, p. 49.

<sup>20</sup> Willard Farnham, The Shakespearean Grotesque: Its Genesis and Transformations (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 4. See also Thomson's chapter, "Towards a Definition," pp. 20-27, in which he argues that "disharmony" is the most "consistently distinguishing characteristic of the grotesque" and defines the mode as "the unresolved clash of incompatibles."

<sup>21</sup> Farnham, p. 467.

<sup>22</sup> On the relationship between the grotesque and satire—see Kayser, pp. 30, 37, 186, 189; Jennings, p. 25; Farnham, p. 464; and Thomson, p. 42.

<sup>23</sup> Dictionary of World Literary Terms, ed. Joseph Shipley (Boston: The Writer Inc., 1970), p. 286.

<sup>24</sup> The best discussion of this issue that I know of is Philip Pinkus, "Satire and St. George," Queen's Quarterly, 70, No. 1 (1963), pp. 30-49.

<sup>25</sup> Shipley, p. 287.

<sup>26</sup> Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 223-239.

<sup>27</sup> Frye, p. 224.

<sup>28</sup> Frye, p. 224.

<sup>29</sup> Frye, p. 224.

<sup>30</sup> Robert C. Elliott, The Power of Satire: Magic, Ritual, Art (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960). Perhaps the lethal "attack" aesthetic of satire is best expressed in Dryden's famous analogy: ". . . there is still a vast difference betwixt the slovenly butchering of a man, and the fineness of a stroke that separates the body, and leaves it standing in its place." See John Dryden, "A Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire," in Selected Criticism, ed. James Kinsley and George Parfitt (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 263.

<sup>31</sup> Frye, p. 35. The tragic pattern of the mode refers to "fictions in which the hero becomes isolated from his society," while the comic pattern refers to "fictions in which he is incorporated into it."

<sup>32</sup> Frye, p. 46.

<sup>33</sup> Frye, p. 62. It is worth noting that Frye's "Theory of Modes" is itself cyclical and the twentieth century is supposedly a period characterized by the "ironic mode," pp. 34-35. The kinship between Frye's "ironic mode," the grotesque and black humor is supported further by the fact that proponents of all three believe the twentieth century to be a particularly conducive period for their respective forms. See Kayser, p. 11; Jennings, p. 1; and Steig, p. 253. For theories on the current popularity of black humor—see Robert Scholes, The Fabulators (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 38; Mathew Winston, "The Ethics of Contemporary Black Humor," Colorado Quarterly, 24 (1976), 277; and "To Weep with Laughing," in Comedy: New Perspectives, ed. Maurice Charney, New York Literary Forum, 1 (Spring 1978), p. 38.

<sup>34</sup> Frye, pp. 50, 162, 305. See also John Reich-

ert's comments in his article, "More Than Kin and Less Than Kind: The Limits of Genre Theory," Yearbook of Comparative Criticism, 8 (1978), 75: ". . . the genre theorist is committed to diversity, to a recognition of a plurality of possible literary forms and aims."

<sup>35</sup> Friedrich Schiller, Naive and Sentimental Poetry and On the Sublime, trans. Julius A. Elias (New York: F. Ungar Publishing Company, 1967), pp. 145-146.

<sup>36</sup> Frye, pp. 309, 311.

## PART ONE: PRELIMINARIES

Thersites onely would speake all. A most disordered  
Of words he foolishly poured out, of which his mind  
Than it could manage—anything with which he could  
Laughter he never could containe.

Chapman's Homer (Iliad II.181-184)<sup>1</sup>

There are two Renaissance attitudes toward war which encouraged its literary treatment in the comic grotesque mode. The first held that war was a divine scourge meant to punish man for his sins; the second saw war as part of an inexorable cycle in the affairs of men: peace led to plenty, plenty to pride and envy, pride and envy to war, war to poverty, and poverty back to peace again. Paul Jorgensen calls the first "Christian" and the second "Classical" in Shakespeare's Military World which contains a good summary of Elizabethan views on war.<sup>2</sup> However, there is a version of the so-called "Christian" view in antiquity as references to Bellona's whip seem to be common in Roman epics.<sup>3</sup> The cyclical view of war, exactly as it is sketched out above, has been traced back to the fifteenth century, but it almost certainly comes from the Roman historians.<sup>4</sup> Although one might be inclined to think of it as "Classical," the Bible contains



its own rendition.<sup>5</sup> War is a dominant subject throughout the Old Testament, and perhaps the most explicit expression of the scourge theory is Isaiah 10:24-26 in which the Lord outlines how the Assyrians are to be used as a "rod" against Israel.<sup>6</sup>

Whatever their origin, the cyclical and scourge attitudes seemed to co-exist during the Renaissance. In fact, this very co-existence goes back to St. Augustine's The City of God—a good example of how classical and Christian learning could be combined.<sup>7</sup> Roy Battenhouse documents several Renaissance expressions of the scourge theory including Marlowe's Tamburlaine, Nicholas Breton's Characters, Gascoigne's "Dulce Bellum Inexpertis," and Greville's "A Treatie of Warres"; he concludes with the statement that "Burton is summarizing a well-established view when he says that war is 'the scourge of God'."<sup>8</sup> There is probably an equal amount of Renaissance documentation for the cyclical theory. Jorgensen cites it in Thomas Fenne's Fennes Fruits (1590) and Marston's play Histrion-Mastix in which allegorical figures follow the cycle in the manner of a morality play.<sup>9</sup> Sir George Clark devotes a chapter to the cyclical theory in War and Society in the Seventeenth Century, tracing it back to the Italian historian Luigi da Porto.<sup>10</sup> However, he fails to note Puttenham's The Arte of English Poesie in which it appears as an example of "Clymax or the Marching figure" and thus

reflects its popularity.<sup>11</sup> The scourge theory could be used as an historical explanation for pagan victories, but it was no justification for a holy war; the cyclical theory circumvented theology.

In their pure forms, the theories could be said to represent opposite views. The scourge implies that by living a virtuous life one might expect to escape the ravages of war, while the cycle accepts both war as an inevitable consequence of human fallibility and peace as an equally inevitable consequence of the ravage. Of course this simplifies more complex and knotty issues, but such a model is appropriate for a discussion of the comic grotesque since the grotesque itself often distorts on the side of simplification. Generally speaking, Renaissance thinkers endorsed some combination of the two, which perhaps accounts for their co-existence, and thereby envisaged a self-contained cosmological order that allowed for divine retribution. The scourge and cyclical theories may actually approach one another depending on how they are interpreted. For the cyclical theorist, war arises from the sin of pride or the corruption of luxury and hence war might be seen as a just punishment. For the scourge proponents who believe that all men are inherently weak and bound to fall into sin, the possibility of avoiding God's wrath begins to disappear. Furthermore, the conquering Tamburlaine or Attila—military aggression individualized—represents an

ambiguous evil within the scourge context since he may constitute both the transgression against divine will or the chastisement in accordance with divine will. (All scourge figures, however, eventually fall after they have served God's purpose.) This paradoxical and ambivalent structure takes on a greater significance when one looks at the nature of Renaissance satire—a task which will put our discussion of the comic grotesque and war in focus.

In The Cankered Muse, Alvin Kernan demonstrates how the Elizabethan satirist often assumed a "satyr" persona which ironically contained the very vices that were being attacked: ". . . every [Elizabethan] satirist is, or tries to be, a raging satyr, a Tamburlaine of vice, an insolent swaggerer, the utter foe of vice, just Rhammusia's whip, the scourge of villiany."<sup>12</sup> In terms of the scourge, war and satire can be said to serve the same ambiguous function. They are both intended to punish vice but do so in a paradoxically vicious way. By its own indulgence in ambiguity, the comic grotesque is closely related to this particular kind of satire wherein the satirist is himself guilty of what he satirizes. In any case, the important point is that an organic link exists between the rhetoric of Elizabethan satire as the "Tamburlaine of Vice" and the scourge theory of war.

Interestingly enough, Tamburlaine's first conquest in Marlowe's play is by oratory. Showing an uncharacteristic

concern about being outnumbered, Tamburlaine decides "to play the orator" and succeeds in luring Theridamas over to his side.<sup>13</sup> Rhetorical dexterity characterizes many other scourge figures in Elizabethan drama, including Shakespeare's Richard III and Iago, as well as Milton's Satan. Tamburlaine the Great may well be the Elizabethan work which deals most consistently with war in the grotesque mode. Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida also merits consideration. The malcontent, Thersites, epitomizes that terrible rage against folly which, Kernan claims, constitutes the rhetoric of Elizabethan satire. However, since this study is limited to prose fiction, comments on Tamburlaine and other related dramas will be kept parenthetical.

For the moment it is enough to say that rhetorical technique will be the basis of my approach toward three selections which utilize the comic grotesque in their treatment of war. The selections are the account of Pyrocles's and Musidorus's defeat of the rebels in Sidney's Arcadia, the description of the battle of Marignano and the Munster uprising in Thomas Nashe's The Unfortunate Traveller, and the tirade against war in Robert Burton's The Anatomy of Melancholy. None of these selections is taken from the mainstream of Elizabethan satire, yet the image of the "raging satyr" does characterize the rhetorical stance taken by each author—albeit in entirely different ways.

In the Arcadia, Sidney relates the slaughter of the rebels by Pyrocles and Musidorus with a sharp and comic wit. His intention was to use the rebels to satirize the corruption of the common mob, and so in depicting their "memorable" slaughter in a facetious way Sidney becomes a "Tamburlaine of vice." What strikes the reader as grotesque is that euphuistic eloquence seems terribly out of place when the subject is dismemberment. The narrator of The Unfortunate Traveller is the picaresque hero, Jack Wilton, who describes the carnage of battle with the most jarring and ludicrous similes. Initially nothing seems to bother Jack. There is even a Rabelaisian vitality in his language which, like Sidney's comic wit, clashes with the subject matter. But this may not be so incongruous when one remembers that the narrator, Jack, is himself a soldier. Overwhelmed by the evidence of man's folly, Burton uses excessive amplification and radical examples which tend to make his Anatomy more hilarious than grave. He too becomes "a raging satyr" or "utter foe of vice" insofar as he catalogues and derides every despicable act of war that he can think of. His barrage of illustrations and quotations has the ironic effect of making the reader giddy instead of indignant. The common denominator of these passages consists of an incongruity between a humorous kind of rhetoric and the subject of war.

This incongruity is best described as the comic

grotesque. The question then becomes one of explaining the use of the comic grotesque in works which are commonly given such varied generic labels (Arcadia is usually called an epic-romance, The Unfortunate Traveller a picaresque novel, and The Anatomy of Melancholy a Menippean satire). The answer lies partly in the subservient nature of the grotesque mode to other genres and partly in a reaction of the authors to the conventions of the age. In The Counter-Renaissance, Hiram Haydn argues that an anti-intellectualism and anti-scholasticism "originated as a protest against the basic principles of the classical renaissance" and that "no characteristic" of this reactionary movement was "stronger than its rejection of the established exaltation of reason."<sup>14</sup> Consequently, writers such as that "competent jobber" Thomas Nashe and even that Elizabethan courtier, Sir Philip Sidney, reveal "apparent contradictions" or a "strangely insistent vein of inconstancy." This insistent "inconstancy" occurs between the mind and the flesh, or between classical humanism and popular culture.<sup>15</sup> For example, idealized love clashes with its opposite—physical passion. Neither the courtly codes nor classical learning represents the end-all values of life.

Haydn does not mention Burton, but Rosalie Colie, in her study of how paradoxical structures permeate Renaissance literature, devotes a whole chapter to the

"mutual contradictions" of The Anatomy of Melancholy.<sup>16</sup>

However, constructing a general "inconstancy" or "paradox" classification only to accommodate Sidney, Nashe and Burton is ultimately of little use. Each writer presents the reader with a different set of rhetorical variables that calls for its own analysis. Furthermore, all three seem to be operating under different influences, some direct others indirect.

Sidney's version of the comic grotesque has its roots in the epic tradition. Part of my task will be to suggest models for various incidents. The identification of certain epic motifs and rhetorical structures will also inform my discussion of the eighteenth-century selections. With Nashe, the opportunity to assess the Rabelaisian use of language presents itself. In Burton's treatment of war one finds definite elaborations of Erasmus's writings. A genre analysis is more complete if specific sources and traditions can be pointed out. My primary purpose is to explore how the comic grotesque is used by these writers only with respect to the subject of war but, in certain cases, I will propose a means of seeing the comic grotesque within the greater structure of the work.

The loose prose style of Nashe and Burton has been given various labels: anti-Ciceronian, Senecan, baroque.<sup>17</sup> Whatever the label, their dynamic style has generally been understood as a reaction to the highly ornate and artificial

prose of Ascham and others. Yet the similarity may go no further for Nashe's specialty is the jarring simile whereas Burton tends to indulge in excessive amplification, or as he himself would describe it—overshooting. In contrast, Sidney's prose style is closer to the euphuism of his predecessors insofar as it employs the basic techniques of antithesis and parallelism. But stylistic differences aside, all three selections (the slaughter of the rebels, the description of the battle of Marignano and the Munster uprising, and the tirade against war) share one important rhetorical effect, which is to create a distance between the language and the subject. Nashe's similes, Burton's excesses, and Sidney's artifice all call attention to themselves at the expense of the gravity of what they are describing—the horrors of war. Consequently, the reader is distracted from the subject and responds more to the humorous nature of the form. To go a step further, this rift may not be altogether deliberate. Perhaps language is simply inadequate to capture the horrors of war in their entirety. Both Jack Wilton and Burton (or Democritus Junior) seem dwarfed by what they attempt to describe. Unlike the plague, another scourge,<sup>18</sup> wars are man-made monsters which are so overwhelmingly destructive that they mock man's efforts to impose a verbal order on them. The comic grotesque then becomes the only way of making any sense out of what is a grotesque situation.



Although Sidney, Nashe and Burton have already been associated with either the grotesque or black humor, these associations have been made in a cursory way or have passed over the subject of war.<sup>19</sup> The value and originality of Part One, then, lies in its concentration on the grotesque passages which deal specifically with war and their classical motifs. This will serve as an aid in understanding not only the works from which the passages are taken but also the continuity of the comic grotesque mode between the Renaissance and the eighteenth century.

## NOTES TO PART ONE: PRELIMINARIES

<sup>1</sup> Chapman's Homer, Vol. I, ed. Allardyce Nicoll, Bollingen Series XLI (New York: Panethon Books, 1956), p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> Paul A. Jorgensen, Shakespeare's Military World (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956), pp. 199. Unfortunately, Jorgensen does not provide any "Christian" or "Classical" sources. See pp. 170-207 for a review of these and other Elizabethan views on war.

<sup>3</sup> See Aeneid VIII.703: "*quam cum sanguineo sequitur Bellona flagello* [while Bellona follows her with bloody scourge]." In Virgil, Vol. II, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, Loeb Classical Library, rev. ed. (1934; rpt. London: Heinemann, 1966). See also Lucan's The Civil War VII.568: "*Sanguineum veluti quatiens Bellona flagellum* [like Bellona brandishing her bloody scourge]." In Lucan: The Civil War, trans. J. D. Duff, Loeb Classical Library (1928; rpt. London: Heinemann, 1962).

<sup>4</sup> See Times Literary Supplement, 17 February 1916, p. 82; 24 February 1916, p. 94; 2 March 1916, p. 105; and 30 March 1916, p. 153.

Among the Romans, Sallust refers to the theory in his comments on Rome: "But when this new community had grown in numbers, civilization, and territory, and was beginning to seem amply rich and amply strong, then, as is usual with mortal affairs, prosperity gave birth to envy. As a result, neighbouring kings and peoples made war upon them . . ." Sallust: The War with Catiline, trans. J. C. Rolfe, Loeb Classical Library (1931; rpt. London: Heinemann, 1965), pp. 11-13.

<sup>5</sup> Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven . . . . A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace."

<sup>6</sup> Isaiah 10:24-26. "Therefore thus saith the Lord Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee

with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt.

For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction.

And the Lord of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him according to the slaughter of Mid-i-an at the rock of O-reb: and as his rod was upon the sea, so shall he lift it after the manner of Egypt."

<sup>7</sup> See St. Augustine: The City of God, Vols. I and II, Loeb Classical Library, Vol. I trans. George E. McCracken (1957; rpt. London: Heinemann, 1966), p. 295 (Bk III.x), and Vol. II trans. William M. Green (London: Heinemann, 1963), p. 195 (Bk V.xii)—for the scourge and cyclical theories respectively.

<sup>8</sup> Roy W. Battenhouse, "Tamburlaine, The Scourge of God," PMLA, 56 (1941), 337-342.

<sup>9</sup> Jorgensen, pp. 192-193.

<sup>10</sup> Sir George Clark, War and Society in the Seventeenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), pp. 130-150. In a postscript, Clark expresses his suspicion that the theory goes back to "classical antiquity" but he does not give any documentation.

<sup>11</sup> George Puttenham, The Arte of English Poesie, ed. Gladys Doidge Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936), p. 208.

<sup>12</sup> Alvin Kernan, The Cankered Muse (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 93.

<sup>13</sup> Christopher Marlowe, Tamburlaine the Great, ed. Una Ellis-Fermor (London: Methuen, 1951), Part One, I.ii. 109-230.

<sup>14</sup> Hiram Haydn, The Counter-Renaissance (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1950), pp. xi-xiii.

<sup>15</sup> Haydn, pp. 6-7. It is interesting to note that the elements of Haydn's "inconstancy" are exactly the same as the two veins of Renaissance humor (the Humanistic and the popular) identified by Louis Cazamian in The Development of English Humor (Durham: Duke University Press, 1952), p. 104.

<sup>16</sup> Rosalie L. Colie, Paradoxia Epidemica (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 453.

<sup>17</sup> See Morris W. Croll, Style, Rhetoric and Rhythm, ed. Max Patrick and Robert O. Evans (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966); Jonas A. Barish, Ben Jonson and the Language of Prose Comedy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960); and George Williamson, The Senecan Amble (London: Faber and Faber, 1951).

<sup>18</sup> Hence, it is appropriate that Thomas Dekker uses the extended metaphor of a besieging army to describe how the plague laid waste London in 1603. See "The Wonderful Yeare (1603)," in The Non-Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker, Vol. I, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (New York: Russell & Russell, 1963), pp. 109-112.

<sup>19</sup> For Nashe see Neil Rhodes, Elizabethan Grotesque (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980); Raymond A. Stephanson, "Language, Rhetoric and Reality in Elizabethan Prose Fiction," Diss. McMaster University, 1978, pp. 202-212; Barbara C. Millard, "Thomas Nashe and the Functional Grotesque in Elizabethan Prose Fiction," Studies in Short Fiction, 15, No. 1 (1978), 38-48; and Patrick Morrow, "The Brazen World of Thomas Nashe and The Unfortunate Traveller," Journal of Popular Culture, 9 (1975), 638-644.

For Sidney see Barbara C. Millard, cited above; and Mathew Winston, "To Weep with Laughing," Comedy: New Perspectives, ed. Maurice Charney, New York Literary Forum, 1 (Spring 1978), pp. 31-43.

For Burton see Charles Anal, "Black Humor in Selected Works of Donne, Jonson, Shakespeare, and Burton," Diss. Connecticut University, 1976.

## CHAPTER ONE:

### SIDNEY'S ARCADIA

#### War in "Arcadia": An Overview

Before one looks at the slaughter of the rebels, it would be wise to review how Sidney treats the subject of war elsewhere in Arcadia.<sup>1</sup> The central military confrontation occurs between the forces of Basilius and Cecropia. It arises when Crecropia abducts the two princesses, Pamela and Philoclea, in a vain attempt to make her son Amphialus heir to the throne. The most recent analysis of the ensuing conflict suggests that Sidney reveals a rather ambiguous attitude toward war.<sup>2</sup> On the one hand, he seems to glorify single combat; while on the other, he does not turn away from the "grotesque and pointless accidents of battle."<sup>3</sup> Our concern is specifically with the latter attitude. Whatever were Sidney's views on armed conflict, they should be especially fascinating because Sidney himself had a good deal of combat experience and ultimately died from a wound suffered on the battlefield. Knowing this makes it more surprising to discover that the treatment of war in Arcadia is rather conventional.

For the most part, war in Arcadia is depicted as

a series of individual encounters. This technique belongs to both the epic and romance traditions. In the epic one also finds overall battle descriptions which, instead of providing a realistic account of the action, convey the unnatural or grotesque proportion of chaos and death. This epic version of the grotesque reflects Suzanne Langer's view that the epic being the "oldest [literary] form was probably that in which all the separate developments were implicit."<sup>4</sup> Anyone acquainted with the Iliad or the Aeneid would surely agree that the grotesque is part of the epic tradition, particularly with respect to war. But while Homer shows an unconscious enjoyment in describing combat, Virgil was only imitating Homer's battle descriptions. Neither can be said to have used the grotesque in a deliberately facetious way, and yet there is a classical tradition of epic-battle parodies going back to the Batrachomyomachia (The Battle of the Frogs and Mice) and Ovid's version of the battle between the Centaurs and Lapithes (Metamorphoses Book XII). In Ovid Recalled, L. P. Wilkinson distinguishes between those epic battle descriptions in which "the grotesque . . . merges into horror" and those in which it "merges into humour."<sup>5</sup> As far as style is concerned, Sidney follows the straight epic horror in his overall description and the epic parody in his account of the slaughter of the rebels.

One characteristic of the epic-battle description<sup>6</sup>

is that it attempts to reach beyond the sensibility of the human world by personifying cosmic elements. For example, during one of the battles in the Iliad the earth is said to have "groaned."<sup>7</sup> It also "groans" when Turnus and Aeneas finally meet at the end of the Aeneid.<sup>8</sup> This kind of epic imagery reverberates with the implication that the tragedy of man's grotesque wars affects the natural creation itself.

Sidney appears to emulate this technique when he gives a panoramic view of the first major engagement of Cecropia's and Basilius's forces. It begins with a "terrible salutation of warlike noyse" and a cosmic reference:

But by this time there had bene a furious meeting of either side: where after the terrible salutation of warlike noyse, the shaking of handes was with sharpe weapons: some launces according to the mettall they mett, and skill of the guider, did staine themselves in bloud; some flew up in pieces, as if they would threaten heaven, because they fayled on earth.  
(I, 387)

Oddly enough, the focus is not on the men but on their seemingly animated lances. This kind of personification was known as *conformatio* according to the sixteenth-century handbooks on rhetoric.<sup>9</sup> The cosmic reference to heaven and earth is then euphuistically introduced. After some elaborations on weapons other than the lances, Sidney concentrates on sound images:

The clashing of armour, and crushing of staves; the  
justling of bodies, the resounding of blowes, was  
the first part of that ill-agreeing musicke, which  
was beautified with the griselinesse of wounds, the  
rising of the dust, the hideous falles, and grones  
of the dying. (I, 388)

The first part of the sentence catalogues various battle sounds. Sidney then punctuates these in the second half of the sentence with vivid pictures. Everything is generalized: the "wounds," the "dust," the "falles"; and the sentence felicitiously comes to rest on the most poignant sound, "the grones of the dying." Paul Jorgensen has pointed out that music imagery was a standard classical convention in Renaissance battle descriptions,<sup>10</sup> and this may be behind Sidney's metaphor, "ill-agreeing musicke." Needless to say the convention could not be more ironic insofar as music, an archetypal image of harmony, is used to describe something as chaotic as battle noise. The irony is accentuated by the word "beautified."

Next Sidney turns to the fate of the horses who are the tragic victims of man's folly:

The verie horses angrie in their maisters anger,  
with love and obedience brought foorth the effects  
of hate and resistance, and with minds of servitude,  
did as if they affected glorie. Some lay deade under  
their dead maisters, whome unknighly wounds had  
unjustly punished for a faithful dutie. Some lay uppon  
their Lordes by like accidents, and in death had the  
honour to be borne by them, whō in life they had borne.  
Some having lost their commaunding burthens, ranne  
scattered about the field, abashed with the madnesse  
of mankinde. (I, 388)



The natural order has been reversed and so the horses are "unjustly punished for a faithfull dutie." (This reading depends on "whome" referring to "some" instead of the syntactical antecedent "maisters.") Furthermore, they run wild with "the madnesse of mankinde" which conveys the idea that man has somehow corrupted the natural world or committed a transgression against the natural order. The image of the fallen horse occurs throughout war literature as a symbol of this transgression. Sidney evokes sympathy for the creatures by referring to their "love and obedience," which may remind one of the beginning of The Defence of Poesie. The Defence opens with Sidney's amusing anecdote about having been so moved by Jon Pietro Pugliano's discourse on "what a peerlesse beast the horse was" that he almost feels as Gulliver does toward the Houyhnhnms: ". . . if I had not bene a peece of a *Lògician* before I came to him, I thinke he would have perswaded me to have wished my selfe a horse."<sup>11</sup>

The image of the horse leads into the next part of the overall description in which the grotesque becomes more pronounced:

The earth it selfe (woont to be a buriall of men) was nowe (as it were) buried with men: so was the face thereof hidden with deade bodies, to whome Death had come masked in diverse manners. In one place lay disinherited heades, dispossessed of their naturall seignories: in an other, whole bodies to see to, but that their harts wont to be bound all over so close, were nowe with deadly violence opened: in others, fowler deaths had ouglily displayed their trayling

guttēs. There lay armes, whose fingers yet mooved,  
 as if they woulde feele for him that made them  
 feele: and legges, which contrarie to common nature,  
 by being discharged of their burthen, were growne  
 heavier. (I, 388)

A terrible incongruity exists between the formality of Sidney's language and the absolute blood bath which is being described. Here we see how well the euphuistic reversal can express the comic paradox. Instead of burying men, the earth is buried by men—a kind of ornamental hyperbole known as *dementiens*,<sup>12</sup> which might remind one of how the ground is covered with corpses after a day of fierce fighting in the *Iliad* (VIII.491, X.199). Every aspect of the blood bath is essentially "contrarie to common nature" or an inversion of the norm. Images of mass death and a mess of anatomical parts prevent any personal identification and contribute to the ludicrous effect. Sidney also uses a rhetorical technique that was known as *conciliatio*, which refers to the gentle expression of unpleasant facts.<sup>13</sup> Heads are "disinherited" or "dispossessed of their naturall seignories" instead of simply cut off. Then there is the conventional life-in-death image of the dismembered limb which still twitches. In the *Aeneid*, Pallas amputates Larides's hand but the hand "seeks its master, and the dying fingers twitch and clutch again at the sword" (X.395-396). Perhaps the most grotesque and lengthy classical example of this twitching motif occurs in Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura* (III.634-669).<sup>14</sup>

Sidney's overall description ends with this scattered pile of dismembered limbs.

There is another and perhaps more important reason for recalling Sidney's Defence and this has to do with the idea of "*Poesie*" as "an Art of *Imitation*" or "[a] speaking *Picture*" (III, 9). The battle description cited above bears a remarkable resemblance to Paolo Uccello's painting "The Battle of San Romano" (1451-1457 circa) which Sidney may have seen in Florence in 1574.<sup>15</sup> The painting actually consists of three panels, and what is particularly similar to Sidney's description is the emphasis on horses, which are depicted in places as being under the strict control of their riders and in other places as being utterly wild.<sup>16</sup> The panels also include piles of mangled horse and human bodies as well as scattered lances and helmets. Red flowers can also be seen in the first panel, and a number of animals (a hare and two deer) fleeing in the second—perhaps a suggestion of nature's outrage. Pope-Hennessy's remark on Uccello's mode may even be transposed to Sidney: "Again and again the artist's will to realism is mitigated by his all-pervading decorative sense."<sup>17</sup> Sidney's notion of "*Imitation*," as he develops it in The Defence, involves deriving an aesthetic pleasure from the form even when the subject is "horrible":

. . . that imitation whereof *Poetrie* is, hath the most conveniencie to nature of al other: insomuch that as *Aristotle* saith, those things which in

themselves are horrible, as cruel battailes, unnatural monsters, are made in poetically imitation, delightfull. (III, 20)

Hence, Sidney's grotesque battle description not only contains many epic motifs, but it also accords with his own theory of poetry—for which the more general term literature can easily be substituted.<sup>18</sup>

It is almost certain that Sidney was following an epic mode with which he was familiar in a general and perhaps indirect way. Of course the epic and romance conventions concerning the subject of war are commingled throughout the Arcadia, and it is sometimes hard to distinguish between them. Alan Isler has said that the Elizabethans, and Sidney in particular, did not distinguish between "epic" and "romance" but "subsumed" them "under the single, inevitably vague term 'heroic poem'."<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, regarding influence, one can easily agree with E. M. W. Tillyard: "Sidney may copy Virgil in the big battle scene between the forces of Amphialus and Basilius . . . but much of the fighting and the jousting is in the style of the medieval romances."<sup>20</sup> If Sidney is indeed copying Virgil, then a probable passage is Camilla's cavalry charge against the Latins in Book XI.597-647. Here one finds the thunderous clashing of troops—"dant sonitu ingenti perfractaque quadrupedantum / pectora pectoribus rumpunt [with mighty crash, breaking and shattering their chargers, breast against breast]" (614-615)—and other horrors which are

exactly the same as Sidney's: "*tum vero et gemitus morientum et sanguine in alto / armaque corporaque et permixti caede virorum / semianimes volvuntur equi* [in truth rose groans of the dying, and deep in blood welter arms and bodies and horses, wounded unto death, and mingled with slaughtered riders]" (633-635).<sup>21</sup> Yet in Sir Philip Sidney as A Literary Craftsman, Kenneth Myrick contends that the battle scenes in Arcadia contain "possible echoes of the Iliad" which Sidney had probably read in a Latin translation since his knowledge of Greek was limited.<sup>22</sup> While the epic influence on Sidney's battle scenes was probably general in nature, it is nevertheless indisputably the source of Sidney's version of the grotesque.

It is a gross over-simplification to regard the romance genre as a form of literature in which the subject of battle is used solely to extol chivalric heroism. One of the many interpolated stories in Arcadia is an intriguing variation on the disguise motif which dominates the work (Pyrocles disguised as Daiphantus and Zelmane; Zelmane as Daiphantus; Musidorus as Palladius, Dorus and the Black Knight; Parthenia as the "noble lady" and the Knight of the Tomb). The story is of two brothers and valiant knights, Tydeus and Telenor, who fall victim to a plot hatched by Plexirtus to destroy them. Engaging each to replace him in a duel, Plexirtus contrives to have the

brothers unknowingly fight each other (their armor conceals their identity). Pyrocles describes the combat to Philoclea as "one of the cruellest fights betweene two Knights, that ever hath adorned the martial storie" (I, 292). Before recognizing each other, the brothers are both fatally injured, and as they die they warn the princes against the folly of believing in an untested loyalty. Even if the story is not comic, it does comment on the absurd and senseless nature of rashly taking up arms against an unknown foe. Plexirtus becomes the beguiling Satan who convinces men to go into battle on the basis of a false sense of love or false sense of loyalty. The words of Shakespeare's Thersites seem most appropriate here: "With too much blood and too little brain . . ." (Tro.V.i.53). A similar incident occurs early in Arcadia when Musidorus, as leader of the Helots, enters a battle against Kalandar's forces and unknowingly meets Pyrocles whom he almost kills. Again the tone is not comic, but the situation vibrates with mythic implications. Like the battle between Tydeus and Telenor, their fight represents the warring factions in the fallen world of men where brothers mistake each other for enemies. It is the same fraternal war that James Joyce symbolizes in the Shem-Shaun polarity of Finnegans Wake.

In contrast to this sober theme, Sidney's Arcadia also contains the hilarious challenge and fight between

Clinias and Dametas. This is pure comic relief and badly needed after the long series of heroic encounters. But as in Shakespeare's famous gravediggers scene, comic relief can carry serious overtones which inform the greater tragic issues. The most obvious of such overtones in the meeting of Clinias and Dametas is simply that they are trying to kill each other. Both characters are absolute cowards and represent the opposite of the stock-romance hero. And even if Sidney's aim was only to exploit the humorous potential of this cowardice, the situation raises some interesting questions. If all men were as cowardly as Clinias and Dametas, would armed conflicts ever occur? Is not a coward just somebody who is all too aware of his mortality? More important are the satiric points suggested by how outside influences are responsible for the cowards engaging in a combat that otherwise would never take place. Feeling obliged to demonstrate his love for Basilius, Dametas offers his challenge but only because he is sure that Clinias will refuse it. Clinias, on the other hand, only accepts the challenge because he is certain that Dametas will never appear. When Amphialus forces Clinias to fulfil his obligation and venture forth, we see that the cowards have become victims of their own posturing. Likewise, war itself is often the result of one country calling another's bluff and the other making good the threat to maintain a sense of honor. This particular

absurdity of war is well expressed by Hamlet:

Rightly to be great  
Is not to stir without great argument  
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw  
When honor is at the stake. (Ham. IV.iv.53-56)

The adverb "greatly" reverses the meaning and creates the ironic thrust.

The actual fight between Dametas and Clinias is extremely humorous. Both are totally inept at arms and this keeps them alive. When fortune turns against one, the other races in for the kill until fear swings the advantage to the other side. Dametas finally disarms Clinias and promises to save his life but then decides to cut his throat because he "never could thinke himselfe safe, till *Clinias* were deade" (I, 434). Dametas only agrees to abide by the "lawe of Arms" and release Clinias if the Judges "would not suffer him to fight any more" (I, 434). As an outside influence was needed to coerce the parties into a physical engagement, so it is needed to separate them. Besides being great comic relief from the high-romance combat, which is probably all that Sidney intended, the meeting of the cowards can be interpreted as a brilliant allegory on how the postures assumed by warring factions can lead to a conflict beyond what either faction anticipated.

If we call the Arcadia a prose romance, then we must also recognize that it contains more than what we



refer to as the stock characters and trappings of romance. As McCoy argues (see notes 2 and 3), Sidney is probably more ambiguous about heroism and war than he appears at first glance. This frustrates only the superficial genre critic; a more sophisticated and flexible approach reveals that ambiguity is often what makes literature so fascinating. Falstaff portrays the corrupt practices of recruiting officers, yet his soliloquy on honor is a double-edged satire on cowardice and the idealized notions of war. Straightforward satire can blend with a more universal kind of satire and low comedy can mix with high romance or tragedy. This fluidity of genres, which seems to be a characteristic of Elizabethan Literature, creates ambiguous meanings. We know that Falstaff is a coward and that Pyrocles is a valiant knight, but the coward has something to say about the emptiness of honor and the knight's valor may be a little naive.

With this in mind, let us take one final look at the major war in Arcadia. Following the epic convention, everything builds toward the climactic encounter of the arch-heroes, like Hector and Achilles or Turnus and Aeneas. Up to this point, the epic war consists of several preliminary bouts between secondary heroes who fight for the secondary honors, and of various rampages by the arch-heroes themselves who run up impressive records. Love, ironically, is the great inspiration to slaughter. In the epic this

is usually of a fallen comrade, Achilles's love of Patroclus or Aeneas's love of Pallus. In the romance the love is usually of a lady. Pyrocles and Musidorus find their inspirational impetus in Philoclea and Pamela respectively. But, desperate to win Philoclea's love for himself, Amphialus piles up the most conquests the first day: "But no sworde payed so large a tribute of soules to the eternall Kingdome, as that of *Amphialus*, who . . . did labour to make valure, strength, hatred, and choller to answere the proportion of his love, which was infinit" (I, 388).

Amphialus loses much of his inspiration (and even retires to bed) when he unknowingly kills a woman, Parthenia, and fears that Philoclea could no longer admire him. Parthenia was of course disguised as the Knight of the Tombe and hoping to avenge the death of her husband Argalus. Sidney uses the incident to emphasize the tragedy of war itself since Amphialus is not entirely at fault.

Finally, we get to the main bouts: Musidorus takes on Amphialus, who comes out of retirement, and Pyrocles tangles with Anaxius. Already posturing as the shepherd, Dorus, Musidorus must assume another disguise and battle as the Blacke Knight. The first fight, in which "Wrath and Courage bar[s] the common sense from bringing any message of their case to the minde" (I, 460), sees Musidorus win a slim but incomplete victory (he fails to release his lady Pamela). Amphialus is a more formidable foe

than his epic counterparts. Achilles has to chase Hector around Troy four times before the latter stops to fight (Iliad XXII.143-214), and Aeneas pursues Turnus around the Latin fortress five times in one direction and then as many in the other (Aeneid XII.742-765). In the second climactic fight, Sidney emphasizes the evenness of the combatants: Pyrocles and Anaxius:

But like two contrarie tides, either of which are able to carry worldes of shippes, and men upon them, with such swiftnes, as nothing seemes able to withstand them: yet meeting one another, with mingling their watrie forces, and struggling together, it is long to say whether streame gets the victorie: So betweene these, if *Pallas* had bene there, she could scarcely have tolde, whether she had nurced better in the feates of armes. The Irish greyhound, against the English mastiffe; the sworde-fish, against the whale; the Rhinoceros, against the elephāt, might be models, & but models of this cōbat. (I, 517)

This passage contains more echoes of the Aeneid, especially when Turnus and Aeneas are compared to two fighting bulls (XII.716). Virgil also uses cosmic images, such as the sea or wind, to represent the manner by which a battle sways back and forth or remains perfectly even (Aeneid XI.624-628, X.356-361). The effect of associating an evenly matched fight with the opposing forces of nature or the cosmos is to give the fight a mythic significance. Following this idea, we may find it appropriate that Sidney's revised version, or New Arcadia, would happen to end suddenly at this point leaving the ultimate outcome of the Pyrocles-Anaxius encounter in permanent suspension.

Furthermore, the fight cannot be finished by the action of the Old Arcadia since the whole captivity and siege episode is an addition made in the New Arcadia. While not intentional on Sidney's part, this unresolved combat lends a final sense of absurdity to the whole conflict, and according to McCoy, reflects Sidney's ambiguous attitude toward war:

By harsh and satiric contrast, he [Sidney] had clarified the war's basic issues and principles; these are subsequently obscured by his glorification of single combat. Still more problematic is the effect on the work's development. Neither the narrative nor the battle it seeks to describe advance according to any systematic, sequential plan. Instead, they proceed through a series of episodic, disconnected struggles, eventually culminating in irresolute stasis. The New Arcadia is not completed, nor is anything decided by this war, practically or theoretically. Sidney's chivalric equanimity involves him in profound irresolution.<sup>23</sup>

In a sense, the New Arcadia must be one of the best, truly unfinished works in all of literature.

From the above discussion, we may make the following conclusions about the Arcadia. One, Sidney imitated, in a general way, epic conventions pertaining to battle scenes and interfused these imitations with his own euphuistic wit. Second, this epic influence is the main source for Sidney's portrayal of war in the grotesque. Third, ambiguous opinions on battle, as showing both the heroic and the absurd actions of men, can be located in Sidney's assimilation of traditional romance. Fourth, the comic relief episode involving Dametas and Clinias contains

serious overtones which counterpoint the heroic attitude toward war. Finally, a definite sense of the absurd colors some of the main individual combats and attaches itself to the unfinished nature of the New Arcadia. All of these things indicate that the grotesque, however secondary to the heroic, is a part of the Arcadia as a whole and not just restricted to the slaughter of the rebels.

### The Slaughter of the Rebels

#### Introduction

The depiction of the peasants being slaughtered for having taken up arms against Basilius constitutes Sidney's ultimate achievement in the comic grotesque. There are two episodes. The first is the initial revolt related in Book II and felicitously dubbed "five memorable strokes." The second occurs later when the fleeing Musidorus and Pamela meet up with the "scummy remnant" of this rebellion in Book III (part of the unrevised Old Arcadia). In both episodes, Sidney unleashes a devastating attack against the chaos of democracy.

Critics have already grappled with the seemingly irreverent use of humor in these episodes. Alan Isler cites precedents for the comical treatment of civil uprisings in Spenser, Chaucer, and Shakespeare: "Sidney's first concern is to condemn riot; decorum dictated that he treat

the encounter between nobles and rabble-in-arms comically."<sup>24</sup> However, it could be argued that Sidney's humor is so savage that it tends to make the reader look twice at the nobles. Martin Bergbusch clarifies the subject by pointing out that the Arcadia does not show "the orthodox Tudor view that rebellion was never justified" since Pyrocles and Musidorus support the uprisings in Laconia, Pontus, and Phrygia.<sup>25</sup> Hence, Bergbusch agrees with the theory "that Sidney supported the Huguenot attitude that rebellion against a ruler is justified if that ruler repeatedly oversteps his constitutional limitations despite warnings not to do so."<sup>26</sup> After all, Sidney "enthusiastically encouraged English support of the rebellious Netherlands and of the Huguenots in France"; and "after writing his account of the rebellions in the New Arcadia, he was . . . a combatant in the war of the Low Countries against Philip and his Spanish forces."<sup>27</sup> The reason for the commoners' taking up arms against Basilius is that Basilius was not fulfilling his responsibilities as a ruler. He withdraws to the lodges with his family in an attempt to avoid the prophecy of the oracle and turns the government over to Philanax. So although the Arcadians have no justifiable cause to rebel, as did the Laconians and the Phrygians, an explanation is given for the rebellion—Basilius's sheepish retreat.

But critics have yet to analyze how Sidney's

savage humor operates; nor have they really probed the epic sources. All we have is Dorothy Connell's connection between the "five memorable strokes" and Ovid's account of the battle between the Lapithes and the Centaurs in the Metamorphoses:

I think that the scene emanates less from Sidney's aristocratic scorn of the mob than from an artistic need to represent Civil disorders in a graphic yet also symbolic way. To do this, Sidney has chosen to follow Ovid's method in the Metamorphoses (XII.236-592), where the chaotic battle of the Centaurs and the Lapithes at the wedding of Pirithous and Hippodame comes to stand for all war, and for the Trojan War in particular. . . . The intense yet half-comic cruelty of the blows (in Sidney's scene) matches closely the Ovidian portrayal of slaughter. . . . My point is that Sidney was following a literary not a political convention.<sup>28</sup>

I agree with Connell's basic argument that Sidney is imitating "Ovid's method" in Book XII of the Metamorphoses, but I do not feel that the Metamorphoses was the only influence. Ovid's humor, like Sidney's, is obviously deliberate and therefore different from the grotesque of Virgil or Homer, yet there is a pool of epic-battle motifs which links the slaughter of the rebels to the Aeneid and the Iliad as well as the Metamorphoses.

As a satiric indictment of an unjust rebellion, the "five memorable strokes" and "scummy remnant" episodes conform to Sidney's idea of "Laughter" as it is outlined in his Defence: "Laughter hath onely a scornfull tickling. . . . Wee laugh at deformed creatures, wherein certainly wee cannot delight" (III, 40). Making deformity or *turpi-*

*tudo* (the ugly) the basis of the risible goes back to Cicero's adaptation of Aristotle's theory of comedy.<sup>29</sup>

John O'Connor contends that the attitude taken by Sidney toward the "deformed" mob is precisely the same as that which Thomas Nashe takes toward the Anabaptists in The Unfortunate Traveller:

What Nashe felt about religious, Sidney felt about political, innovation. In his Arcadia, Book II, Chapter 25, a mob of commoners rises up against Basilius and Sidney describes the fight in a tone of amused contempt. . . . In terms of chivalric romance, Sidney's sense of comedy is quite appropriate, for it is the many-headed mob, as blind and destructive as Polyphemus, that is the deformed monster of the episode.<sup>30</sup>

The question is really whether or not the slaughter of the rebels contains some "delight" in addition to "Laughter"; in other words, is there something in Sidney's description which contributes more than a "scornfull tickling"? The episode as a whole certainly may be said to instruct the reader on the anarchy or "deformity" of mobs, but does the slaughter itself "breedeth both delight and laughter" (III, 40)?

As we shall see, the answer is yes, because the reader can enjoy Sidney's poetic imitation as pure form. Furthermore, form and content come together for the slaughter of the rebels is performed by the princes with an admirable dexterity and described by Sidney with an admirable wit. In his study, Comic Theory in the Sixteenth Century, Marvin Herrick claims that *admiratio*, or



surprise, was the second component along with deformity in the Renaissance notion of the risible and that this combination was made by Madius in his essay De Ridiculis (1550):

He [Madius] brought together the theories of Aristotle, Plato, Cicero, and Quintilian in the most detailed treatment of the subject [of the risible] in the Renaissance. The most significant element in his theory is his coupling of the classical *turpitudine* with *admiratio*. Madius's "admiration" is virtually synonymous with the unexpected or surprise. While I can find very little direct evidence that Madius influenced later writers on the ridiculous, I suspect that he played an important part in establishing surprise as the most characteristic feature of the risible.<sup>31</sup>

Even though Herrick believes that Sidney had never read Madius (his ideas on this subject could have been derived from Cicero or Quintilian),<sup>32</sup> it is clear that Sidney had absorbed this *turpitudine-admiratio* duality and had practised it in the Arcadia episodes dealing with the slaughter of the rebels. Furthermore, the risibility created by the paradoxical relationship between *turpitudine*, as content (ugly rebellion), and *admiratio*, as form (surprising description), seems to have also been a classical kind of humor that Wilkinson believes is especially characteristic of Ovid. Discussing the gruesome battle in the Metamorphoses where "grotesqueness merges into humor," Wilkinson distinguishes between what is "charming" (form) and what is "funny" (content):

There is a kind of humour that evokes the response "How charming!" rather than "How funny!" English

has no good word for describing it, but the Greeks used *χάρις*, recognizing that there is an element of neatness and grace involved. (*γέλοιοις* was used for what we call "funny.") Most of Ovid's humour is of this kind and it pervades the Metamorphoses.<sup>33</sup>

One should immediately recognize the resemblance between this idea of "neatness and grace" and what Sidney himself refers to in his Defence as "delightfull" imitation (see pp. 40-41 above). To sum up, the comic grotesque mode used by Sidney to describe the slaughter of the rebels is understandable within the context of the Renaissance theory of the risible and its classical antecedent.

#### The "Five Memorable Strokes" and Aftermath

In the first episode, the rebels overtake Zelmane, Gynecia and Philoclea before the threesome can take refuge in the lodge. From the very beginning, Sidney emphasizes that this "unruly sort of clownes, and other rebels" is an out-of-control mob:

. . . which like a violent floud, were caried, they themselves knewe not whether, But assoone as they came within perfect discerning these ladies, like enraged beastes, without respect of their estates, or pitie of their sexe, they began to runne against them, as right villaines, thinking abilitie to doo hurt, to be a great advancement: yet so many as they were, so many almost were their mindes, all knitte together onely in madnes. Some cried, Take; some, Kill; some, Save: but even they that cried save, ran for companie with them that meant to kill. Everie one commaunded, none obeyed, he onely seemed chief Captain, that was most ragefull. (I, 311)

Obviously the aristocratic Sidney did not think much of

the masses, yet this unfavorable view is probably more the rule in Elizabethan thinking than the exception. The anarchy stems from the fact that the rebels have no leader and no common goal. The degree of madness is directly proportional to their number, for the greater the number the greater the diversity of will or faction. Their behavior is bestial and senseless insofar as it is violence without any rational basis. Hence, the rebels are "villaines" who turn against the natural order and erroneously believe that their "abilitie to doo hurt" is "a great achievement." This last paradox is the paradox of war itself whenever the end (liberty, equality, justice) is measured solely in terms of the means (number of people killed, towns destroyed, area occupied).

Basilus and Musidorus come to aid Pyrocles (disguised as the Amazon Zelmane) fight off the mob. Musidorus is said to have "made armes & legs goe complaine to the earth, how evill their masters had kept them" (I, 312). The personification of amputated limbs has the ludicrous effect of deflecting the guilt associated with the dismemberment back onto the rebels themselves. Once again we see how *conciliatio* (gentle expression of unpleasant facts) can contribute to the comic grotesque. The threesome then retreats, but Sidney stresses that this action is not due to any lack of valor: "Yet the multitude still growing, and the verie killing wearying them (fearing, lest in long

fight they should be conquered with cōquering) they drew back toward the lodge" (I, 312). One undeniable tendency of the comic grotesque is to focus on the absurd irony. Here the slaughtering dexterity of the princes is pictured as a very threat to their safety.

So the princes draw back, but in another euphuistic reversal "their terror went forward: like a valiant mastiffe, whom his master pulles back by the tail from the beare (with whom he hath alreadie interchanged a hatefull imbrace) though his pace be backward, his gesture is foreward" (I, 312). Sidney's simile captures the essence of the action but seems somewhat inappropriate insofar as the princes, like the mob, take on bestial connotations. However, as a brute, physical confrontation, the scene contains a definite primitiveness that may well be best expressed through animal similes. Such imagery is used effectively in the Iliad. In one extended simile, Menelaus strips the armor from Euphorbus as fiercely as a "lion" would feast upon a "heifer" and keeps the rest of the Trojans, or "hounds," at bay with his terrible demeanor (XVII.62-69). During his rampage, Achilles is compared, in a positive manner, to both a "pard" (XXI.573) and a "falcon" (XXII.139). Despite the fact that these comparisons are not meant to be derogatory, the implication remains the same—war brings out the bestial quality in man.

The five individual slayings or "memorable strokes" which follow the retreat make up the main part of the comic grotesque in the episode. They all combine some kind of ludicrous circumstance or witty expression with a most gruesome form of death. Certain situations and anatomical details can be traced to the epic. First, there is "a dapper fellowe, a taylor" who draws close to Pyrocles until Basilius, "with a side blow, strake off his nose":

He (being a suiter to a seimsters daughter, and therefore not a little grieved for such a disgrace) stouped downe, because he had hard, that if it were fresh put to, it would cleave on againe. But as his hand was on the grounde to bring his nose to his head, *Zelmane* with a blow, sent his head to his nose. (I, 312)

Sidney is clearly having fun. His euphuistic skill matches the adroit swordsmanship displayed by the princes (satire fantastically—and appropriately—projected as physically cutting the enemy to pieces). Details, of course, sharpen the joke. The tailor's concern for appearances becomes hilarious when he loses his nose, and the hilarity increases when his attempt to recover the nose results in his decapitation. Sidney adds to the humor with each additional circumstance.

The second victim is a butcher, and here we meet the soldier-as-rhetorician motif:

That saw a butcher, a butcherlie chuffe indeed (who that day was sworn brother to him in a cup of wine) & lifted up a great leaver, calling *Zelmane* all the

vile names of a butcherly eloquence. But she (letting slip the blow of the leaver) hitte him so surely on the side of his face, that she lefte nothing but the nether jawe, where the tongue still wagged, as willing to say more, if his masters remembrance had served. (I, 312)

A verbal attack is no substitute for a physical one, and yet the two are closely associated. Nothing is more common in the Iliad and the Aeneid than taunts and goading words before actual combat, unless it be the spurning speeches of the victors which follow. Epic warriors themselves continually remind each other that war is physical combat and not just rhetorical repartee, as Menoetius reprimands the boastful Meriones: ". . . it beseemth not in any wise to multiply words, but to fight" (Iliad XVI. 631). Likewise, Aeneas concludes his long answer to Achilles by comparing the two of them to "women, that when they have waxed wroth in soul-devouring strife go forth into the midst of the street and wrangle one against the other with words true and false" (Iliad XX.251-255). It is safer to vaunt after the enemy has been dispatched to avoid inspiring him unnecessarily. Patrocles, for example, mocks Cebriones's diving style after smashing his head with a stone and flipping him out of the chariot (Iliad XVI. 744-750).<sup>34</sup> But with the enemy dead, one does not have the satisfaction of seeing one's insult strike home. Furthermore, even if one boasts over a fallen foe, one still risks incurring the wrath of a comrade-in-arms which

is what happens to Patrocles. At any rate, the boaster often ends up like Sidney's butcher or Pharus in the Aeneid—with a spear in the mouth: "Lo! as Pharus flings forth idle words, he [Aeneas] launches his javelin and plants it in his bawling mouth" (X.322-323).

The third memorable stroke is dealt to a "half dronke" miller and provides us with a good example of symmetrical skewering:

. . . the nimblenes of the wine caried his head so fast, that it made it over-runne his feet, so that he fell withall, just betwene the legs of *Dorus*: who setting his foote on his neck (though he offered two milche kine, and four fatte hogs for his life) thrust his sword quite through, from one eare to the other; which toke it very unkindlie, to feele such newes before they heard of them, in stead of hearing, to be put to such feeling. . (I, 312-313)

This kind of ear to ear neck-slashing or temple to temple skull piercing is an art practised in the Iliad, the Aeneid, and the Metamorphoses (see Iliad IV.501-504, XX.472-474; Aeneid IX.418-419; and Meta. XII.335).<sup>35</sup> Here again Sidney engages in euphuistic word-play as the ears feel before they have a chance to hear. The miller's attempt to buy his life is reminiscent of Adrastus who does some fast talking and convinces Menelaus that he could be exchanged for a substantial ransom. Unfortunately, for the Trojan, Agamemnon happens along and succeeds in persuading Menelaus to reject such offers and show no mercy (see Iliad VI.45-65). Similarly, Musidorus leaves the "miller to vomit his soul out in wine and bloud" (I, 313).

Drunkenness, as we shall see, is the main reason for the uprising in Arcadia, just as it is the main cause of the Lapithae-Centaur war in the Metamorphoses. Excessive animosity, like excessive wine, inflames the blood and leads to mad behavior. The miller's death resembles that of Eurytus, who spouts "forth gouts of blood along with brains and wine" (Meta. XII.238-239), and that of Rhoetus, who "belches forth his red life, and dying casts up wine mixed with blood" (Aeneid IX.349-350). Sidney seems to push these epic motifs, which are already steeped in the grotesque, further toward the ludicrous.

The fourth memorable stroke, also performed by Musidorus, appears to slice one of the rebels in half: ". . . his two-hand sword strake of another quite by the waste, who the night before had dreamed he was grown a couple, and (interpreting it he should be married) had bragd of his dreame that morning among his neighbours" (I, 313). The act of bragging dooms him as it does all braggarts whose tongues are too loose for their own good.

The last three memorable strokes gracefully flow together in what becomes a ballet of slaughter. Immediately after stabbing the miller, Dorus kills the braggart and this act sets up the last stroke which is an interesting comment on the grotesque itself. Dorus's last victim is a "poore painter" who is present to obtain some first-hand experience for his picture of the battle "betweene



the *Centaur*s and *Lapithes*" and therefore "very desirous to see some notable wounds, to be able the more lively to express them" (I, 313). The situation poses a peculiar paradox. On one hand, the scene is so dangerous and gory that nobody in his right mind would want to get near it. On the other, the artist who strives to reproduce such a scene with the benefit of direct impression must get near the action. What is death and injury to the participant feeds the imagination of the painter: ". . . the foolish fellow was even delighted to see the effects of blowes" (I, 313). Perhaps his holding of a "pike" makes him fair game, but twice we are told that he is standing still—amazed at the stroke which cuts the braggart in half—when Dorus "(with a turne of his sword) strake of both his hands" (I, 313). Hence, "the painter returned, well skilled in wounds, but with never a hand to performe his skill" (I, 313). If the painter is really a threat, why does not Dorus kill him outright? Sidney makes the flippant amputation sound like a deliberate act to frustrate the artist's *raison d'être*. Of course one could argue that Dorus was unaware of the "pike" holder's identity and hence showed mercy in not slaying him, but this is pedantic. That the artist is a painter may be related to Sidney's idea of "*Poesie*" as a "speaking *Picture*" (III, 9). The important point, however, seems to be that the last memorable stroke mocks man's grotesque fascination with the spectacle of

battle.

Sidney may have been influenced by how Virgil caps Turnus's rampage of slaughter in the Trojan camp by having him kill Cretheus the poet (see Aeneid IX.775-777). Turnus has obviously gotten a little carried away here, and Virgil can easily identify with Cretheus as an epic poet whose duty it is to record these monumental battles. As the accomplished soldier, however, Sidney does not identify with the artist in the thick of combat which is a dangerous place for an artist—unless, like Sidney, he can fight too. While similar, the situations are by no means exactly the same. Virgil's Cretheus is in the Trojan camp presumably minding his own business when the battle-mad Turnus slays him. Sidney's awe-struck painter, on the other hand, is as unnatural on the battlefield as the mob itself is in the uprising against Basilius. When the painter's hands are cut off, his thwarted purpose merges with that of the rebellion for as the rebellion cannot succeed because of its madness so he cannot paint because of his foolish behavior.

The memorable strokes are like a fantasy in the mind's eye wherein one plays out an ideally performed slaughter, because even slaughter—when it is necessary—should be done gracefully. Therefore, the aesthetic pleasure derived from the episode could largely be termed choreographic. One moment leads smoothly into the next

and forms an admirable series of action. Since the scene is so horrible, however, it constitutes an excellent example of the comic grotesque—one in which actual war (content) metaphorically represents the satiric attack (form).

Dorothy Connell uses the reference to the battle "betweene the *Centaures* and *Lapithes*" as a means of linking Sidney's five memorable strokes directly to Ovid's Metamorphoses.<sup>36</sup> There are even more striking parallels which Connell does not mention. First, as the Centaur-Lapithae battle erupts out of drunkenness at a wedding, so the rebellion in Arcadia erupts out of drunkenness at a feast celebrating Basilius's birthday. The irony in this pattern is a comment on the paradoxical nature of human affairs. The second parallel is that the focus of the battle is on the dexterity of one side over the other, the Lapithes over the Centaurs or the princes over the rebels. Finally, as Zelmane, the man disguised as an Amazon, achieves a victory over the rebels so Ceny, the woman metamorphosed into an immortal man, inspires the Lapithes against their foes. Sidney's comic grotesque is closer to the humor which Ovid displays in his battle scene than it is to the more terrible grotesque in the Iliad and Aeneid, but there are, as shown, definite echoes of the latter pair in Arcadia. It should also be added that Sidney does not adopt Ovid's most common motif—the

nailing of a limb or body to some other object. Petraeus, for example, gets "pinned" to a tree (Meta. XII.387). Dorylas's hand is likewise fixed to his forehead (Meta. XII.387), and Hodites's tongue joined to "his chin and his chin to his throat" (Meta. XII.458). If Sidney was imitating the style of Book XII of Ovid's Metamorphoses, then he still improvised on general epic motifs in his subject matter.

Despite the five memorable strokes the princes cannot physically defeat the mob which is growing faster than they are reducing it. Sidney euphuistically repeats the more-the-crazier theme: ". . . the number of those villaines still encreasing, and their madnesse still encreasing with their number" (I, 313). Pyrocles decides to try and appease them with words and, in his female disguise, manages to get an audience when a farmer cries to the rest of the mob, "what will all the maides in our towne say, if so many tall men shall be afraide to heare a faire wench?" (I, 314). Pyrocles then asks the mob to choose a spokesman to relate their grievances. At this point, the fragmentation and rebellion theme becomes internalized for the rebels cannot agree on the exact nature of their grievances and soon begin fighting among themselves: ". . . their united rage was now growne, not only to a dividing, but to a crossing one of another" (I, 315). Without a leader to direct their anger, the uprising falls

victim to its own spirit of dissent. For Sidney, there is no such thing as democratic consensus, only democratic anarchy: "At length they fel to direct contrarieties. . . . no confusion was greater then of particular mens likings and dislikings" (I, 315).

The rebellion in Arcadia first arises because Basilius has relinquished his responsibilities as leader. However, its downfall is owing to the same reason—nobody emerges to take control. The subject of civil war as being the natural condition of a leaderless state was certainly in the air toward the end of Elizabeth's reign as Shakespeare's history plays attest.<sup>37</sup> Jack Cade's rebellion (2 Henry VI, IV) in particular resembles that of the commoners in Arcadia—a mob of peasants is comically portrayed as attempting to overthrow the aristocratic seat of government. There is one important difference and that is the leadership of Jack Cade. Still, both civil uprisings are curbed by a call for unity to face the nation's true foreign enemy. Clifford reminds Cade's followers that France is their real foe: "To France to France, and get what you have lost; / Spare England for it is your native coast" (2 Henry VI, IV.viii.51-52). Pyrocles takes the same tack with the Arcadian rebels: "In this quiet harmles lodge are harbourd no *Argians* your ancient enemies, nor *Laconians* your now feared neighbours. . . . Here lodge none, but such as either you have great cause to love, or no cause to hate"

(I, 316). Nothing reconciles differences as quickly as the threat of a common enemy—another wonderful paradox. It was generally believed in Elizabethan England that the best way to diffuse civil unrest was to conduct a foreign war. Francis Bacon expresses the idea very aptly with the body politic metaphor:

No body can be healthful without exercise, neither natural body nor politic; and certainly to a kingdom or estate a just or honourable war is the true exercise. A civil war indeed is like the heat of a fever; but a foreign war is like the heat of exercise, and serveth to keep the body in health; for in a slothful peace both courages will effeminate and manners corrupt.<sup>38</sup>

This philosophy explicitly accepts strife as a part of human affairs. The ideal is not a fantastic plan that aims for world peace but a pragmatic scheme that allows for man's inherent corruption. One might remember that More's utopian plan to thwart war (by offering rewards to the enemy for assassinating its own leaders) bases itself on the premise that "so easily do bribes incite men to commit every kind of crime."<sup>39</sup>

Like Clifford in 2 Henry VI, Pyrocles uses his rhetorical skill to win over a fickle mob and so "divers of them with much jollity growne to be his [Basilus's] guard, that but litle before met to be his murderers" (I, 319). The truly substantial heroes and villians are always dexterous with words. When Pyrocles turns the mob, the cowardly but deceptive Clinias makes his move by shouting

his support for Basilius: "O unhappie men, more madde then the Giants that would have plucked *Jupiter* out of heaven, how long shal this rage continue?" (I, 320). The allusion to the rebellion of the Giants might be ironic insofar as Jupiter himself had previously usurped Saturn, yet the parallel between the madness of the mob and the Giants as grotesque creatures suggests a straightforward reading. All human actions—right or wrong, sane or crazy—can be supported by classical allusions and every good rhetorician makes use of them.

Still rhetoric is a poor shield against the sword as the farmer then demonstrates. So surprised at Clinias's about-face he strikes the beguiling opportunist, and the blow sparks an outburst of fighting within the mob. What was only verbal dissension explodes into physical violence. As nothing binds two sides together as well as the threat of a common enemy, nothing breaks the force of a particular side as much as inner conflict. The farmer delivers his blow and immediately "no hand was idle, ech one killing him that was next, for feare he should do as much to him" (I, 320). Fear produces random killing because the mob is completely undisciplined.

Sidney associates the chaos of the outburst with democracy itself. Since there is no orderly division between the pro-Basilius and anti-Basilius factions, every man has reason to worry about those around him: "For being

divided in minds & not divided in cōpanies, they that would yeeld to *Basilius* were intermingled with the that would not yeeld" (I, 320). Hence, freedom of choice simply means that the social order disintegrates and nobody can trust his neighbour. The rebels consequently kill members of their own faction: "And many times it fel out that they killed them that were of their owne faction, anger whetting, and doubt hastening their fingers" (I, 321). Sidney points the reader to another paradox by indicating that the spirit of rebellion only cultivates a self-defeating counter-revolutionary desire: "None was sooner killed thē those that had bene leaders in the disobedience: who by being so, had taught them, that they did leade disobedience to the same leaders" (I, 320-321). Finally, the princes emerge from the lodge to muster together the pro-Basilius members. Commoners, it seems, have no power to organize themselves but depend on their social superiors. In what might be called a "last memorable stroke," Pyrocles slays the farmer whom he had previously moved with his beautiful disguise: "*Zel-mane* [Pyrocles] striking the farmer to the hart with her sworde, as before she had done with her eyes" (I, 321). This is a physical acting out of one of the most common Petrarchan conceits—Cupid's arrow. The anti-Basilius group then flees "to certaine woods upon the frontiers" (I, 321), and the battle comes to an end.



After the battle, Clinias informs Basilius of how the uprising started, and the reader is given more reasons why it is related in the comic grotesque. Once again the paradoxical nature of the situation is stressed. Gathered to celebrate Basilius's birthday, the people become drunk and begin to express their dissatisfaction with his rule. As mentioned, this resembles the drunkenness of the Centaurs at the marriage of Pirithous and Hippodame, which leads to the Centaur-Lapithae battle. Isler is correct in identifying a saturnalian element in the rebellion:

There is an element of the Saturnalia about Sidney's description of riot, and indeed whenever we find references to the untuning of degree's string in the literature of the Renaissance, whether soberly or comically treated, we have a picture of "the world turned upside-down," the *sine qua non* of such festivals as the medieval Boy Bishop and the traditional holidays of May Day and Winter Revels.<sup>40</sup>

The slaughter of the rebels in Arcadia shares the same festive mood that marks Friar John's rampage against the insurgents in Book I of Rabelais's Gargantua and Pantagruel (Chapter 27). Of course, there is also a strong satiric element in Sidney's episode. According to Neil Rhodes, the Elizabethan grotesque constantly moves between the "polarities of satire and saturnalia."<sup>41</sup>

Sidney combines his material masterfully. The physical drunkenness of Basilius's revelers-turned-rebels reflects the intoxicating effect of rhetoric and abstract ideals: ". . . they had the name of glorious liberty with

them. These words being spokẽ (like a furious storme) presently caried away their wel inclined braines" (I, 323). The rebellion is as unnatural as democracy itself was to Sidney and many other Elizabethans. A general confusion of individual voices swells into a rioting mob, which Sidney means the reader to see as the very opposite of what an army should be:

So generall grewe this madnes among them, there needed no drumme, where each man cried, each spake to other that spake as fast to him, and the disagreeing sounds of so many voices, was the chiefe token of their unmeete agreement. (I, 323)

The drum, as Jorgensen points out, is a standard image which represents the single or united order of an army.<sup>42</sup> Since the rebels have no such order of purpose, "there needed no drumme." Instead, their many contradictory voices aptly express the anarchistic nature of their movement. In contrast, Sidney's own aureate diction and sense of euphuistic balance—here put in the mouth of Clinias—ironically describes the origin of all this chaos with perfect control:

Thus was their banquette turned to a battaile, their winie mirthes to bloudie rages, and the happie prayers for your [Basilius's] life, to monstrous threatening of your estate; the solemnizing your birth-day, tended to have been the cause of your funerals. (I, 323)

As a cunning rhetorician, Clinias does not surprise us with his eloquence, yet it should be noted that in the Old Arcadia this exact speech was part of the general

narrative (see OA, 128). Clinias goes on to describe how the rebels quickly grabbed whatever they could use as weapons. The oddity of some of their choices reflects the unnatural character of the mob itself:

. . . they never weyed how to arme thẽselves, but tooke up every thing for a weapon, that furie offered to their handes. Many swordes, pikes, and billes there were: others tooke pitchforkes and rakes, converting husbandrie to souldierie: some caught hold of spittes (thinges serviceable for life) to be the instruments of death. And there was some such one, who held the same pot wherein he drank to your health, to use it (as he could) to your mischiefe. (I, 323)

In this upside-down picture, common tools associated with life are convolutedly employed to inflict death. The utter absurdity of using a pot as a weapon epitomizes the mad and unnatural action of the peasants. It also helps explain why the "five memorable strokes" could be so easy. This passage anticipates Thomas Nashe's description of the ill-equipped Anabaptists ready to wage war in The Unfortunate Traveller. Those who have no business taking up arms can only do so improperly.

We might end our discussion of the first episode by pointing to the ominous fact that after Clinias ends his history, "*Basilus*, that was not the sharpest pearcer into masked minds, toke a liking to him" (I, 324). Even though the rebellion against Basilus fizzles out, Clinias—who first started spreading the rebellious sentiments among the Arcadians (see I, 324)—succeeds in duping the King. Hence, the princes have honorably defended an empty principle, the

royal crown and throne, and nothing else. For the King—shrinking from his responsibilities, in love with a man disguised as an Amazon, and befriended by the instigator of a riot which threatened to kill him—seems to be little more than an idiot.

### The "Scummy Remnant"

As we have seen, the anti-Basilus faction of the rebels flees "to certaine woods upon the frontiers" (I, 312). Nothing is heard of them until Musidorus and Pamela attempt to escape from Arcadia in Book III. The couple stops to rest under some pine trees where they exchange love songs. Pamela falls asleep and Musidorus, "over-mastered with the fury of delight" (OA, 202), is just about to rape the princess when he is suddenly interrupted by "a dozen clownish villains, armed with divers sorts of weapons" (OA, 202). Sidney makes it clear that the interruption by the "villains" is Musidorus's "just punishment" (OA, 202). In this sense, they actually serve as a scourge. But the scene breaks off here as Sidney suddenly goes back to relate the hilarious scheme that Pyrocles concocts to fool Dametas and his family to gain an uninterrupted audience with Philoclea.

It might be noted that in the Countess of Pembroke's 1593 version of the Arcadia Musidorus's attempted

rape is deleted and hence the "just punishment" is also altered.<sup>43</sup> In this version, the villains are said to be "guided by the everlasting Justice, using themselves to be punishers of their faultes, and making their owne actions the beginning of their chastizements."<sup>44</sup> One might dismiss this as an outright corruption of Sidney's original, but the Countess was merely relocating a self-contained form of retribution that Sidney had used with reference to Dametas: "The everlasting justice (using ourselves to be the punishers of our faults, and making our own actions the beginning of our chastisements . . . ." (OA, 265). This self-contained system may be seen in the general state of man in the sense that human fault or evil is its own punishment. The pattern also accords with the Renaissance idea of war as a divinely directed yet humanly inflicted scourge.

When Sidney returns to the couple and clownish villains a good deal later in Book IV, he identifies the latter as that "scummy remnant" of the rebels "whose naughty minds could not trust so much to the goodness of their prince . . . ." (OA, 306). Sidney says that they "were guided by the everlasting justice to be chastisers of Musidorus's broken vow" (OA, 307). Hence one can see how the Countess simply replaced this passage with the one pertaining to Dametas (quoted in the previous paragraph).

The rebels move in to attack but, sensible of

Musidorus's prowess, they resemble "bad curs rather barking then closing" (OA, 307). Instead of engaging Musidorus in hand-to-hand combat, they choose the safer method of attack by "throwing darts and stones" (OA, 307). This bombardment precipitates the next phase of the conflict. Frantic that some "darts and stones" have landed near and even touched his lady, Musidorus must go from defense to offense and charge forth. The rebels "like so many swine when a hardy mastiff sets upon them [,] dispersed themselves" (OA, 308). As we have seen (p. 57 above), this kind of animal comparison is an epic convention. Musidorus's charge is reminiscent of that by Automedon, who scatters the Trojans "as a vulture on a flock of geese" (Iliad XVII.460). While Automedon cannot catch any Trojans, Musidorus succeeds in performing three more memorable strokes.

The first of these uses of life-in-death image that is more comic than the twitching limbs which we encountered in the general battle description:

. . . the first he overtook as he ran away, carrying his head as far before him as those manner of runnings are wont to do, with one blow strake it so clean off that, it falling betwixt the hands, and the body falling upon it, it made a show as though the fellow had had great haste to gather up his head again. (OA, 308)

This description is similar to Archelochus's death in the Iliad:

Him the spear smote at the joining of head and neck

on the topmost joint of the spine, and it shore off both the sinews. And far sooner did his head and mouth and nose reach the earth as he fell, than his legs and knees. (XIV.465-468)

Elsewhere in the Iliad, Diomedes and Odysseus capture the spying Dolon who loquaciously tells them all that he knows about the Trojan plans in hope that he will be spared. But Diomedes "smote him full upon the neck, and shore off both sinews, and even while he was yet speaking his head was mingled with the dust" (X.455-456). In the grotesque, the normal distinctions between life and death break down.

Before proceeding any further, we must consider the validity of locating epic motifs in the Old Arcadia. If Sidney only used epic conventions in his revision, then it is pointless to argue that the Old Arcadia contains epic influences. In the final analysis, however, this question of influence cannot be determined with any definitiveness (especially with respect to the slaughter of the rebels). All that can be said for sure is that the facetious humor which Sidney used to describe how Musidorus dispatches the three members of the scummy remnant is exactly the same as that which he uses in the five memorable strokes of the New Arcadia. Because the Old Arcadia lacks the five memorable strokes in the initial revolt (see OA, 126-132), it is clear that in revising Sidney extended the comic grotesque mode of the second episode to the first. In other words, Sidney composed the three

scummy remnant portraits before the five memorable strokes. As Connell suggests, Book XII of Ovid's Metamorphoses may have prompted Sidney to relate the slaughter of the rebels comically, but if so then this influence was present in the Old Arcadia and developed further in the New Arcadia.

Musidorus treats the second of the scummy remnant much like he did the painter in the first battle:

Another, the speed he made to run for the best game bare him full butt against a tree, so that tumbling back with a bruised face and a dreadful expectation, Musidorus was straight upon him, and parting with his sword one of his legs from him, left him to make a roaring lamentation that his mortar-treading was marred for ever. (OA, 308)

"[M]ortar-treading," instead of simply "walking," is another good example of *conciliatio* (see p. 39 above). The amputation seems as unnecessary here as it was with the painter, which makes it all the more beastly.

The last portrait reveals an even greater ruthlessness on the part of Musidorus:

A third, finding his feet too slow as well as his hands too weak, suddenly turned back, beginning to open his lips for mercy, but before he had well entered a rudely compiled oration, Musidorus's blade was come betwixt his jaws into his throat; and so the poor man rested there for ever with a very ill mouthful of an answer. (OA, 308)

It is standard to see mercy-seekers similarly answered in the Iliad and the Aeneid.<sup>45</sup> Inflamed with animosity, battle-mad combatants are most pitiless. Rhetorical appeals for compassion are met with quick and final



responses with the sword.

Despite his fierce and successful rampage, Musidorus must ultimately surrender to the rebels. Nothing could better illustrate the maxim that one may win the battle but lose the war. Going on offense dooms the prince because it means abandoning his lady. While Musidorus was chasing down his victims, some of the rebels had sense enough to double back and take Pamela hostage. Threatening to kill her if Musidorus does not surrender, the rebels turn the situation around and emerge victors. What Musidorus should realize is what John Danby, in Poets on Fortune's Hill, claims is the chief lesson ultimately taught to the princes by the princesses—that the virtue of patience is preferable to physical aggression.<sup>46</sup> Musidorus loses to the rebels because he becomes too involved in destroying them. Sidney's scene suggests that there is a fine line between protecting one's love object and trying to annihilate anything which threatens the love object. Musidorus must still learn to control his passion, and so Sidney uses the scummy remnant attack as a scourge for the attempted rape.

After defeating the prince, however, the rebels fall into a great argument about what to do with their captives. Once more we are served Sidney's views of democracy. According to Sidney, if every man has an equal say then there can be no agreement. As fallen creatures, men are

bound to see the world differently and to clash as a result of this fragmentation, especially if they are of the lower sort like the rebels. Hence, the real deformity or ugliness about the mob is its lack of degree. If all are equal then there is no rank, no hierarchy, no order. Ulysses's famous speech on the fault of the Greek war effort in Troilus and Cressida sounds the same theme (Tro. I.iii. 75-137). For things to run in a correct manner, and ironically this includes wars and rebellions, every man must know his proper place within the greater structure.

Sidney's mob sways toward simple pillage rather than murder but the rebel, whose "mortar-treading" was permanently impaired, crawls over and demands blood revenge. The mob then decides to put Musidorus to death, yet dissension again breaks out as they try to determine the means of execution. This chronic paralysis of indecision is exaggerated to ridiculous lengths. As the rebellious spirit of the initial uprising became self-defeating, so the rage of discord in the scummy remnant works against itself: "Thus was a while the agreement of his slaying broken by the disagreement of the manner of it; and extremity of cruelty grew for a time to be the stop of cruelty" (OA, 309).

Moreover, for Sidney, not only is peasant consensus elusive but resolution, when it does come, tends to be fleeting. Swayed by an emotional appeal, the mob wavers

again once the impact of that appeal passes (the amputee dies). Pamela points to the dire consequences of killing Musidorus, and the rebels finally decide to return the couple to Basilius and ask his pardon. It is important that in both the initial uprising and this second episode violent aggression is subdued by reason and rhetoric. Zelmane calms the revolt through an extremely calculated speech, and Pamela talks the scummy remnant out of "their cruel hearts to this gentler course" (OA, 310). Physical prowess is not enough. To be truly heroic, one must be able to escape from a situation which is physically lost by the subtle art of verbal persuasion.

For Pamela, it is enough to steer the rebels away from an act of sinful violence—the execution of Musidorus. Musidorus, however, tries to convince the rebels that it would be more to their advantage to escort him and his lady to their intended destination. This suggestion causes still more dissent. Pamela uses her rhetorical skill to prevent a crime, Musidorus to perpetuate one—running off with the princess. Therefore it is logical that his attempt would fail. There is a great difference between Pamela's passive virtue and Musidorus's active will, and the latter is certainly blameworthy in this case. Before the scummy remnant can decide on Musidorus's proposal, a troop of Philanax's horsemen swoops down on the party taking charge of the royal prisoners and quickly executing the rebels.

". . . such an unlooked-for end did the life of justice work" (OA, 317). The scummy remnant has served its scourge function in punishing Musidorus and foiling the escape.<sup>47</sup>

As an unjust rebellion, the uprising in Arcadia constitutes an unnatural deformity according to the Elizabethan concept of social order. This is the political argument behind the use of the comic grotesque in the slaughter of the rebels. As author, Sidney just seems to let go for a moment and allow his mind's eye to record how much fun it would be to eliminate one's opponents with great flair. There is something enthralling about the dexterous cutting-to-pieces of deformed creatures. Perhaps what is uplifting is that we are witness to a celebration of form. The slaughter of the rebels is described exactly the same way that it is performed—with grace, style, and wit. Each memorable stroke forms part of a choreographical pattern that delights our aesthetic sensibility. And yet despite Sidney's technical skill, the reader cannot turn away entirely from the gruesome content in all this beastly slaughter.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

<sup>1</sup> A consideration of the slaughter of the rebels in Sidney's Arcadia necessitates having to deal with both the New Arcadia and the Old Arcadia. This is because the slaughter of the rebels actually consists of two episodes: the first which Sidney had revised in the New Arcadia, and the second which remained unrevised in the Old Arcadia.

Hence I have used the text of the New Arcadia (hereafter referred to as the Arcadia, unless ambiguity requires New Arcadia) for my discussion of Sidney's general attitude toward war and the "five memorable strokes" episode. This is The Prose Works of Sir Philip Sidney, Vol. I, ed. Albert Feuillerat (1912; rpt. Cambridge: University Press, 1963). All references to this edition are included in the text after "I".

For my discussion of the second episode (the "scummy remnant"), I have used The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (The Old Arcadia), ed. Jean Robertson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973). All references to this edition are included in the text after "OA".

<sup>2</sup> See Richard C. McCoy, Sir Philip Sidney: Rebellion in Arcadia (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1979), pp. 176-188.

<sup>3</sup> McCoy, pp. 181-182. McCoy is especially amazed at how Sidney approached his own death: "Sidney would contemplate his own impending death with . . . aesthetic detachment. The gangreous stench of his wound was almost overpowering, but he could still compose a song entitled "*La cuisse rompue*." The contradictions of chivalry are nowhere more apparent. Sidney's cavalier wit allows him to face death with elegant composure and style," p. 181.

<sup>4</sup> Susanne K. Langer, Feeling and Form (New York: Scribner's, 1953), p. 304. "The epic is really, like the true ballad, pre-literary poetry; and it is the great matrix of all poetic genres," p. 304.

<sup>5</sup> L. P. Wilkinson, Ovid Recalled (Cambridge: University Press, 1955), pp. 162-163. On the self-

consciousness of the grotesque, Wilkinson writes: "When Homer describes carnage we may not like it (after boyhood), but we recognize that this is something which belongs to his age; he is not self-conscious about it. Disgusting sights are inseparable from war . . . . But in the tender Virgil and the good-natured Ovid of Augustan Rome such descriptions jar. Granted that in their Rome even the educated classes were familiar with the slaughter of the arena, if not also of war, the elaborate squalors described on occasion by these two poets (and Lucan is worse) strike one as conscientious attempts at Homeric realism." p. 162.

<sup>6</sup> Another Elizabethan example of epic horror in an overall battle description occurs in Thomas Kyd's The Spanish Tragedy (I.ii.57-62).

<sup>7</sup> Homer: The Iliad II.95, Vol. I, 2 vols, trans. A. T. Murray, Loeb Classical Library (I 1924, II 1925; rpt. London: Heinemann, I 1965, II 1939). All references are made to these volumes and included in the text.

<sup>8</sup> Aeneid XII.713, in Virgil, Vol. II, 2 vols, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, Loeb Classical Library, rev. ed. (I 1935, II 1934; rpt. London: Heinemann, I 1965, II 1966). All references are made to these volumes and included in the text.

<sup>9</sup> Lee A. Sonnino, A Handbook to Sixteenth-Century Rhetoric (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), pp. 54-56.

<sup>10</sup> See Paul A. Jorgensen, Shakespeare's Military World (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956), pp. 1-34. For an excellent parody of this literary convention, see the battle description at the beginning of Chapter III in Candide.

<sup>11</sup> The Defence of Poesie, in The Prose Works of Sir Philip Sidney, Vol. III, ed. Albert Feuillerat (1912; rpt. Cambridge: University Press, 1963), p. 3. All references to The Defence are made to this edition and included in the text after "III".

<sup>12</sup> Sonnino, pp. 68-69.

<sup>13</sup> Sonnino, pp. 51-52.

<sup>14</sup> See Lucretius: De Rerum Natura, trans. W. H. D.

Rouse, Loeb Classical Library (1937; rpt. London: Heinemann, 1966), pp. 215-216.

<sup>15</sup> Sidney visited Florence when he was in Italy in 1574 but spent most of his time in Venice and Padua. See John Buxton, Sir Philip Sidney And the English Renaissance (London: Macmillan, 1964), p. 65.

<sup>16</sup> See John Pope-Hennessy, The Complete Works of Paolo Uccello (London: Phaidon Press, 1950), pp. 19-23, 150-152; plates 45 (46-54), 55 (56-62), and 63 (64-68).

<sup>17</sup> Pope-Hennessy, p. 22.

<sup>18</sup> Alan D. Isler illustrates this with references to Sidney's Defence in "Heroic Poetry and Sidney's Two Arcadias," PMLA, 83 (1968), 375.

<sup>19</sup> Isler, p. 379.

<sup>20</sup> E. M. W. Tillyard, The English Epic and Its Background (London: Chatto and Windus, 1954), p. 312.

<sup>21</sup> As we shall see, these lines also seem to be a model for Gulliver's description of human warfare to his Houyhnhnm master.

<sup>22</sup> Kenneth Myrick, Sir Philip Sidney as a Literary Craftsman (Harvard, 1935; rpt. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), pp. 99, 114.

<sup>23</sup> McCoy, p. 182.

<sup>24</sup> Alan D. Isler, "Sidney, Shakespeare, and the 'Slain-Notslain'," University of Toronto Quarterly, 37, No. 2 (1968), 184.

<sup>25</sup> Martin Bergbusch, "Rebellion in the New Arcadia," Philological Quarterly, 53 (1974), 29.

<sup>26</sup> Bergbusch, p. 29.

<sup>27</sup> Bergbusch, p. 41.

<sup>28</sup> Dorothy Connell, Sir Philip Sidney: The Maker's Mind (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), p. 118, n. 1.

<sup>29</sup> For a discussion of this, see Marvin T. Herrick, Comic Theory in the Sixteenth Century (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964), p. 38.

<sup>30</sup> John J. O'Connor, "Physical Deformity and Chivalric Laughter in Renaissance England," in Comedy: New Perspectives, ed. Maurice Charney, New York Literary Forum, 1 (Spring 1978), pp. 69-70.

<sup>31</sup> Herrick, p. 52.

<sup>32</sup> Herrick, pp. 53-55.

<sup>33</sup> Wilkinson, p. 163.

<sup>34</sup> Iliad XVI.744-750: "Hah, look you: very nimble is the man: how lightly he diveth! In sooth if he were on the teeming deep, this man would satisfy many by seeking for oysters, leaping from his ship were the sea never so stormy, seeing that now on the plain he diveth lightly from his car. Verily among the Trojans too there be men that dive."

<sup>35</sup> Ovid: Metamorphoses, trans. Frank Justus Miller, Vol. II, Loeb Classical Library (1916; rpt. London: Heinemann, 1964).

<sup>36</sup> See p. 52 above.

<sup>37</sup> On sixteenth-century insurrections in England, see S. T. Bindoff, Tudor England (Middlesex: Penguin, 1970), pp. 107-108, 135-137, 155-157, and 209-210.

<sup>38</sup> Francis Bacon, "Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates," in The Essays, ed. Samuel Harvey Reynolds (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), p. 211.

This idea of a foreign war as being a healthy exercise to avoid civil disputes or domestic sloth seems to have been the most popular Elizabethan attitude toward war. See Jorgensen, pp. 169-202.

<sup>39</sup> Utopia, in The Complete Works of St. Thomas



More, Vol. IV, trans. G. C. Richards, rev. and ed. Edward Surtz, S. J. and J. H. Hexter (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), pp. 203-205.

<sup>40</sup> Isler, "Slain-Notslain," p. 181.

<sup>41</sup> Neil Rhodes, Elizabethan Grotesque (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 131. Unfortunately, Rhodes makes no mention of the rebellion in Arcadia, yet his comments on "Rabelais's anatomisation" are applicable to Sidney; see Rhodes, p. 39.

<sup>42</sup> Jorgensen, pp. 17-34.

<sup>43</sup> This altered version of the Old Arcadia, used in 1593 to complete the story of the New Arcadia, is in Vol. II of Feuillerat's The Prose Works of Sir Philip Sidney,

<sup>44</sup> The Prose Works of Sir Philip Sidney, Vol. II, p. 119.

<sup>45</sup> Achilles slays Tros and Lycaon after they both beg to be spared (Iliad XX.463-472, XXI.70-119), and likewise Camilla batters a pleading Orsilochus (Aeneid XI.696-698).

<sup>46</sup> See John F. Danby, Poets on Fortune's Hill (London: Faber and Faber, 1952), pp. 46-73.

<sup>47</sup> For a discussion of how scourge figures were meant to be disposed of by God after serving their function, see Roy W. Battenhouse, "Tamburlaine, The Scourge of God," PMLA, 56 (1941), 337-348.

## CHAPTER TWO:

### NASHE'S THE UNFORTUNATE TRAVELLER

#### The Battle of Marignano

For Thomas Nashe and his fellow Elizabethans, the battle of Marignano was more of a symbol of war's bloodshed than a recorded event. It occurred almost eighty years before Nashe wrote The Unfortunate Traveller, and there was no English involvement to give it a place in the memory of the nation. But according to Sir Charles Oman, Marignano was "a turning point in the history of the Art of War," because for the first time field artillery was put to effective use by the French.<sup>1</sup> This technological advance in the deployment of war engines meant heavy casualties. McKerrow puts the Swiss losses at about 12,000 men,<sup>2</sup> an outrageous figure for a two-day battle. Oman, however, estimates the casualties more evenly at "5000 or 6000 apiece."<sup>3</sup> For many years after Nashe, the casualties were believed to have been even greater and some astronomical numbers were cited. David Hume, for example, writes that the "field was strewed with twenty thousand slain on both sides; and the mareschal Trivulzio . . . declared that every engagement which he had yet seen was only the play of children; the

action of Marignano was a combat of heroes."<sup>4</sup> Heroic or not, the battle was brought on by a French invasion, led by the young and war-hungry King Francis I who wanted to recover Italian territory given up by his predecessor Louis XII.

Nashe's narrator in The Unfortunate Traveller, Jack Wilton, makes no mention of artillery but does emphasize the terrible blood bath of the battle and its short duration. What immediately strikes the reader, however, is Jack's absolute indifference to the causes or moral implications of the conflict, which is evident in his intention to enter it on whatever side is stronger: "I made towards them as fast as I could, thinking to thrust my selfe into that Faction that was strongest" (231). Jack has no principles, only a desire to get to the scene in a hurry. That the picaresque hero is only loyal to himself may account for Jack's lack of any political allegiance but it does not explain his haste to join the conflict. Nashe is not satirizing the naivety of the common soldier going to war, because Jack is not naive and, in fact, has already served in Henry VIII's army albeit only as a page. Jack is really fleeing from the sweating-sickness in England, "I vowd to tarrie no longer among them" (231), and his intention to enlist with the stronger side is probably just an indifferent mercenary's wish to stay alive.

More than likely, Nashe is commenting on the desperate reasons that many of the English commoners had for enlisting in the armies throughout the sixteenth century.

Jack arrives on the scene at the height of the battle but never does enter it. Perhaps the fact that it has already started, and hence is in a state of total chaos, prevents him from doing so. In any case, he mentions the ambivalence of his situation and then goes on to describe the carnage:

It was my good lucke or my ill (I know not which) to come iust to the fighting of the Battell; where I saw a wonderfull spectacle of blood-shed on both sides: here vnweeldie *Switzers* wallowing in their gore, like an Oxe in his dung, there the sprightly *French* sprawling and turning on the stained grasse, like a Roach new taken out of the streame: all the ground was strewed as thicke with Battle-axes as the Carpenters yard with chips; the Plaine appeared like a quagmyre, ouerspread as it was with trampled dead bodies. (231)

Jack is both lucky and unlucky—lucky of course not to be in the battle, but unlucky not to be able to join an army as a means of supporting himself. The comic grotesque thrives on this kind of ambiguity.

Two features stand out in Jack's description: the first is his distant perspective, which is necessary to get an overall view, and the second is the absurdity of his similes, which is suggestive of the deformed and ugly nature of the scene. The two features are interrelated insofar as Jack's distance gives rise to the similes and similes are an attempt to compress the magnitude of detail. An account of

a battle is often grotesque simply in its tendency to amalgamate so many individual deaths into an abstract image. Jack's absurd similes seem irreverent because they address slaughter facetiously, and even if Jack is indifferent to the battle, the horror of the scene cries out for a more sympathetic response. According to the theory of the grotesque (see p. 5 above), this kind of facetious humor can ironically shock readers more than any direct appeal to the emotions. To describe a battle in an overall way, one often resorts to metaphor and this process inevitably sacrifices a sense of realism, or mimetic detail, for a more general and distant impression.

This will be clearer if we look at how literature deals realistically with the horror of war by selecting a particular individual and focusing on him. An excellent example occurs in Ernest Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms when a shell hits a bunker and fatally injures Passini. His slow and painful death is related with pure matter-of-factness, unembellished by metaphor or allusion. The action speaks for itself; it is grotesque but, stripped of any extraneous comment, hardly comic:

One leg was gone and the other was held by tendons and part of the trouser and the stump twitched and jerked as though it were not connected. He bit his arm and moaned, "Oh, mamma mia, mamma mia," then, "Dio ti salvi, Maria. Dio ti salvi, Maria. Oh Jesus shoot me Christ shoot me, Mamma mia, mamma mia, oh purest lovely Mary shoot me. Stop it. Stop it. Stop it. Oh Jesus lovely Mary stop it. Oh oh oh oh," then choking, "Mamma mamma mia." Then he was quiet, biting his arm, the stump

of his leg twitching.<sup>5</sup>

This is how to touch the tragic sensibility. The writer of the comic grotesque often does the opposite. He avoids focusing on the individual and instead creates a rhetorical eloquence that may shock or amuse the reader.

Jack Wilton's description of the battle of Marignano is full of generalizations that abound with similes and word-play. All the similes conceptualize a mass and all irreverently debase the subject of death. The Swiss are seen as "wallowing in their gore, like an Oxe in his dung," and the French as "sprawling and turning on the stained grasse, like a Roach new taken out of the streame." As well as being visual, both images have symbolic connotations. In the first comparison, we have a portrait of man as an awkward and dull-minded beast floundering in his own mess (armed conflict). Of course in physical terms, the mess is "gore" or the inner nature of this beast anatomically revealed. The meaning of "gore" was in a period of transition toward the end of the sixteenth century. Originally, it referred to "dung" or "filth of any kind" and then came to mean blood and carnage in particular (OED). It is possible that Nashe was just yoking the old meaning with the new. Reinhard Friederich suggests that the ox image may have been inspired by the "cliché of the huge and slow Swiss."<sup>6</sup>

The image of the French who die flinching like a

fish out-of-water is a grotesque picture of that intermediate state between life and death. We located the motif in the epic, saw it impersonally adapted by Sidney (see p. 39 above), and presented with poignant realism by Hemingway. Nashe ridicules it by using the "Roach" simile. In his study Elizabethan Grotesque, Neil Rhodes argues that "the stylistic feature which best epitomizes the grotesque in Renaissance literature is the 'base comparison'."<sup>7</sup> Here Nashe yokes the high (death) with the low (fish) and pushes what is itself grotesque further toward the ludicrous, or the comic grotesque.

The use of singular images—the Switzers are "an" ox and the French "a" fish—contributes to the abstract effect. More often the comic grotesque attempts to convey the magnitude of slaughter through a reference to piles or heaps of corpses. The next simile in Jack's description shows Nashe indulging in intellectual play: ". . . all the ground was strewed as thicke with Battle-axes as the Carpenters yard with chips." Instead of producing chips, the axes are compared to chips, but the simile seems somewhat forced. Surely there are more important things than battle-axes strewn about the ground. Jack fills out the canvas with the next simile: "the Plaine appeared like a quagmyre, ouerspread as it was with trampled dead bodies." This is more to the point, but has Jack gone too far? The sense of exaggeration in his imagery stems from utter bewilderment.

Jack is obviously overwhelmed by the spectacular action even if he remains indifferent to the conflict. His verbal exuberance is a response to the sheer enormity of the slaughter. Of course from a safe and detached distance, the battlefield may actually look as Jack describes it metamorphically, but the *meta-phora* element carries us beyond the reality to another frame of reference. The association of corpses with mud or a "quagmyre" could be called a surrealistic vision of fallen life on earth—one sticky mess of conflict and death.

Hence, all the similes are part of the rhetoric which removes the reader from a sense of reality. They all resemble the form of "low burlesque" or "travesty" since they treat a serious subject in an undignified manner. By calling attention to its own artifice, the language diverts the reader's response away from the gravity of the subject. Charles Lawson says that "The choice of similes . . . serves to distance the human misery in the situation and makes possible an intellectual pleasure in the perception of unexpected similarities between tenor and vehicle."<sup>8</sup> The grotesque is largely generated by this incongruity between an "intellectual pleasure" and an horrible subject like the carnage of war. But there is also an irony in the way that Jack tries to encompass the enormity of the horror and instead produces something ludicrous. The horror of war may be so great that it cannot be conveyed in its



entirety by language. If Nashe wanted to capture a realistic sense of horror, he could have had Jack focus on an individual. Emotionally, we respond to the individual tragedy not the abstracted mass. The paradox is that one must abstract to address the entire horror of any one battle. In this sense, it may be said that the real tragedy of a battle defies human comprehension, and whenever an overall description is made of one it invites the grotesque, as with Hume's comment on the Marignano battlefield "strewed with twenty thousand slain" (see p. 87 above). Jack's similes abstract an essence or general pattern in the act of dying, but it is an unfeeling essence.

The classical epic maintains a sense of individual tragedy by identifying the main participants in a battle by name and often a brief biographical sketch.<sup>9</sup> Individual deaths make the sense of loss more palpable. Even in the Anglo-Saxon poem, The Battle of Maldon, the personalization of death (Birhtnoth's and others') enables the reader to feel something for the English defenders. Conversely, the comic grotesque likes to gloss over the individual (Sidney's slaughter of the rebels is an obvious exception) and address general facts. As in Jack's case, the grotesque description sometimes becomes involved in its own mode of expression. The language seems to celebrate itself and remain aloof from the reality it is supposedly addressing.

While Jack's absurd similes jump out at the reader,

his use of assonance and consonance is also an important part of his rhetoric. Friederich even contends that it is the "verbal play" which spawns the similes. He closely analyzes the sound patterns in Jack's description and claims that Nashe is largely guided by his ear:

. . . the word *Switzers* gives rise to their alliterative "vnweeldie . . . wallowing." Hence it is the verbal play which brings forth the descriptive simile, "like an Oxe in his dung." The sentence is a carefully paralleled "here there" antithesis. In its second part the "sprightly *French*" are contrasted to the first part's "vnweeldie *Switzers*." The subsequent image again develops out of the sound effect as "sprightly" leads to "sprawling." . . . The grotesquely appropriate image of a helpless roach grows, of course, out of "sprawling." And finally, the rather calm preliminary conclusion, "new taken out of the streame," maintains alliterative echoes with the preceding "turning on the stained grasse," while it also carries over to "the ground was strewed." . . . The literary experience comes before the visual one.<sup>10</sup>

The similes and sound patterns belong to Jack and, as the narrator, Jack may grab the reader's interest more than the battle of Marignano itself.

Jack proceeds to elaborate his "quagmyre" image:

In one place might you behold a heape of dead murthered men ouerwhelmed with a falling Steede in stead of a toombe stone, in another place a bundell of bodies fettered together in their owne bowells; and as the tyrant Romane Emperours vsed to tye condemned liuing caytiues face to face to dead corses, so were the halfe liuing here mixt with squeezed carcasses long putrified. (231)

The first part of the sentence calls to mind Sidney's over-all description of the major battle between Cecropia's and Basilius's forces, in which the slain horses are lying upon their slain masters (see p.37 above). Whereas Sidney uses

a euphuistic structure to stress the paradox, Nashe continues with his own alliterations: "Steede", "stead" and "stone." Images of entanglement dominate the second part of the sentence; bodies appear to be tied up with their own exposed intestines, and the half living are caught in piles of putrified flesh. This kind of grotesque approaches gothic horror, but once again the word-play calls attention to itself and detracts from the gravity of the scene: "bundell", "bodies" and "bowells." As McKerrow points out, Jack erroneously attributes the ancient wartime practice of tying enemy survivors face to face with corpses to "the tyrant Romane Emperours" (IV, 267). It may be that Nashe was confusedly remembering the Aeneid (VIII.478-488) where the barbaric custom is mentioned in reference to the Etruscan tyrant, Mezentius. There is something especially odious about pressing life together with death that, for the reader, goes beyond the physical discomfort. In fact, it is not so much the putrified flesh as it is the contact with death itself that is so unsettling. As mentioned (see p. 76 above), one aspect of the grotesque is that the normal distinctions between life and death begin to dissolve. Death comes alive in the flinching corpse and living bodies are often described in terms of inanimate substances. Here Nashe draws a terrifying picture of how human flesh, or mortal life, is merely part of the earth. In the words of Rhodes, "Nashe reveals how like other matter human bodies

are, and, ultimately, just how little a life can be."<sup>11</sup>

It might be said that the vitality of Jack's language is reminiscent of Rabelais whom Rhodes, in his treatment of Nashe, makes "a touchstone for a discussion of the grotesque in its more violent aspects."<sup>12</sup> Nothing could be more violent than the battle of Marignano or the Picrochole War in Gargantua and Pantagruel. The one major difference between the two is that Rabelais inclines towards the saturnalia whereas Nashe seems more satiric. Rhodes is correct in summarizing the general view that Rabelais "is unlikely to have had much direct influence on Elizabethan Literature."<sup>13</sup> Huntington Brown convincingly argues that Nashe was not at all familiar with Rabelais.<sup>14</sup> According to Brown and others, if Nashe emulated anyone it would have to be Aretino.<sup>15</sup> But our study is primarily concerned with genre not influence. Rabelais's combination of violent action and festive language in the Picrochole War may represent a general tendency in Renaissance literature. It is quite common to speak of a Rabelaisian language as being a delight in word-play, amplification, and courseness, and this is where most critics see an affinity between Rabelais and Nashe. J. J. Jusserand was probably wrong to say that Nashe admired Rabelais, but his premise that Nashe "possessed much of that curious care for and delight in words which is one of the characteristics of the men of the Renaissance" explains how he naturally

associated the two writers.<sup>16</sup>

We have seen how Jack's language celebrates the musical nature of words through a constant use of alliteration. Puns are also a standard part of this festive rhetoric, as the beginning of the next sentence in the Marignano description demonstrates: "Anie man might giue Armes that was an actor in that Battell, for there were more armes and legs scattered in the Field that day than will be gathered vp till Doomes-day" (231). Dismembered limbs randomly lying about seem commonplace in these panoramic battle scenes. There is nothing tragic about the limbs since they belong to nobody in particular. Moreover, their profuse quantity just appears to be part of the exuberant spirit of Jack's description.

The last part of the episode focuses for a moment on the French king, Francis I, and then abruptly concludes:

. . . the French Kinge himselfe in this Conflict was much distressed, the braines of his owne men sprinkled in his face, thrice was his Courser slaine vnder him, and thrice was he stricke on the brest with a speare: but in the end, by the helpe of the *Venetians*, the *Heluetians* or *Switzers* were subdude, and he crowned a Victor, a peace concluded, and the Citie of *Millaine* surrendred vnto him as a pledge of reconciliation.  
(231-232)

McKerrow notes that this passage was probably taken "from Languet" (Cooper, 1565, fol.275<sup>V</sup>), which he quotes:

A great battaile foughten betwene the Switzers and the Frenchmen, in the which the French King was in so great daunger, that the braine of his owne men spercled in his face, and him self was thrise stricken with a speare: but in the ende of the fight, by the help of

the Venecians and other, whiche came in good season, the Heluecians were discomfited and slayne, and the citie of Myllaine yelded to the French kyng. (IV, 267)

Brains splatter into the face of the king as one might imagine a bowl of porridge to hit a clown. This slapstick version of the grotesque, however, is part of Languet's Chronicle which illustrates the conventionality of the grotesque in Renaissance battle accounts. What differentiates the description of the carnage at Marignano in The Unfortunate Traveller from the more standard account by Languet is Jack's indifference and the Rabelaisian vitality of his language. These two factors are prominent enough to shift what is merely grotesque into the sphere of the comic grotesque because they are loaded with satiric and ludicrous elements.

Francis I was only twenty-one at the battle of Marignano but by far the most famous personality. In a French manuscript illumination, Francis I is gloriously depicted as the dominant figure on the battlefield.<sup>17</sup> Surrounded by slaughter, he appears nonchalant while in the act of lancing one of the enemy (no sign of artillery or brains in the face). According to Oman, the young King "was determined to show that at least he was a good man-at-arms, and he was never so happy as when leading a cavalry charge."<sup>18</sup> Nashe may be mocking such enthusiasm in the picture of the king's brain-splattered face, which borders

on vaudevillian slapstick.

It should be noted that the image of splattered brains is another conventional battle motif that goes back to the epic. Perhaps this is because grey matter stands out against the more familiar color of red. In the Iliad we come across the formula "ἐγκέφαλος δὲ ἔνδον" three times (XI.97-98, XII.185-186, XX.399-400).<sup>19</sup> Virgil also refers to spilt or splattered brains three times in the Aeneid (IX.753-755, X.415-416, XI.697-698). The first instance truly approaches the ludicrous as the rampaging Turnus splits Pandarus's skull right down the middle:

he stretches on the ground his fainting limbs and  
brain-bespattered armour, while, lo! in equal halves  
his head dangles this way and that from either  
shoulder.<sup>20</sup>

In the second Aeneid example cited above, Virgil mentions that the brains are still warm ("*calido*")! The motif is standard in the classical epic-battle parodies as well. One finds it in the Batrachomyomachia (ll.226-229), and Ovid's Metamorphoses contains a wonderful grotesque simile when Phaeocomes hits Tectaphos over the head with a log:

The broad dome of his head was shattered, and through  
his mouth, through hollow nostrils, eyes, and ears  
oozed the soft brains, as when curdled milk drips  
through oaken withes, or a thick liquid mass trickles  
through a coarse sieve weighted down, and is squeezed  
out through the crowded apertures. (Meta. XII.434-  
438)<sup>21</sup>

Golding's translation is even more visually expressive as he used "roping" for *fluit*.<sup>22</sup>

A good Elizabethan example of the same motif occurs in the comic scene of Tamburlaine Part Two. Tamburlaine attempts to kindle a lust for conquest and war in his sons by telling them that his "royal chair of state" shall be advanced on a field "sprinkled with the brains of slaughtered men."<sup>23</sup> Their responses, except for Calyphas's, contain just as much excessive rhetoric. The standardness of the motif continued long after Elizabethan times as evidenced by Pepys's diary in which one reads the following account of the deaths of the "Earl of Falmouth, Muskery, and Mr. Rd. Boyle" in the battle of Lowestoft: "Their blood and brains flying in the Duke's face—and the head of Mr. Boyle striking down the Duke, as some say."<sup>24</sup> Like Francis I, the Duke of York is splattered with somebody else's brains but further inconvenienced by being struck down like an arcade-pin by an airborne head—how positively unsettling! Andrew Marvell captures the ultimate comic potential of the splattered brains motif when he satirizes Falmouth's death: "His shattered Head the fearlesse Duke distains, / And gave the last first proof that he had Brains."<sup>25</sup> The image of splattered brains, in a crude but brilliant fashion, connotes the mindlessness of war or as Virgil expresses it the "*insania belli*" (Aeneid VII.461).

The battle of Marignano is over in a flash (less than a page in McKerrow's edition) and yet there is a timeless quality about it, as if it were a symbol for all



wars. Jack's description radiates the same festive mood that Mikhail Bakhtin saw operating in the violent episodes of Gargantua and Pantagruel:

Bloodshed, dismemberment, burning, death, beatings, blows, curses and abuses—all these elements are steeped in "merry time," time which kills and gives birth, which allows nothing old to be perpetuated and never ceases to generate the new and the youthful. This interpretation is not Rabelais' abstract conception; it is, so to speak, immanent in the traditional popular-festive system of images which he inherited.<sup>26</sup>

And so the young king can wipe the splattered brains from his face, conclude the peace treaty—giving him renewed control of Milan, and Jack is once again on his merry way. Even though episodic abruptness and nonchalant violence are integral elements of the picaresque novel,<sup>27</sup> one feels that the battle begs for some direct comment on the nature of war. Nashe reserves that commentary for the following episode as another battle comes quick upon the heels of Marignano.

#### Jack's Military Career and Nashe's "Varietie of Mirth"

Let us pause and take a closer look at our merry narrator Jack. On his way to Marignano, Jack refers to how his position in the army has changed: "As at *Turwin* I was a demy souldier in iest, so now I became a Martialist in earnest" (231). Jack has stepped up in the world from when he was a page in Henry VIII's army (1513), which was two years previous to Marignano. As a "demy souldier in

iest," he plays a series of pranks on superior members of his company. These jests are really a satiric comment on the army and, as such, contribute to Nashe's comic grotesque vision of military affairs. Jack likens his company to a corn crop: "Those companies, lyke a greate deale of corne, do yeeld some chaffe; the corne are cormorants, the chaffe are good fellowes, which are quickly blowen to nothing wyth bearing a light heart in a lyght purse" (210). Word-play and puns abound. The "good" fellow is a carefree carnival man and drinker; hence, he is often inebriated (as well as broke) and, as a result, a poor soldier. In contrast, the "corne" or men of substance possess an insatiable greed. Nashe may be implying that the best soldiers are truly hungry for pillage or that a strong desire for the spoils of war will make men fight better. Neither the "corne" nor the "chaffe" are at all commendable.

In spite of the fact that he is only a page, Jack considers himself part of the corn. His "cormorant" nature is clearly behind his first jest on the cider-merchant. Jack exploits the war situation by getting the merchant to believe that he is under suspicion as a traitor. Jack's real objective is to make more cider available for himself and the rest of the company, and the merchant does exactly that after Jack convinces him that he is rumored to be supplying the enemy with cider.

A similar jest is played on an "vgly mechanically

Captain" (217), to whom Jack has lost some money at dice. By "mechanicall" Jack is probably referring to the Captain's "mean" and "vulgar" artisan-class background (OED). This particular Captain, "whose head was not encombred with too much forcast" (218), falls prey to Jack's flattery. Persuaded by Jack's argument that "In the delaies of Siege . . . [there] Resteth no way for you to clime sodenly, but by doing some rare strategeme" (218), the Captain welcomes his suggestion about entering the French held town of Turwin as a spy. Jack cites classical precedents for such an heroic act: "*Vlysses, Nestor, Diomed* went as spies together in the night into the Tents of *Rhaesus*, and intercepted *Dolon*, the spie of the Troians: neuer any discredited the trade of Intelligencers but *Iudas*, and he hanged himselfe" (220). As McKerrow notes, this spy-episode is related to the Iliad (X.298ff), but what he does not point out is that Jack seems to be having great fun with the Captain's meanness. Dolon is the spy who loquaciously spills out everything he knows about the Trojan battle plan in the hope that Ulysses and Diomedes will spare him. Hence, Jack's phrase "neuer any discredited the trade of Intelligencers," coming immediately after Dolon, is ironic and spoken with the certainty of one who knows that his listener could not notice for the Captain "neuer lookt in [a] booke in his life" (220). In fact, the Captain eventually performs his espionage mission about as well as

Dolon. As soon as the Captain leaves, Jack goes "in all loue and kindnes to the Marshall generall of the field, & certifide him that such a man was lately fled to the Enemie" (222). On the surface, this seems to be nothing more than a satire on the old *miles gloriosus* or braggart soldier, yet it leads Jack to remark proverbially: "Adam neuer fell till God made fooles" (224). The fall of man is for many humorists the oldest joke in human history,<sup>28</sup> for knowledge allows one to laugh at the folly of others.

Jack's third jest reminds us that all is fair in love and the picaresque world. Disguised as a "halfe crowne wench," Jack attracts the attention of a "Switzer Captain," obtains six crowns "for an antipast to iniquitie," and then makes a clean getaway (225). Nashe might be commenting on the notoriety of the Swiss mercenaries.<sup>29</sup> Those who profit monetarily by war deserve to lose by love. Amorous intrigues are even more prevalent in the picaresque world than military careers. Those who are pugnaciously inclined are also apt to lust for physical love or, at least, these passions are often found together. The "Switzer Captain," as well as a lecher, is a "monstrous vnthrif of battle-axes" (225). When Paris returns from his combat with Menelaus in the Iliad, he immediately leads Helen to bed and says, "for never yet hath desire so encompassed my soul" (III.442). One can hardly forget how the lusts of love and war are linked so closely and

comically in Aristophanes's Lysistrata. This humorous connection also appears in the Renaissance. A whole chapter in Gargantua and Pantagruel (Book III, Chapter 8) is devoted to Panurge's explanation of why the codpiece is the principle part of a warrior's armor.<sup>30</sup> Love and war seem to be the favorite outlets for male aggression.

Jack's last jest is important for raising moral questions about the function of the satirist. He claims to have been "ordained Gods scourge" to punish the "daintie finicalitie" of the company's pay clerks (226). Strictly observing pay regulations and taking great pains about their "cleane" dress, the clerks represent the very opposite of the normal soldier's rough, satyr-like characteristics. In Jack's mind, they are not soldiers at all but delicate quill-pushers who would not even "throwe a pen-full of inke into the Enemies face" (226). Referring to himself as only a "demy souldier in iest," Jack is actually a full soldier in mentality. Once more he takes advantage of the war situation to deceive his victim by shouting to the clerks that "there was treason a foote" (226). When the clerks flee, he robs their desks. We cannot agree with Jack's claim that he is "Gods scourge" for the clerks are guilty of no sin. However, this is the picaresque world where the stronger and often malicious men win and where strict virtue is a mark of naivety. Hence Jack may not be God's scourge, but one can see him as the satirist's scourge whose

duty is to whip the foolish. It is not "daintie finicalitie" which earns the clerks their punishment but simple gullibility. Those who are most fit to survive in the fallen world are those who best adapt themselves to its fallen nature. Moreover, in the picaresque world, everyone, it seems, must learn the hard way. Duped by Jack, the clerks should learn not to trust anyone—even one's comrade-in-arms. Jack is unlike many other picaresque heroes (Roderick Random and Barry Lyndon) insofar as he begins his adventures like one who has already been initiated into the world. His story commences with a merry kind of cynicism: ". . . which of vs al is not a sinner?" (209). The only thing which differentiates one man from another is shrewdness, and the essence of being shrewd in the picaresque world is to beat your fellow sinner to the punch. This pessimistic view is implied in the Horace quotation which precedes Jack's statement: "*Coelum petimus stultitia*" (209)—[We seek heaven in our foolishness], Odes I.3.38. Attempts to reach heaven are foolish not just because they are vain, which is all Horace seems to be saying, but because to get ahead in the world one must use the ways of the world.

In the Epistle to Wriothoesley, prefixed to The Unfortunate Traveller, Nashe promises a "varietie of mirth" (201). So from the satiric mirth of the jests, we move on to encounter rhetorical mirth in the description

of the battle of Marignano. Like other picaresque heroes, Jack only joins the army as a means of support and hence plans to join the "Faction that was strongest." The profession of soldiering has been a perennial satiric target, probably because it is such an awful paradox to earn a living by killing others.<sup>31</sup> Up to this point in The Unfortunate Traveller, Nashe's satiric mirth has almost all been directed at the military. Of course the military episodes, which form a standard part of the picaresque world, are themselves symbolic of man's fallen predicament. Therefore the successful soldiers in the company, who are "cormorants" or rogues like Jack, represent those who succeed in the world at large. In the jest-segment the reader laughs with Jack at the naivety of the dupes and somehow feels as if the dupes get what they deserve. But in the battle of Marignano, Jack's humorous similes are disturbing. His indifference to the loss of human life highlights the inadequacy of the every-man-for-himself code. Jack's rise from a page to a "Martialist in earnest" parallels Nashe's step up from satiric mirth to a more detached form of the comic grotesque.

After Marignano, Jack immediately heads to the scene of another brewing conflict. As a soldier, Jack is simply going where he can find work, but his satiric and mercenary functions begin to merge:

That war thus blowen ouer, and the seuerall Bands

dissolued, like a Crowe that still followes aloofe where there is carrion, I flew me ouer to *Munster* in *Germanie*, which an Anabaptisticall Brother, named *Iohn Leiden* kept at that instant against the Emperour and the Duke of *Saxonie*. (232)

As the satirist scavenges after human folly, so the soldier scavenges after human conflict. The crow-carrion imagery appropriately reflects Jack's mean profession as a soldier as well as the death which always accompanies it. In fact, this scavenger motif is quite common in literary treatments of war and may even be found in the *Iliad*, as the "peerless charioteers" are pictured "lying upon the ground dearer far to the vultures than to their wives" (XI.161-162). The contrast between the "wives" and "vultures" suggests a life-death cycle. The charioteers may die but their death is substance for another life form. Homer, however, is sardonic while Jack Wilton, as the "Crowe," is not. The festive or Rabelaisian nature of this kind of cyclical physicality is, according to Rhodes, a dominant feature of the Elizabethan grotesque of which Nashe is the best exemplar: ". . . both Nashe and Rabelais use grotesque food imagery to remind us of the essential similarity between our own flesh and the flesh we feed it with."<sup>32</sup> This is the positive or saturnalian side of the grotesque. As all living things are bound to die, so life is destined to begin anew.

Jack gives the reader a hint that the Munster conflict will be a more leisurely entertainment than the all-too-quick spectacle of bloodshed at Marignano: "Here I



was in good hope to set vpp my staffe for some reasonable time, deeming that no Citie would driue it to a siedge, except they were able to hold out" (232). A stubborn and evenly matched conflict means a steady source of employment for the soldier. The reader, too, has cause to welcome a slower narrative pace since Jack has briskly pulled him through the last three episodes (Jack as Courtier, the sweating-sickness, and especially the battle of Marignano). Death completely dominates the last two, and yet the quick narrative pace lends a sense of vitality to Jack's story. Horrors fade away as fast as they come into view, and this "picaresque rhythm" or "rush of events"<sup>33</sup> does not allow the reader to dwell on any one particular calamity. Hence, the rapid succession of episodes contributes to the saturnalian mood. In the Munster episode, however, the narrative slows down considerably and becomes far more meditative. In addition, the narrative voice begins to sound more like Nashe's own and less like Jack's. Rhetorical and festive mirth, as contained in Jack's description of Marignano, fades away and the real humor of satire (not just satiric jesting) comes to the fore as Nashe launches into an attack against extremism.

What is most interesting about how the episodes have been strung together thus far is Jack's time-travelling. When he has finished relating the opening series of jests, he asks the reader to "sleepe an houre or two, and dreame

that Turney and Turwin is wonne, that the King is shipt againe into England, and that I am close at harde meate at Windsore or at Hampton Court" (227). We then seem to leap ahead four years to the sweating-sickness epidemic of 1517. This is not so unusual, but then we must go back two years for the battle of Marignano (1515) and afterward fly forward nineteen years for the Munster uprising (1534) "like a Crowe" in search of "carrion." Nashe may have re-located the sweating-sickness in the time scheme without reason or without being aware of it, but the "Crowe" simile suggests that he wished to deal with two military episodes in succession. Moreover, the account of the Munster uprising is really a curious blend of the events of 1534 and the battle of Frankenhausen fought between the Anabaptists and the Elector of Saxony's forces in 1525 (see McKerrow's note). Although it is impossible to ascertain Nashe's exact intentions, it is likely that he has taken great liberties with the historical facts to concoct a sequence of action which would form a satire not only against over-zealous spiritualism but against its potential aggressiveness. The figure of John Leiden was not enough; he had to be framed by terrible battle scenes to carry the effect. The out-of-jointness of the Munster episode becomes even more obvious when one sees that Jack ends his picaresque journey by rejoining Henry VIII's camp when Henry was meeting the French king (the same brain-besplattered

Francis I) at the "Field of the Cloth of Gold" in June 1520. At the end of The Unfortunate Traveller Jack himself calls attention to the cyclical structure of his adventures: "And so as my storie began with the king at *Turnay* and *Turwin*, I thinke meete here to end it with the king at *Ardes* and *Guines*" (328). Ending with this peaceful and festive event indicates that Nashe ultimately wanted to close on a positive note. Despite the wars, deceptions, betrayals and all the other disasters, Jack has survived and so will man.

#### The Munster Uprising

Rhodes says that "behind a figure like Cade, or Nashe's John Leiden in The Unfortunate Traveller, or in the characterization of Martin Marprelate by his opponents, is the tradition of the comic religious leaders who flourished in popular risings during the sixteenth century."<sup>34</sup> Nashe probably had Martin Marprelate in mind when he drew his portrait of John Leiden, but the depiction of the Munster uprising goes far beyond Martin Marprelate and becomes a general satire against any physical aggression which is born out of religious fanaticism. In this respect, it may be useful to make a brief review of Bakhtin's analysis of the Picrochole War in Gargantua and Pantagruel.

The Picrochole War could be interpreted as high

burlesque or low burlesque, and these categories correspond to the first two dimensions which Bakhtin discusses.<sup>35</sup> As high-burlesque (the form and style are elevated and the subject is low or trivial), the war is something of a mock-heroic treatment of a lawsuit which was fought out in Rabelais's native community of La Devinière about water rights on the Loire River. Many of the names used by Rabelais in the war correspond to the personalities involved in the lawsuit. As low-burlesque (the subject is serious and the style is low or undignified), the Picrochole War is a satire against the aggressive actions of Charles V and a defense of our old friend, Francis I. Bakhtin also sees a third dimension in the "festive popular images" which "reveal the deepest meaning of the historic process . . . being the people's views concerning war and peace, the aggressor, political power and the future."<sup>36</sup> The tone of Nashe's Munster episode is not particularly saturnalian and there are few festive images, but one can recognize the same blend of the high and low burlesque.

The essence of the burlesque is an incongruity between the subject and form, or the subject and the manner in which it is addressed. This incongruity resembles the perceptual distortion which is at the heart of the grotesque. A lawsuit may be blown up, or an international conflict reduced to, the scale of a seemingly exaggerated and ridiculous war over cakes as it is in

Gargantua and Pantagruel. Because our subject is war itself, always a dignified subject, we are only interested in how Nashe reduces the Munster uprising or battle of Frankenhausem to a silly display of religious fanaticism. If a more specific satire is contained in the episode pertaining to the Martin Marprelate controversy ( in which no one died but the fictitious voice of "Martin"), then we are simply not prepared to recognize it. But the specifics of allusion aside for a moment, the distortion process is often meant to be seen both ways especially with the subject of war. Petty disputes do explode into monstrous wars, and monstrous wars are conducted like childish affairs.

Jack Wilton begins his description of the Munster uprising with his usual facetious tone. First he exposes the absurd delusion under which John Leiden and his followers appear to be acting. They are soldiers for their cause but soldiers without proper weapons: "It was not lawful, said they, for anie man to draw the sword but the Magistrate" (233). Jack also pokes fun at their makeshift armor; a chamber pot, for instance, is used as a helmet. What is ridiculed here is the self-contradiction of Leiden's followers who embark on a military action but pretend to keep the tenents of their anti-military faith. Either they should recognize their action for what it is and prepare themselves properly or adhere to their belief and drop the action altogether. The pun-loving Jack delights in

unmasking their senseless behavior: ". . . so grounded and grauelled were they in this opinion, that now when they should come to Battell, theres neuer a one of them would bring a blade (no, not an onion blade) about hym, to dye for it" (233).

In the next paragraph, Jack's facetiousness seems to give way to the more serious voice of Nashe himself: "Wherin let me dilate a little more grauely than the nature of this historie requires, or wilbe expected of so yong a practitioner in diuinity" (234). Put simply, Nashe goes on to say that those who get too extreme in external demonstrations of their faith paradoxically extinguish the life of that faith which is internal. Fanaticism gives birth to pride and pride perpetuates fanatical behavior. Hence, the Anabaptists damn themselves by their presumptuous attitude about piety and salvation:

. . . whosoeuer seekes by headlong meanes to enter into Heauen and disanull Gods ordinance, shall, with the Gyaunts that thought to scale heauen in contempt of *Iupiter*, be ouerwhelmed with Mount *Ossa* and *Peleon*, and dwell with the diuell in eternall desolation.  
(235-236)

Nashe associates his argument with Greek mythology to give it wider significance. Furthermore, putting the Anabaptists on the same plane as the giants who tried to usurp Jupiter is an effective means of designating them as deformities.

John O'Connor argues that the "black humor" present in Nashe's account of the Munster uprising is traceable to

a common Renaissance response to "physical deformity":

"Nashe hated the Anabaptist innovation for its effrontery, its ignorance, and its divisiveness. It is a hideous deformity, and in the battle Nashe compares the Anabaptists to a bear torn to pieces by curs."<sup>37</sup> But the Anabaptists only represent one extreme of unnatural religion—excessive reformation. At the other extreme of the spectrum stand the Roman Catholics who are guilty of excessive counter-reformation measures. Here Nashe's satire on spiritual fanaticism becomes more universal and political overtones emerge:

But a great number of you, with *Philip*, haue beene long with Christ, and haue not knowen him; haue long professed your selues Christians, and haue not knowen his true Ministers: you follow the French and Scottish fashion and faction, and in all poynts are like the Switzers, *Qui quaerunt cum qua Gente cadunt*, that seeke with what Nation they may first miscarrie. (236)

The reference to Philip II of Spain, England's greatest enemy at the time that Nashe was writing The Unfortunate Traveller (1593, published 1594), is obviously a condemnation of the Spanish campaign against the Dutch Protestants in the Low Countries. England, of course, supported the Protestants and it was for this cause that Sidney lost his life. Nashe's comments on Philip II would have been taken very seriously by Elizabethans.

Nashe then returns to the Anabaptists or more generally to the Puritan zeal for personal interpretation of the scriptures: "Wee haue found out a sleight to hammer it

to anie Heresie whatsoever" (236). The use of the pronoun "Wee" indicates just how universal the satire has become. A variety of biblical interpretations breeds a variety of sects and inevitable confrontation. Thus having lashed out at both extremes (Puritan and Catholic), Nashe then fittingly refers to the civil wars in France between the Huguenots and the Catholics which occurred repeatedly during the last-half of the sixteenth century:

Ministers and Pastors, sell away your sects and schismes to the decrepite Churches in contention beyond sea; they haue been so long invred to warre, both about matters of Religion and Regiment, that now they haue no peace of minde but in troubling all other mens peace. (237)

Those who would fight for their religion (and here Nashe is appealing to the English) are hereby asked to export themselves to France where they will find a suitable arena for spiritual fisticuffs.

Next Nashe indicts Leiden and his followers for how they pillaged Munster after seizing control of the city:

What was the foundation or ground-worke of this dismall declining of Munster, but the banishing of their Bishop, their confiscating and casting lots for Church liuinges, as the souldiers cast lottes for Christes garments, and, in short tearmes, their making the house of God a den of theeues? (238, see McKerrow's note, IV, 267)

Disguising the lust for material gain as a spiritual crusade is perhaps the most shameful kind of hypocrisy. According to Nashe, such blameworthy acts will surely draw the hand of divine retribution: "God neuer suffers vnreuenged" (238).

Presumably to drive home his point, Nashe quotes Ovid on the



punishment that is deserved to be given to those who would make young boys into eunuchs. But instead of clinching his argument the allusion seems to undermine its seriousness: "Who first depriude yong boeis of their best part, / With selfe same wounds he gaue he ought to smart" (238). Nashe takes a parting shot at "Cardinall Wolsey" before he returns to the particulars of the Munster uprising. Cardinal Wolsey was believed to have amassed a fortune while managing England's ecclesiastical affairs.

The last segment of the Munster episode is the most important insofar as Nashe concludes his comments on armed aggression and religious fanaticism. It also reveals some sympathy on Nashe's part for the fate of the Anabaptists. Initially, however, the segment continues the satiric attack begun earlier. Nashe mocks the Anabaptist manner of prayer in which "they did not serue God simplie, but that he should serue their turnes" (239). For all their spiritual pretension, the Anabaptists are very much part of the fallen world and do not even know it. The ridicule of Leiden and his followers reaches a climax just before the battle, when foolishly putting their faith in the "glorious signe of the rainebowe. . . . they presently ranne headlong on theyr well deserued confusion" (240). But a sympathetic chord is struck in the very next sentence: "Pittifull and lamentable was their vnpittied and well perfourmed slaughter" (240). Nashe then draws an analogy between the ugly annihilation

of the Anabaptists and bearbaiting:

To see euen a Beare (which is the most cruellst of all beasts) too-too bloudily ouer-matcht, and deformedly rent in peeces by an vnconscionable number of currees, it would moue compassion against kinde, and make those that (beholding him at the stake yet vncoapt with) wisht him a sutable death to his vgly shape, now to recall their hard-harted wishes, and moane him suffering as a milde beast, in comparison of the fowle mouthd Mastiues, his butchers . . .  
(240)

As much as Nashe rails against the Anabaptists and even claims that they receive what they deserve, here he obviously reverses his position and expresses disgust for their counter-attackers. This ambivalence is typical of the grotesque mode. Furthermore, the Anabaptist movement is no less of a monster for being so cruelly quashed. The whole affair is just one unnatural and senseless spectacle of death. Those forces used to recapture the town are worked into such a frenzy that they do not pause to consider their actions: ". . . nothing but stearne reuenge in their ears, made them so eager that their handes had no leasure to aske counsell of their effeminate eyes" (240). War is nothing but a grotesque and unreasonable exaggeration of human animosity.

The description of the battle itself lacks the humorous tone of Marignano, but the one amplification passage is marked by a surprising and paradoxical reaper image:

. . . their swords, theyr pikes, their bills, their bowes, their caleeuers slew, empierced, knockt downe, shot through, and ouerthrew as manie men euerie minute of the battell as there falls eares of corne before the sythe at one blow . . . (240-241)

The weapons wielded by the besieging force stand in direct contrast to the pathetic instruments used by the Anabaptists. Once again Nashe's simile (an echo of the earlier cormorant simile) tends to detract from the gravity of the scene. In addition, the sheer exuberance of the phrase "as manie men euerie minute," and the reaper-motif lend the description an oddly festive tone which recalls the comic grotesque of the *danse macabre*. Still, there is no need to go too far. The battle certainly lacks the clear Rabelaisian vitality of the Picrochole War. This is due to Nashe's satiric emphasis on religious fanaticism which alligns The Unfortunate Traveller more with Grimmelshausen's Simplicius Simplicissimus than Gargantua and Pantagruel.<sup>38</sup> But while Nashe's language in the Munster episode is not as ludicrously grotesque as it is in the Marignano description, there nevertheless exists a humourous paradox in how the prayers of the Anabaptists are heard: "God heard their praiers . . . [but] It was their speedie punishment that they prayde for" (239-240). Lastly, however serious, Nashe cannot resist word-play whenever the opportunity arises, as it does in the second part of the amplification passage:

. . . yet all their weapons so slaying, empiercing, knocking downe, shooting through, ouer-throwing, dissoule-ioyned not halfe so manie as the hailing thunder of the great Ordinance: so ordinarie at euerie foot-step was the imbrument of yron in bloud, that one could hardly discern heads from bullets, or clottred haire from mangled flesh hung with goare.  
(241)

The scene itself is certainly not "ordinaire" but so great in its horror that singularly each horror becomes common. This stress on quantity, on details which drown in their own abundance, is an important characteristic of grotesque portrayals of war. In literature, this quantitative aspect is usually expressed by the rhetorical device of amplification (*amplificatio*). O'Connor's comment on the Munster episode is a good summation of my own reading: "Although in his description of the carnage Nashe tries to subdue his sense of humor, a certain ghoulish hilarity emerges in a rhetorical turn . . ."<sup>39</sup>

The lack of mirth in the Munster episode probably reflects the fact that Nashe himself has come out from behind the Jack Wilton persona. He seems to reassume the persona just before the episode ends. After the long exposition on fanaticism, the reader suddenly senses the impatience of the merry narrator, Jack, to move on: "What is there more as touching this tragedie that you would be resolved of? say quickly, for now is my pen on foote againe" (241). Further evidence to suggest that we have been listening to Nashe himself and not his narrator is Jack's crude *adynaton* or admission that the Munster affair is not in his literary power to convey: ". . . for what with talking of coblers, tinkers, roape-makers, botchers, and durt-daubers, the mark is clean out of my Muses mouth" (241). Nashe consciously shifts from his own straightforward tone

back to the low style of his narrator and thereby softens the bite of his criticism.

More important, Jack is a means by which Nashe can comment indirectly on more immediate events than the battle of Marignano and the Munster uprising. Thus in Jack's rejection of the military career one may read Nashe's ultimate indictment of armed aggression: "With the tragical catastrophe of this Munsterian conflict did I cashier the new vocation of my cavaliership. There was no more honorable wars in christendome then towards" (241). The last sentence is rich in implication. Nashe may be condemning not only the civil wars in France but England's own struggle against Spain for influence in the Low Countries and elsewhere. The necessary disguise for such condemnation contributes to the universality of the attack. Consequently, the target of Nashe's satire is war which comes from fanatical behavior. Because all men are susceptible to extremes, victims who take revenge often surpass the crimes of the initial aggressors. Therefore as many deserve the satirist's scourge, so many, in a sense, deserve compassion.

#### War and the Picaresque World

Much of the picaresque novelist's art lies in how he arranges episodes to develop particular themes. We have

seen how, in the first part of The Unfortunate Traveller, Nashe treats the subject of war and the military in three distinct phases (the simple jest, the grotesque battle, and the universal satire). With Jack's series of jests we see that the best soldiers are the most ruthless and that the great majority are simple-headed fools. Our first glimpse of battle only comes in the second episode in which a grotesque spectacle of bloodshed suddenly appears. Jack's indifference at Marignano is disturbing, and so our attention is sharpened for the third episode. Here Nashe provides an expository analysis of the military confrontation, but one which is universal in nature. The facetious gives way to the serious, yet Nashe's satiric and rhetorical humor continues to rear its head. According to one critic, "our responses show us to be at the mercy of Nashe's clever rhetoric."<sup>40</sup> It is precisely this "clever rhetoric" that clashes with the horrible subject of war.

But the disturbing effect of Jack's humor is only one part of the grotesque. When a situation contains such incredible violence, like the battle of Marignano, humor can function as a psychological defense mechanism. Perhaps the only way to retain sanity or to survive in the picaresque world is to adopt a comic-satiric vision. In his study The Picaresque Novel, Stuart Miller makes this point by associating Jack's "mirth" with the solace of wine—"marry, the tauerne is honorable" (208):

It is as though life were so ugly and horrible in its chaos that the only thing to do is avoid looking at it. It is as though even the tale were trivial, any tale trivial, and the only things to do are to be witty and get drunk. The Unfortunate Traveller is full of sick jokes, full of attempts to make the horrible funny. Jack the narrator keeps reality at a distance with his wit, stylistic brilliance, and drink, because reality is simply too horrible to contemplate seriously.<sup>41</sup>

This Rabelaisian endorsement of drunkenness is, in effect, a giving of oneself over to the chaos and disorder of the world. Nashe's rhetorical humor mocks the capacity of language to contain this chaos or express it truthfully. Hence, the disorder of the world lives in the incongruity of the narrative tone.

After the opening jests, The Unfortunate Traveller presents a barrage of terrifying events: the sweating-sickness, the battle of Marignano, and the Munster uprising. Maria Gibbons sees the battle episodes as establishing a pattern of polemic situations, the second of which merges the subject (war) with the form (satire): "Thus polemic situation follows polemic situation. The commentary [on Munster] becomes polemic as Wilton points up inconsistencies in Anabaptist tenents and practices . . . not without typical Wilton humour, of course."<sup>42</sup> Gibbon's remarks remind us that the subject of war is a useful way to reflect the fragmentation and conflict which mark the picaresque world. As for the picaresque hero, he usually remains indifferent to the greater conflicts and concerns himself

only with personal survival—exactly as Jack does at Marignano. While this selfishness is sometimes necessary to escape certain situations, it also suggests why faction and competing interests are never harmoniously resolved. After one dispute is "blowen ouer" another arises. Turwin, Marignano, and Munster establish—early in the novel—a pattern of military episodes which symbolize the brutality and violence of the picaresque world.

To survive in such a world, the picaresque hero must himself learn to be brutal, to fight vice with vice. This cyclical and paradoxical structure resembles the Renaissance view of the satirist as a "Tamburlaine of vice." Following this line of reasoning, Jack Wilton considers poetry to be the closest thing to "perfection yet emberd vp in the breasts of mortall men" only because "none more contemne the world" than poets (242). Not surprisingly, when Wilton praises Aretino he uses satire's conventional weapon imagery: "His pen was sharp pointed lyke a poinyard. . . . With more than musket shot did he charge his quill, where hee meant to inueigh" (264). Attacking folly or imperfection is, paradoxically, the nearest one gets to perfection.

Likewise, philosophy is also seen as a reaction to the world's ills. This theme emerges in the fictitious meeting that Jack has with Erasmus and More. Erasmus writes a book "in commendation of follie" because he is



tired of swimming against the stream or of advocating reason. More envisages his Utopia because he sees that "most common-wealths [are] corrupted by ill custome, & that principalities were nothing but great piracies, which, gotten by violence and murther, were maintained by priuate vndermining and bloudshed" (245-246). Both Encomium Moriae and Utopia are satiric, the first probably more than the second, and demonstrate how polemicism or contention is the life-blood of *academia*. Nashe's own role in the Marprelate controversy is a good example of how tension can generate art, especially satire. Attack-counterattack is not only the rhythm of the picaresque world; it also describes Nashe's situation while writing The Unfortunate Traveller.

The picaresque journey proper consists of the hero becoming involved in a series of personal intrigues and vendettas. For Jack Wilton, this only begins after the Munster episode. From this point forward, Jack is a principal part of the action. He travels to Venice with Surrey and ends up in prison where he meets his courtesan, Diamante. Once released, the threesome travels to Florence where Surrey "enters the lists" to defend the honor of his lady Geraldine. Nashe uses Surrey to parody idealized love, but this "entering the lists" also conveys that close and paradoxical relationship between love and war. The theme was first sounded right at the beginning of The Unfortunate Traveller when Jack refers to Henry VIII's successful siege:

"*Turwin* lost her maidenhead, and opened her gates to more than *Iane Trosse* did" (209). Doing combat is an emblem of love. Surrey's ambiguous "mot" expresses the paradox well, "*Militat omnis amans*" (273)—all lovers fight. There is no better way to prove one's love—either for a lady, a country, or a principle—then by being prepared to do battle, and if necessary die, for it.

After Florence, Jack and Diamante move on to Rome and get entangled in a typical series of up-and-down adventures with the "notable Bandetto" Esdras of Granada, the Jew Zadoch, and the concubine Juliana. Finally, they escape to Bologna in time to witness Cutwolfe's execution for the murder of Esdras. The crime can be viewed as a scourge killing of one criminal by another. Cutwolfe himself emphasizes his role as a divine proxy and even basks in its importance:

Reuenge is the glorie of armes, & the highest performance of valure: reuenge is whatsoeuer we call law or iustice. The farther we wade in reuenge, the neerer come we to <sup>e</sup>y throne of the almightie. To his scepter it is properly ascribed; his scepter he lends vnto man, when he lets one man scourge an other. (326)

Cutwolfe sounds as self-assured as Marlowe's Tamburlaine. His execution is related with the same kind of grotesque similes as we saw in the description of the battle of Marignano.

Although war itself only figures in the first part of The Unfortunate Traveller, it contributes to our under-

standing of the whole. Moreover, the importance of the military theme is evident in how Nashe returns to it at the end of the novel. In the company of "his curtizan," Jack rejoins Henry VIII's camp. This time, however, Henry's presence in France is a celebratory and peaceful one, and The Unfortunate Traveller does close on a positive note—Jack's marriage to Diamante. But the picaresque world remains bleak, and Jack's parting conclusion offers little hope: "Vnsearchable is the booke of our destinies. One murder begetteth another: was neuer yet bloud-shed barren from the beginning of the world to this daie" (327). As it is with murder, so it is with war. Ultimately, The Unfortunate Traveller contains a comic-satiric vision which is part of the picaresque form. Man is doomed to fall, but if he learns fast, he may rise again—at least temporarily. If evil exists to punish evil, then retribution cannot find a perfect balance and Fortune's wheel never stops. This cyclical sense of inevitability and repetition leans toward the comic, or as Jack himself says, "He that hath gone through many perils and returned safe from them, makes but a merriment to dilate them" (295). Hence, the comic grotesque mode seems suited for the picaresque novel, just as some military involvement on the part of the hero seems appropriate for the picaresque plot. We shall get another chance to test this hypothesis when we look at Roderick Random.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

<sup>1</sup> Sir Charles Oman, The History of the Art of War in the Sixteenth Century (London: Methuen, 1937), p. 26. See also pp. 160-171.

<sup>2</sup> The Works of Thomas Nashe, Vol. IV, ed. Ronald McKerrow, rev. F. P. Wilson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), p. 267. All references to The Unfortunate Traveller are made to Vol. II of this edition and included in the text. McKerrow's notes are in Vol. IV.

<sup>3</sup> Oman, p. 170.

<sup>4</sup> David Hume, The History of England, Vol. III (London: Frederick warne, n.d.), p. 113.

<sup>5</sup> Ernest Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms (New York: Scribner's, 1969), p. 55.

<sup>6</sup> Reinhard H. Friederich, "Verbal Tensions in Thomas Nashe's The Unfortunate Traveller," Language and Style, 8 (1975), 213.

<sup>7</sup> Neil Rhodes, Elizabethan Grotesque (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 22.

<sup>8</sup> Charles Larson, "The Comedy of Violence in Nashe's The Unfortunate Traveller," Cahiers Elizabethains, 8 (October 1975), 20.

<sup>9</sup> Lucan even suggests that the magnitude of a slaughter diminishes the significance of each death: "When the dead lie thick upon the field, each death is merged in a common account, and valour, thus overlaid is wasted." Lucan: The Civil War IV.490-491, trans. J. D. Duff, Loeb Classical Library (1928; rpt. London: Heinemann, 1962).

<sup>10</sup> Friederich, p. 213.

- 11 Rhodes, p. 45.
- 12 Rhodes, p. 37.
- 13 Rhodes, p. 37.
- 14 Huntington Brown, Rabelais in English Literature (1933; rpt. New York: Octagon Books, 1967), pp. 47-57.
- 15 See Brown, p. 55; and Rhodes, pp. 34, 37.
- 16 J. J. Jusserand, The English Novel in the Time of Shakespeare, rev. ed., trans. Elizabeth Lee (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1908), p. 303.
- 17 For a reproduction, see John Keegan and Joseph Darracott, The Nature of War (London: Jonathan Cape, 1981), p. 175.
- 18 Oman, p. 161.
- 19 Homer: The Iliad, 2 vols., trans. A. T. Murray, Loeb Classical Library (I 1924, II 1925; rpt. London: Heinemann, I 1965, II 1939). All references are made to these volumes and included in the text.
- 20 Aeneid, in Virgil, 2 vols., trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, Loeb Classical Library, rev. ed. (I 1935, II 1934; rpt. London: Heinemann, I 1965, II 1966). All references are made to these volumes and included in the text.
- 21 Ovid: Metmorphoses, Vol. II, trans. Frank Justus Miller, Loeb Classical Library (1916; rpt. London: Heinemann, 1964); see also XII.287-288. One may note the culinary images in the quoted passage and the comments made by Mikhail Bakhtin in Rabelais and His World, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1968) that "Culinary images accompanying battle scenes were widely used in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; they were frequent precisely in the sphere where literature was connected with the folk tradition of humor. Pulic compared the battlefield of Ronceveaux to a kettle filled with blood-stew of heads, legs and other members of the human body. These images can already be found in the epics of the minstrels." pp. 193-194.

22 Shakespeare's Ovid Being Arthur Golding's Translation of The Metamorphoses, ed. W. H. D. Rouse (New York: Norton, 1966), XII.478.

23 Tamburlaine the Great, Part Two, ed. Una Ellis-Fermor, rev. ed. (London: Methuen, 1951), I.iv.79-82. This scene is full of ludicrously excessive rhetoric. Celebinus responds to his father's speech with, "For if his chair were in a sea of blood, / I would prepare a ship and sail to it" (89-90). And Amyras tries to sound even more enthusiastic:

And I would strive to swim through pools of blood,  
Or make a bridge of murdered carcasses,  
Whose arches should be fram'd with bones of Turks,  
Ere I would lose the title of a king. (92-95)

24 The Diary of Samuel Pepys, Vol. VI, 8 June 1665, ed. Robert Latham and William Matthews (London: Bell, 1972), p. 122.

The severed head which becomes a projectile is vaguely reminiscent of how Aiantes cuts off the head of Imbrius in the Iliad XIII.200-205 and sends it "rolling through the throng like a ball . . . before the feet of Hector."

25 "The Second Advice to a Painter for drawing the History of our navall busynesse," ll.183-184, Andrew Marvell: Complete Poetry, ed. George de F. Lord (New York: The Modern Library, 1968), p. 124. These lines are also noted by Pepys's editors.

26 Mikhail Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1968), p. 211.

27 Stuart Miller, The Picaresque Novel (Cleveland: Case Western Reserve University Press, 1967), pp. 23-24.

28 See Charles Baudelaire, "On the Essence of Laughter," in The Mirror of Art, trans. and ed. Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon Press, 1955), p. 136: ". . . human laughter is intimately linked with the accident of an ancient Fall, of a debasement both physical and moral."

29 See Michael Howard, War in European History (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 27: "The most

notorious and for a time the most sought after mercenaries in Europe were the Swiss . . ."

30 See also Tamburlaine's plan to woo Zenocrate: "My martial prizes . . . Shall we offer to Zenocrate, / And then myself . . ." (Part One I.ii.102-105).

31 See "Dialogues of the Dead" XII, in Lucian, Vol. VII, trans. M. D. MacLeod, Loeb Classical Library (London: Heinemann, 1961), pp. 61-67; The Braggart Warrior, in Plautus, Vol. III, trans. Paul Nixon, Loeb Classical Library (1924; rpt. London: Heinemann, 1950); and "Hanno, Thrasymachus," in The Colloquies of Erasmus, trans. Craig R. Thompson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 14.

32 Rhodes, p. 42. See also Rhodes's discussion of the Carnival-Lent combat in Rabelais, pp. 82-85.

33 Miller, p. 23.

34 Rhodes, pp. 93-94.

35 Bakhtin, pp. 443-451.

36 Bakhtin, pp. 447-448.

37 John J. O'Connor, "Physical Deformity and Chivalric Laughter in Renaissance England," in Comedy: New Perspectives, ed. Maurice Charney, New York Literary Forum, 1 (Spring 1978), p. 69.

38 See Hans Jacob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen, Simplicius Simplicissimus, trans. Hellmuth Weissenborn and Lesley Macdonald (London: John Calder, 1964). Grimmelshausen lived through the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) in Germany which is generally considered to have been the worst of the religious wars. Like The Unfortunate Traveler, Simplicius Simplicissimus contains a universal condemnation of war and religious fanaticism; furthermore, the novel is also written in the first-person form.

39 O'Connor, p. 69.

40 Patrick Morrow, "The Brazen World of Thomas

Nashe and The Unfortunate Traveller," Journal of Popular Culture, 9 (Winter 1975), 639-640.

41 Miller, pp. 104-105. For a discussion of the defense mechanism of the grotesque, see p. 4 above.

42 Sister Maria Gibbons, "Polemic, the Rhetorical Tradition, and The Unfortunate Traveller," Journal of English and Germanic Philology, 63, No. 3 (1964), 410.



### CHAPTER THREE:

#### BURTON'S ANATOMY OF MELANCHOLY

#### War in the "Satyricall Preface"

##### Introduction

The Anatomy of Melancholy teems with ambiguity and paradox.<sup>1</sup> Burton entertains one idea or theory only to set it against its opposite. As his purpose varies in The Anatomy, so do his opinions and feelings. Burton himself recognizes this fluid approach in the Preface:

I did sometimes laugh and scoff with Lucian, and satirically tax with Menippus, lament with Heraclitus, sometimes again I was *petulanti splene cachinno* [with mocking temper moved to laughter loud], and then again, *urere bilis jecur* [my liver was aflame with gall], I was much moved to see that abuse which I could not mend.<sup>2</sup>

Ultimately, these several moods lead him to argue contradictory positions. The world is paradoxical; therefore, so must be his response.

Since The Anatomy is expository prose, the reader can easily observe how Burton's mind operates. If there is a dominant rhythm in the work, then it would have to be the vacillation between the laughter of Democritus and the tears of Heraclitus. This rhythm constitutes Burton's essential reaction to the world, which is best understood according to the ambiguous form of the grotesque

(see pp. 1-4 above). The fearful and the ludicrous are both recognized. Burton repeatedly discovers some human absurdity or folly, explores its more serious manifestations in some detail, and—after focusing on the extreme cases—arrives at a point of giddy cynicism. The laughter of Democritus arises out of this scornful cynicism which is a step beyond the merely serious. As Montaigne says in his essay on Democritus and Heraclitus, laughter "is more distainful, and condemns us more" than crying.<sup>3</sup>

In my opinion, the tirade against war is an important climax in the "Satyricall Preface." Next to the mass violence, death and misery of war all other human follies seem petty. However, the tirade is only part of Burton's argument that the world is now even madder than it was when Democritus lived: "Never so much cause of laughter as now, never so many fools and madmen" (I, 52). The notion that civilization had gradually degenerated stemmed from an emphasis on the fallen nature of man. Human folly was doomed to compound itself over time. Don Cameron Allen has argued that this late-Renaissance theory about the degeneration of man was ironically born out of the Renaissance itself: "The essential causes of this pessimism may be sought in many sources, but one of the basic carriers of the infection was the body of conflicting philosophies that the new learning had uncovered."<sup>4</sup> For the pessimist, knowledge resolves nothing. It simply makes one more aware

of the degree of fragmentation in the world. After cataloguing in general terms the "Many additions, much increase of madness, folly, vanity," Burton concludes by quoting Horace, "*Si foret in terris rideret Democritus* [were Democritus alive, how would he laugh!]" (I, 53).<sup>5</sup> Ironically, one may assume that Democritus would laugh even harder for Burton than he did for Horace seeing that man has degenerated all the more since antiquity.

Before Burton launches into the tirade against war, there is a long section on religious differences and conflicts. At one extreme are the Roman Catholics who foolishly adhere to "such absurd and ridiculous traditions," while at the other are the Puritan dissenters who would "rather lose their lives and livings than do or admit anything papists have formally used" (I, 53, 54). Bud Korkowski argues that "religious fanaticism" is Burton's central concern throughout The Anatomy,<sup>6</sup> and he may well be right insofar as religion is part of love-melancholy—the subject of the Third Partition. But war, as we shall see, is the most horrible manifestation of this fanaticism. For the moment, it is enough to notice how Burton establishes his rhetorical rhythm: "If Democritus were alive now, and should but see the superstition of our age, our religious madness . . ." (I, 54). The sentence breaks off into a long list of illustrations (half a page) and finally ends by repeating the original question: "what would he say?"

(I, 54). Shifting to the Puritans, Burton uses the same structure. The opening, "Had he seen," is followed by a long catalogue of Puritan fanaticism which culminates in a restatement of the rhetorical question: "what does thou think Democritus would have done, had he been spectator of these things?" (I, 55).

The question leads right into the tirade against war which grows out of the encyclopedic exposé of fanaticism: "What would he have said to see, hear, and read so many bloody battles . . ." (I, 55). In spite of the fact that the tirade only covers a few pages, it touches upon many of the satiric issues which tend to arise whenever the comic grotesque is used to address the subject of war. Burton's expository prose cuts right to the heart of war's abstract perplexities. The dominant rhetorical technique of *amplificatio* is continued from the previous section. According to the Renaissance handbooks on rhetoric, the exact nature of Burton's kind of amplification would be designated as *congeries*:

An accumulation of words and sentences with the same meaning. Although the climax is not in this case reached by a series of steps it is none the less attained by a piling up of words . . . in *congeries* proper all the accumulated words have but one meaning.<sup>7</sup>

Burton amplifies each satiric issue in his tirade against war in this manner. A single idea is represented by several different images which embellish the idea but do not develop it.

There is, however, another form of amplification known as *incrementum*, in which each item is stronger than the preceding one.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps *incrementum* could be used to describe the style of the tirade as a whole, since Burton moves through three distinct stages which document the degrees of madness involved. First Burton points to the various horrors and paradoxes of how wars are started and conducted. Then he attacks the heroic attitude toward war which he finds madder than war itself. Finally he condemns those who would go a step further and persuade men that war is an expression, not just of heroism, but of spiritual faith. The *bellum sacrum* or holy war is the supreme madness. As a whole, the tirade is nicely held together by the trope, "How would Democritus laugh," which also defines the place of the tirade in the greater structure of the Preface.

#### Horrors and Paradoxes of War

The first and longest stage begins with a simple objective statement that spawns an absurd metaphor reminiscent of Nashe: "What would he have said to see, hear, and read so many bloody battles, so many thousands slain at once, such streams of blood able to turn mills" (I, 55). The "so many thousands slain at once" is just another image of the "bloody battles." It leads to the

cliché, "streams of blood," which becomes more grotesque with the phrase, "able to turn mills." This kind of excessive metaphor goes back to the classical epic,<sup>9</sup> but as a measure of degree, the "able to turn mills" has an undeniably irreverent ring.

After these initial images, Burton delves right into the reasons for such bloodshed. He blames those few who hold political power. Two general causes are given first: "*unius ob noxam furiasque* [through the mad guilt of one person], or to make sport for princes, without any just cause" (I, 55). Wars arise from the madness or foolishness of national leaders. The "*unius ob noxam furiasque*" (Aeneid I.41) is the first in a series of Aeneid quotations which Burton often cites out of context. (In this case, the words are spoken by Juno who is referring to Ajax's attack on Cassandra in Pallas's temple during the sack of Troy. The act precipitated Pallas to cause the destruction of part of the Greek fleet and has nothing to do specifically with war.) The idea of war as sport for princes conveys the *homo ludens* mentality (see p. 7 above) of those in power who care nothing about the masses under their control.<sup>10</sup>

Burton then gives the reader one of his typical encyclopedic lists of unjustifiable causes of war: "'for vain titles' (saith Austin), 'precedency, some wench, or such-like toy, or out of desire of domineering, vainglory,

malice, revenge, folly, madness'" (I, 55-56). As far as I can tell, this quotation is actually a paraphrase of certain statements made by St. Augustine on war and man's passion for glory in the first five books of The City of God.<sup>11</sup> It is also, of course, a translation, and the Latin in the margin (the Everyman edition includes the marginalia at the end of each Volume) merely adds to the *congeries* effect since nothing new is added: "*Ob inanes ditionum titulos, ob praereptum locum, ob interceptam mulierculam, vel quod e stultitia natum, vel e malitia, quod cupido dominandi, libido nocendi, etc.*" (I, 448). One can see how Burton has actually expanded the Latin, turning "*libido nocendi*" or wicked desire into his own list: "vainglory, malice, revenge, folly, madness." The last two items, "folly" and "madness," are really general categories as opposed to specific images; so the list goes from the general to the particular and back to the general. The final "madness" is fitting inasmuch as the whole tirade is meant to prove that man is mad.

The second half of the sentence emphasizes the basic paradox that those who are responsible for the occurrence of war have absolutely no knowledge of what battle is really like. Here Burton's satiric mind takes the helm and the incongruity of the situation becomes more ludicrous:

. . . statesmen themselves in the meantime are secure

at home, pampered with all delights and pleasures, take their ease, and follow their lusts, not considering what intolerable misery poor soldiers endure, their often wounds, hunger, thirst, etc., the lamentable cares, torments, calamities, and oppressions that accompany such proceedings, they feel not, take no notice of it. (I, 56)

Morris Croll has made one of the most accurate

descriptions of how Burton's prose style functions:

. . . there is a characteristic order, or mode of progression. . . . the first member is likely to be a self-contained and complete statement of the whole idea of the period. . . . the first member therefore exhausts the mere fact of the idea; logically there is nothing more to say. But it does not exhaust its imaginative truth or the energy of its conception. It is followed, therefore, by other members, each with a new tone or emphasis, each expressing a new apprehension of the truth expressed in the first.<sup>12</sup>

This multiplying of the single "fact of the idea" into a plural "imaginative truth" or "energy" can be seen in almost every sentence that Burton writes. Taking the passage quoted above, we have the single idea of the "statesmen . . . secure at home." Then we see the idea mirrored in various individual images of what it is to be secure at home: to be "pampered with all delights and pleasures," to "take their ease," and to "follow their lusts." Behind this colorful elaboration one can feel Burton's indignation, or as Croll would have it, "the energy" of the idea's conception. The same pattern is recognizable in the second half of the contrast as the soldiers' "intolerable misery" is multiplied into a series of physical, and then mental, examples. Hence, as a



rhetoical device, *congeries* is not a senseless repetition but a colorful kaleidoscope of concrete images that have a cumulative effect. Nevertheless, as we shall see, this kind of ingenious amplification becomes comical when the author's energy carries it too far.

Burton's disgust at the irresponsible few who cause wars leads him into another barrage of abuse. The items are small units and this accentuates the cumulative effect. Terms such as "hair brain" and "green head" strike a definite comical note. The sentence ends with another reference to the physiological or emotional disorder that compels these few: ". . . to satisfy one man's private spleen, lust, ambition, avarice" (I, 56). This reference leads right to the next sentence in which Burton stresses the physical and mental health of those who die in wars, as he continues to develop the contrast: ". . . proper men, well proportioned, carefully brought up, able both in body and mind, sound, led like so many beasts to the slaughter" (I, 56). Burton's amplification is organically connected to his theme for war may originate with a few mad "Hotspurs" (I, 56), but it results in the untimely end for thousands of perfectly "sound" men.

Burton then introduces the numerical statistic, the "40,000 at once" (I, 56). Also at this point a reference to Thomas More appears in the margin: *Bellum rem plane belluinam vocat Morus, Utop. lib. 2*" (I, 448). More called

war "an activity fit only for beasts," and so Burton begins to associate himself with the mainstream of Humanist satire.<sup>13</sup> His next point is that man seems to be in a constant state of warfare: "At once, said I, that were tolerable, but these wars last always, and for ages; nothing so familiar as this hacking and hewing . . ." (I, 56). The following expression, "*ignoto coelum clangore remugit* [the skies re-echo the unwonted noise]" (I, 56) sounds like an epic motif, yet I cannot locate the exact source. Burton extends the idea of the constancy of war to envision it as ultimately destroying the world: ". . . they care not what mischief they procure, so that they may enrich themselves for the present; they will so long blow the coals of contention, till all the world be consumed with fire" (I, 56). However, he does not dwell on the absurdity of a man-made armageddon; instead he bombards the reader with statistics which are meant to re-emphasize the grotesque horrors of war.

But if this is Burton's real intention, then something goes amiss. First, the statistics are cited as a pretense to factual truth. Imperfect in everything, man is by nature a poor counter—not because  $1+1$  is not 2, but because one cannot abstract from reality without incurring a loss. Even if 870,000 (obviously a rounded number) Grecians did die at Troy, the numerical figure does not convey the reality of each individual death. How does one

contain the heart-rending cries of a dying soldier in a number, or the despair suffered by his family? It is impossible, yet the desire for precision often leads to statistical calculation. Bridget Gellert Lyons argues that Burton is merely laughing at attempts to capture numerical accuracy:

He [Burton] applies numbers, and the contradictory authorities about them, to precisely the most "doubtful" subjects, or those most incapable of measurement—events of the remote past, for example, or those of a semi-mythological character. . . . Exactness, buttressed by authorities either included in the text or in footnotes, is exaggerated to the point of mockery, and ridiculed further by anti-climactic phrases ("I know not how many").<sup>14</sup>

The figures seem to be intended to overwhelm the reader, but it is Democritus Junior himself who is overwhelmed.

Another element which undermines the gravity of the numerical barrage is the nature of certain statistics.

After considering the hundreds of thousands of war casualties, who could care if "Sicinius Dentatus fought in an hundred battles, eight times in single combat . . . had forty wounds before, was rewarded with 140 crowns" (I, 56)? Democritus Junior (or Burton's fictional persona) momentarily becomes crazed with numbers for their own sake. So what if "Sergius had 32 wounds" or if the siege of Ostend saw "2,500,000 iron bullets shot of 40 pound weight" (I, 56, 57)? Burton can also be shockingly blunt, "Ceasar killed a million," or sarcastically humorous, "Our Edward the Fourth was in 26 battles afoot: and as they do all, he

glories in it, 'tis related to his honour" (I, 56). In the final analysis, Burton's statistics speak their own absurdity. The tragedy of war is far more painful than what can be conveyed with figures. One must remember, however, that Burton's real subject is the madness of man in which he, as Democritus Junior and author, shares and which he acknowledges: "I am as foolish, as mad as any one" (I, 120). Hence it is only natural that his exposé of the madness of war would itself be mad.

After the statistics, Burton repeats the question to which he gave an answer at the beginning of the tirade: ". . . what fury brought so devilish, so brutish a thing as war first into men's minds?" (I, 57). It is as though Burton were unsatisfied with simply assigning the guilt to those in power. There must be some corrupting force which inclines man toward conflict. In the margin, Burton quotes—probably from memory—Erasmus's Dulce Bellum Inexpertis: "*Erasmus de bello. Ut placidum illud animal benevolentiae natum tam ferina vecordia in mutuam rueret periciem*" (I, 448).<sup>15</sup> He translates the statement accurately in the text: "Who made so soft and peaceable a creature, born to love, mercy, meekness, so to rave, rage like beasts, and run on to their own destruction?" (I, 57). Burton only answers this all-important question in the Third Partition. The following expostulations with Nature and God are also reminiscent of Erasmus (see note 15). There is no doubt

that Burton wants to align himself with Humanists such as More and Erasmus (especially the latter) both of whom spiced their philosophy with humor.

One characteristic of the tirade is that the theme of each stage is prepared for in the previous stage. Anticipating his attack on war propaganda, Burton refers sarcastically to soldiers as "these admired alone" (I, 57). He then drops the theme and gives the reader two more grotesque images of mass death: "When Rhodes was besieged, *fossae urbis cadaveribus repletae sunt*, the ditches were full of dead carcasses: and as when the said Solyman, Great Turk, beleaguered Vienna, they lay level with the tops of the walls" (I, 57). These images clearly lack the festive or Rabelaisian tone which one detects in Marlowe and Nashe. Instead they seem to be used solely to set up the derisive climax: "This they make a sport of . . . to satisfy their lust and spleen" (I, 57). As the tirade progresses, it also looks back to its previous arguments and images. Here one recalls the initial statement about how wars "make sport for princes" again "to satisfy . . . private spleen, lust, ambition" (I, 55, 56). Therefore not only are themes anticipated, they are repeated as well.

Concurrent with the restatement of the opening theme is the introduction of new material. In this sense, the tirade may be likened to a sonata composition. New subjects are constantly being introduced, then dropped,

and developed later when they are informed by the intervening material. Here Burton, for the first time, refers to the utter lawlessness of war: "God's and men's laws are trampled underfoot, the sword alone determines all" (I, 57). In a state of war, virtuous and sinful behavior confusedly merge together: "*dolus an virtus? quis in hoste requirat?* [guile or valour? against an enemy, 'tis all one]" (I, 57).<sup>16</sup> War is a license to murder and commit all kinds of crimes (see Erasmus, note 15). Burton returns to this theme later on.

The idea of civil war, or of one of a kind fighting another of the same kind, is brought up in the following sentence: "Nothing so common as to have 'father fight against the son, brother against brother, kinsman against kinsman, kingdom against kingdom, province against province, Christians against Christians" (I, 57). With the obvious exception of kingdom against kingdom, all these itemized pairs involve a filial or civil conflict. Disputes between factions that share a common nature are frequent, as if their very commonness puts a strain on the relationship that erupts into violence. Kinsman and fellow Christians have expectations of each other that are often not met. Of course, in the brotherhood of man all conflicts, even kingdom against kingdom, are of this nature for humanity binds us all.

Burton then catalogues the destruction and misery

which war brings to the civilians. The list begins with a general image of waste: "Infinite treasures consumed, towns burned, flourishing cities sacked and ruined, *quodque animus meminisse horret* [and what the mind shudders to remember]" (I, 58). This is one of the few instances in the tirade when the Aeneid is quoted appropriately; the line (Aeneid II.12) refers to the sack of Troy. The mind may shudder, but Burton wants to remember it all: ". . . goodly countries depopulated and left desolate, old inhabitants expelled, trade and traffic delayed, maids deflowered" (I, 58). The general depopulation image is followed by two much weaker images, one of exile and the other of trade, and these in contrast give way to the final and shocking reference to rape. The innocent civilians may suffer the most in the lawlessness of war, because war tends to license other acts of physical aggression such as pillage and rape. Burton even invokes the lamentations of Hector's wife: "chaste matrons cry out with Andromache, *Concubitum mox cogar pati ejus, qui interemit Hectorem*, they shall be compelled peradventure to lie with them that erst killed their husbands" (I, 58). Raping the women of the vanquished seems to be a common occurrence in war and a common subject in war literature.<sup>17</sup> It is as if the female half of the enemy must be physically mastered after the male.

More lists of horrors follow accompanied by more

Latin marginalia, but the central idea of how the unbridled violence of war devastates the civilians remains dominant.

Finally, we come to a concluding statement:

. . . so abominable a thing is war . . . the scourge of God, cause, effect, fruit, and punishment of sin, and not *tonsura humani generis* [the mere pruning of the human race], as Tertullian calls it, but *ruina* [its destruction]. (I, 58)

Divine retribution operates in the natural world to punish man for his sins. What is interesting about the above passage is that it reflects the Renaissance belief in the self-contained order of the world. As "the scourge of God," war is the "punishment of sin," but according to Burton it is also the "cause, effect, [and] fruit" as well. Because God's laws are ignored for the laws of the sword, war does give rise to sin (or is its "cause") in the form of unjustified murder, rape, and pillage. It is also the "effect" or consequence of sin inasmuch as it originates from man's fallen nature. Unable to control his passion or to unify his pluralistic views, man is doomed to engage in physical combat. Hence, war is the "fruit" of sin because its seeds are pride, envy, and anger. This cause-effect ambivalence combines with the armageddon image of *ruina* to depict man's ultimate self-induced punishment for his own folly.

At this significant point, Burton repeats the trope that is the keynote of the Preface: "Had Democritus been present . . ." (I, 58). What follows is another barrage of



statistics and examples of man's inhumanity to man. These examples, however, are all of civil wars and particularly the civil wars of the immediate past. One must remember that, according to Burton, man has never been more mad than now. First there are the sporadic wars in France between the Huguenots and Catholics, "those abominable wars—*bellaque matribus detestata* [wars, of mothers loathed]" (I, 58). Despite Burton's attempt to deal with more contemporary conflicts, his classical quotations (here Horace, Odes I.i.24-25) constantly recall the past in such a way as to undermine the immediate context of his argument and replace it with a more universal one. He follows up his reference to France's civil wars with one to England's own War of the Roses, but the idea of there never being so much madness—specifically civil war madness—as today is again obscured by a quotation from Lucan.

Burton goes on to rephrase the opening question of the Second Psalm ("heathen" is replaced by "Christian"):  
 ". . . why do the Christians so furiously rage?" Another seemingly out of place Aeneid quotation follows: "*Arma volunt, quare poscunt, rapiuntque Juventus?* [Why do the youth call for war and rush to arms?]" (I, 58).<sup>18</sup> This denunciation of civil and Christian wars is close to the argument made by Erasmus in Querela Pacis and Dulce Bellum Inexpertis about the cruelty of Christians fighting Christians as being worse than that of pagans or even wild

beasts.<sup>19</sup> Unlike Erasmus who develops a clear line of argument, Burton falls back into another list of examples involving more statistics and authorities. Still the sentence beginning, "I omit those French massacres . . ." (I, 59), suggests again the direct influence of Querela Pacis: "*Missas faciam bellorum tragoedias*."<sup>20</sup>

The tirade then reaches another general recapitulation of the main subject: "Is not this *mundas furiosus*, a mad world, as he terms it, *insanum bellum*? are not these madmen . . ." (I, 59).<sup>21</sup> Following what by now should be a familiar pattern, Burton subtly introduces his next theme in the middle of this recapitulation: ". . . which leave so frequent battles as perpetual memorials of their madness to all succeeding ages?" (I, 59). The only reason that the reader is able to follow Burton through his seemingly endless examples and quotations is that the subject remains the same—the horrible paradoxes of war. Here, however, he shifts from the battle itself to the erection of battle memorials. In other words, Burton finally moves from the madness of war, so madly explicated, to the madness of ennobling war. He marks this long awaited progression by restating the rhetorical formula which represents the confused response to the grotesque:

Would this, think you, have enforced our Democritus to laughter, or rather made him turn his tune, alter his tone, and weep with Heraclitus, or rather howl, roar, and tear his hair in commiseration, stand amazed; or as the poets feign, that Niobe was for grief quite

stupefied, and turned to a stone? (I, 59)

Our concern is not whether or not Democritus would laugh but whether or not the reader of the tirade would laugh. If he has been able to feel the emotional impact of all the misery which Burton outlines, then he would probably "howl" and "roar" or at least "weep with Heraclitus." But madness, although pitiful, will often strike one as being ludicrous and so might the tirade strike the reader. It is difficult to respond emotionally to any battle to which Burton refers because he refers to so many in such a short span. Burton's "energy," as Croll describes it, takes over and the reader's attention focuses on the madness of the tirade, or as Burton himself would call it—on the overshooting. This tendency to go too far is always humorous. But if the reader laughs, his laughter will almost certainly be clouded by a sense of horror. The overshooting Burton may appear as a rhetorical clown, yet the subject remains terrifying. Hence, the ludicrous form releases tension while the fearful content restores it.

#### Greater Madness—the Soldier as Hero

Even though the tirade is thus far full of rhetorical excesses, Burton maintains that he is only warming up to his subject: "I have not yet said the worst, that which is more absurd and mad . . ." (I, 59). The subsequent Erasmus

quotation refers to war but it also describes the three stages in Burton's tirade: "*quod stulte suscipitur, impie geritur, misere finitur* [begun in folly, continued in crime, and ended in misery]." <sup>22</sup> The first stage explores the utter foolishness of war. The second, as we shall see, addresses itself to the crime of promoting war as a means of proving heroism. And in the last stage, Burton claims that instead of obtaining spiritual grace in the so-called holy war man can only damn himself.

From the beginning Burton's main concern has been with the absurdity and madness of war—greater now than ever before. By dwelling on these two aspects, he tends to stress the ludicrous. In the second stage of the tirade, however, the sarcasm becomes more pronounced and so does the humor. It begins with a declaration of the specific subject and a curious admission that there is such a thing as a just war: "Such wars I mean; for all are not to be condemned, as those phantastical anabaptists vainly conceive" (I, 59). <sup>23</sup> "Such wars" refers back to the Erasmus quotation ("begun in folly . . ."). The indirect remark about just wars ("not to be condemned") is made only in passing as Burton continues with those begun in foolishness, but it disturbs the logical flow of the tirade and begs for further explication. None is forthcoming. Both the "phantastical anabaptists" and the expression "Christian tactics" in the next sentence anticipate the spiritual

dimension of Burton's indictment of war, which only comes in the third stage. The subject of the second stage is well expressed by the sarcastic epigram: "to be a soldier is a most noble and honourable profession" (I, 59).

Burton first points to the irony of how human arts and institutions are upheld by "warlike virtues" but then attacks the crimes which are done in the name of these virtues: "valour is much to be commended in a wise man; but they mistake most part" (I, 59). Extreme in everything, Burton then launches into an encyclopedic list of the most abusive misapplications: "they term theft, murder, and rapine, virtue, by a wrong name; rapes, slaughters, massacres, etc." (I, 59). This idea is colorfully expanded when Burton quotes Pontus Heuter:

They commonly call the most hair-brain bloodsuckers, strongest thieves, the most desperate villains, treacherous rogues, inhuman murderers, rash, cruel and dissolute caitiffs, courageous and generous spirits, heroical and courtly captains, brave men-at-arms, valiant and renowned soldiers, possessed with a brute persuasion of false honour. (I, 59-60)

The sarcastic harangue continues in the marginal Latin.

Just when the tendency to overshoot threatens to explode into utter hilarity, Burton remembers his argument and takes the next logical step, "By means of which it came to pass . . ." (I, 60). The misrepresentation of military valor becomes the bait by which innocent men are lured away from their families only to engage in horrible crimes. Ultimately, wars owe their magnitude to the promotion of

false ideals.

Much of the humor in Burton's tirade emanates from his inclination to emphasize the absurdities of a paradoxical situation as opposed to its tragic aspects. Furthermore, his goal is to condemn, which he does, but the tendency of the reader is to laugh at the exuberance of his indignation. We still hear the cliché about how handsome men look in uniform or how splendid a military parade is. Even though the profession of soldier often degenerates into the most despicable lawlessness, it attracts by appearing in the most brilliant dress and awesome discipline. Military marches, complete with inspirational band-music, are deadly snares. Burton captures this sense of military appeal when he rolls together the following heart-thumping images and tops them off with a reference to Darius's army marching to Issus:

. . . marching bravely on, with a cheerful noise of drums and trumpets, such vigour and alacrity, so many banners streaming in the air, glittering armours, motions of plumes, woods of pikes and swords, variety of colours, cost and magnificence, as if they went in triumph, now victors to the Capitol, and with such pomp as when Darius' army marched to meet Alexander at Issus. (I, 60)<sup>24</sup>

Burton may be long-winded but he does see through to the universal paradox.

There is also a marked tendency in Burton to proceed to the extreme case. Illustrations of serious points thereby begin to resemble caricatures. On those who

are victimized by the idea of valor, Burton cites

Barletius:

Void of all fear, they run into imminent dangers,  
cannon's mouth, etc., *ut vulneribus suis ferrum*  
*hostium hebetent* [to blunt the enemy's sword on their  
own flesh], saith Barletius, to get a name of valour,  
honour and applause, which lasts not neither, for it  
is but a mere flash this fame, and like a rose *intra*  
*diem unum* *extinguitur*, 'tis gone in an instant.  
(I, 60)<sup>25</sup>

The end of the passage introduces the idea of mutability. Burton uses every argument that he can think of to debunk the heroic attitude, and the ephemerality of fame is just one of them. Of course one may assume from his former point that such fame is often based on a false sense of valor. It is as if Burton were making a desperate appeal to those who could not, or refused, to see the emptiness of military heroism. His argument runs something like 'There is no such thing as valor, and even if you are considered valiant, it will not last.' Hence the reasons against heroism may sound contradictory because they are constructed for a variety of readers.

Burton is persuasive in showing that not only is war mad but man's attitude toward war is madder, and his success comes largely from his own exuberant rhetoric. Although many of Burton's ideas are common in the Humanist tradition, his excessive style seems to be an improvisation on the ingenuity of Humanist rhetorical forms. In Encomium Moriae for example, Erasmus takes the ironic

stance of praising folly to satirize the world. Similarly in The Anatomy, Burton piles up mounds of erudition to demonstrate how more foolish the world has become since antiquity, and this cumulative mode swells into its own foolishness. As a satirist, Burton sees his role as expanding ancient condemnation to all guilty parties past and present, which is what he does in the following passage:

Alexander was sorry because there were no more worlds for him to conquer; he is admired by some for it, *animosa vox videtur, et regia*, 'twas spoken like a prince; but as wise Seneca censures him, 'twas *vox iniquissima* [sic *iniquissima*] *et stultissima*, 'twas spoken like a bedlam fool; and that sentence which the same Seneca appropriates to his father Philip and him, I apply to them all. (I, 60)

Seneca's censure is overstated.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, the idea that Alexander was great only in his bloodthirsty madness was a familiar one in Roman times.<sup>27</sup> Burton's "like a bedlam fool" lends a more pronounced humorous tone to his indictment which aligns it more with that in Juvenal's Tenth Satire than Seneca's. Like a true scholar, Burton builds on the work of previous authorities and logically extends Seneca's censure "to them all" or to anybody who would mourn the fact that there were no more wars in which heroism could be practised. The condemnation of the heroic attitude peaks with this all-inclusive statement.

Supreme Madness—the Holy War

The last part of the tirade presents the final



argument that the so-called holy war is the ultimate act of human insanity and contradiction: "Which is yet more to be lamented, they persuade them this hellish course of life is holy, they promise heaven to such as venture their lives *bello sacro* [in a sacred war]" (I, 60). These propagandists go beyond the physical world, to which valor and honor belong, and prey on man's spiritual anxieties. In Burton's view, war is perversely said to be a means of expressing one's spiritual faith.

His first example consists of the "modern Turks" who encourage their people to fight the infidels because "if they die in the field, they go directly to heaven, and shall be canonized for saints," and this is simply followed by the exclamatory, "O diabolical invention!" (I, 61). For some reason, Burton does not mention the Crusades. One would not find this omission so odd if Burton were not the kind of author who seems intent on including everything. He especially condemns those who record certain wars as "holy" because, by doing so, they mislead future generations into believing that a holy war is possible. The concept of the holy war is refuted with the scourge theory: ". . . wars are the scourge of God for sin, by which he punisheth mortal men's peevishness and folly" (I, 61). Therefore, the holy war is not just a distortion of the truth but its exact opposite. Rather than a means to prove faith in God, war serves as a punishment for not having true faith. We have

seen how Burton also called war the "effect" of sin; to represent something which is sinful as being sacred is the worst contradiction.

Once again Burton cites various authorities and utilizes amplification to drive his point home, but the ludicrous shines through as it does so often in The Anatomy:

. . . I know not how many besides of old, were deified, went this way to heaven, that were indeed bloody butchers . . . such as were desperate in wars, and precipitately made away themselves (like those Celts in Damascene, with ridiculous valour, *ut dedecorosum putarent muro ruenti se subducere*, [so that they thought it] a disgrace to run away for a rotten wall, now ready to fall on their heads), such as will not rush on a sword's point, or seek to shun a cannon's shot, are base cowards, and no valiant men. (I, 61)

The series ends with a recapitulation of the falseness of military valor. To Burton, extreme acts of spiritual or heroic demonstration often appear as nothing more than mindless fanaticism. In the above passage he effectively illustrates the fuzzy difference between bravery and stupidity.

At this point the tirade begins to draw to a close. Burton jumps from the ludicrous portrait of men choosing to allow a wall to fall on them, rather than risk being thought cowards, to an epic description of the consequences of such choices: "By which means, *madet orbis mutuo sanguine*, the earth wallows in her own blood, *saevit amor ferri et scelerati insania belli* [a mad lust for war with all its horrors is rampant]" (I, 61).<sup>28</sup> War can never be purely

ridiculous so Burton's tirade is never without its serious overtones. The epic references emphasize the gravity of Burton's subject and give it a larger-than-life context. Although war may be absurd and mad, it remains ambivalently ludicrous and fearful according to the form of the grotesque.

Finally, Burton draws an ethical conclusion. State institutions not only legitimize murder but encourage it during a time of war: ". . . if it be done in private, a man shall be rigorously executed, 'and which is no less than murder itself; if the same fact be done in public in wars, it is called manhood, and the party is honoured for it'" (I, 61). Like Erasmus, Burton believes that a true spiritual conscience should override such artificial sanctions.

So ends the tirade against war. The idea of war as a promotion and celebration of murder by the state expands into a general argument against legalized crime. Theft, when practised by those in high office, is honored as political shrewdness while those who are forced to steal in order to survive are executed. There is, however, a vast difference between theft and mass murder. Whatever corruption Burton goes on to expose in society, it somehow seems petty in comparison to the suicidal madness of war. This is not to say that the rest of Burton's "Satryicall Preface" is frivolous. His subject is human folly in all its degrees and shapes. As the Preface continues, the

reader begins to see more of the folly of the narrator, Democritus Junior, and the external examples become less important.

Of course the tirade itself overflows with rhetorical amplifications and quotations as if the narrator cannot control his own knowledge or rage. Furthermore, the reader senses that Burton—like the propagandists he derides—is *inexpertus* when it comes to war, for he only knows it secondhand from Humanist tracts and the classics. Instead of being subjected to a penetrating analysis, the folly of war is documented all too well with more evidence than necessary. Perhaps the most striking paradox on Burton's part is not expressed in the tirade but toward the end of the Preface. After citing so many examples of human folly and vice, Burton concludes that man needs another good whipping: "We had need of some general visitor in our age, that should reform what is amiss; a just army of Rosy-cross men, for they will amend all matters (they say), religion, policy, manners, with arts, sciences, etc.; another Attila, Tamerlane, Hercules . . ." (I, 96). To understand Burton's comic grotesque vision of war, one must ultimately see how war fits into the general scheme of The Anatomy.

#### War in the First Partition: Melancholy in General

As Nashe's Jack Wilton saw the origin of folly in

man's fall (see p. 105), so Burton sees the origin of melancholy. Knowledge bestows sorrow as well as laughter, but we are continually reminded throughout the Renaissance (particularly by Burton) that the weeping of Heraclitus and the derision of Democritus are closely connected. Both are responses to the consequences of man's fallen nature, including fragmentation and dissension.

In the First Subsection of the First Member of the First Section of the First Partition, Burton recalls the scourge theory of war: "'Are you shaken with wars?' as Cyprian well urgeth to Demetrius . . . 'tis all for your sins'" (I, 131). He goes on to emphasize that man is his own worst enemy, "every man the greatest enemy unto himself" (I, 136). Our fallen nature gives rise to every Tamburlaine who turns about to whip us for our evil actions which, of course, also come from our fallen nature. This merging of cause and effect means that some kind of self-contained order exists, and its cyclical quality becomes obvious in how Burton dissects melancholy. Certain passions produce melancholy and melancholy, in turn, produces the same passions. For example, sorrow and fear are both labeled as "cause and symptom" (I, 128). When cause and effect intermingle, it is difficult to exercise any control over them.

We have seen how Burton discusses war as a manifestation of an inner human condition (to satisfy the

spleen of a few), and so war is intricately related to melancholy. Hence, one can deduce Burton's implied views about the former from his explicit statements on the latter. There are two categories or "General" causes of melancholy: "Natural" and "Supernatural." To avoid getting bogged down in Burton's methodology, let us say that the subdivisions under "Natural" deal largely with passions arising from either external or internal sources and being either necessary or unnecessary. The list of necessary passions reads like an amplification of the seven deadly sins. These are passions which everybody suffers from in some degree. Therefore, that which causes a petty squabble between two neighbors may also cause a war between two nations inasmuch as political leaders have recourse to military action. Some of Burton's anecdotes portray war as a grotesque consequence of childish emotions:

When Richard I and Philip of France were fellow-soldiers together at the siege of Acre in the Holy Land, and Richard had approved himself to be the more valiant man, insomuch that all mens eyes were upon him, it so galled Philip . . . that he cavilled at all his proceedings, and fell at length to open defiance; he could contain no longer, but hasting home, invaded his territories and professed open war. (I, 268)

Once more Burton's satiric tone gains momentum. In the next subsection on "Anger," he sums up man's pitiful record: "Look into our histories, and you shall almost meet with no other subject but what a company of hare-brains have done in their rage" (I, 270). What a ludicrous

and low opinion of man's past!

Burton goes on to describe the general and inescapable discontent that plagues mankind. The human predicament consists of a constant restlessness between desire and fear, and in this scheme one catches a glimpse of the cyclical theory of war:

Many men are of such a perverse nature, they are well pleased with nothing (saith Theodoret), "neither with riches nor poverty . . . prosperity and adversity; they are troubled in a cheap year, in a barren; plenty or not plenty, nothing pleaseth them, war nor peace . . ." (I, 275).

There can be no permanent happiness in the physical world. Nor can the most powerful armed force secure any such happiness. All must suffer fortune's downward swing, including world conquerors:

He that erst marched like Xerxes with innumerable armies, as rich as Croesus, now shifts for himself in a poor cock-boat, is bound in iron chains with Bajazet the Turk, and a footstool with Aurelian, for a tyrannizing conqueror to trample on. (I, 276)

One conqueror falls to another, demonstrating the ultimate vanity of human wishes, as Juvenal documents in his Tenth Satire (ll. 96-187). Physical power can defeat everything except its own dynamic fallibility. The greatest empires are doomed to crumble, and even the greatest conqueror is doomed to be depressed when, like Alexander, nothing remains to be conquered.

The distinctions between the passions which arise necessarily from our fallen nature and those which are

contingent on external factors is nothing more than a differentiation between the universal and the particular. In short, Burton first says that all men are miserable and then shows how one specific man may be made miserable. The usefulness of such a distinction in The Anatomy is dubious, but it helps explain the grotesque response. Although there is something ludicrous about the universal efforts of men to attain an unattainable happiness, one is inclined to view individual misery in a more tragic light. In a Subsection entitled "An Heap of other Accidents causing Melancholy, Death of Friends, Losses, etc.," Burton includes horrific scenes of slaughter and destruction having to do with Burbonius's sack of Rome (I, 363), but satiric indignation is replaced by genuine pity for the innocent victims. For all his ludicrous rantings about how insane war is in the abstract, Burton tries to remind his reader that the concrete reality is pure hell. This distinction between the general absurdity and particular tragedy explains many of the paradoxes in Burton's thought.

There is an important physical cause of war, and of melancholy, which is considered completely apart from the passions. This is no less than Burton's worst evil throughout The Anatomy—idleness. Here the anatomical discussion is extended to the body politic, and what applies to human physiology is transposed to the nation:

In a commonwealth, where is no public enemy, there is,



likely, civil wars, and they rage upon themselves: this body of ours, when it is idle and knows not how to bestow itself, macerates and vexeth itself with cares, griefs, false fears, discontents, and suspicions; it tortures and preys upon his own bowels, and is never at rest. (I, 243-244)

By "public enemy" Burton probably means some form of foreign war or foreign enemy which would be "common" to the commonwealth. Nothing binds people together as well as a mutual enemy. All aggressive feelings within the nation may then be directed outward. As we saw in our previous discussion of this philosophy (see pp. 66-67 above), the idea of a foreign war as healthy exercise was endorsed by Bacon and many other Renaissance writers.<sup>29</sup>

Burton mentions one possible "Supernatural" cause of war which has a symbolic significance. Wars may be instigated by devils so that the devils can "feed on men's souls" (I, 187). The idea of subsisting on war was seen in Jack Wilton's satiric nature (see p. 109 above), which was likened to "a Crowe that still followes aloofe where there is carrion." The satirist and the figure of Satan share one important characteristic—both live off the fallen nature of man. But Burton's variation on the food-chain motif differs from the Rabelaisian in that it passes beyond the physical to the spiritual sphere:

*Elementa sunt plantis elementum, animalibus plantae, hominibus animalia, erunt et homines aliis, non autem diis, nimis enim remota est eorum natura a nostra, quapropter daemonibus [minerals are food for plants, plants for animals, animals for men; men will also be food for other creatures, but not for gods, for their*

nature is far removed from ours; it must therefore be for devils]; and so, belike, that we have so many battles fought in all ages, countries, is to make them a feast, and their sole delight. (I, 187)

War and death are here viewed in a festive sense as an extension of the physical cycle. Burton does not endorse the theory that devils feed on the souls of the dead, but the theory none the less reflects an order similar to that of the Chain of Being.<sup>30</sup> Even in the most horrendous images of death there exists some regenerative force. But as spiritual representatives, the "devils" themselves possess no positive attributes. Unlike Wilton's jests—another scourge—there is not even anything humorous about them. Ultimately, Burton bids us to understand these evil spirits in a traditional Christian context. Even if we are free from sin and do not deserve the scourge of war, evil spirits may send one for "'tis to exercise our patience; for as Tertullian holds, *Virtus non est virtus, nisi comparem habet aliquem, in quo superando vim suam ostendat* [virtue is not worthy of the name till it has overcome an antagonist worthy of its steel]" (I, 202). This spiritual dialectic is at the basis of Christian grace.

#### War in the Second Partition: Cure of Melancholy

In the Second Partition, Burton offers a number of cures for melancholy. He also outlines the cyclical theory of war. The two are connected for we need not fret over

what is inevitable. On the contrary, the cyclical patterns in life may be celebrated.

The first step in Burton's argument is to classify war as a "general" discontent or grievance along with "plagues, dearths, famine, fires, inundations, unseasonable weather, epidemical diseases" (II, 127). General grievances will occur sooner or later; they constitute "a common calamity, an inevitable necessity" (II, 128). But one may find it ludicrous to associate the unavoidable nature of war with that of "unseasonable weather." Burton uses the idea of inevitability to yoke the high with the low. Here we see evidence of Burton's flexible attitude toward the world. In one breath, he can talk of war as the worst crime in human history and in another it becomes something as unfortunate as a rainy day:

. . . we have Bellona's whips, and pitiful outcries, for epithalamiums; for pleasant music, that fearful noise of ordnance, drums and warlike trumpets still sounding in our ears; instead of nuptial torches, we have firing of towns and cities; for triumphs, lamentations; for joy, tears. So it is, and so it was, and so it ever will be. (II, 128)

Positive images alternate with the negative ones in a rhythm which reflects the cyclical nature of the world. Like a summer shower, war is "inevitable, it may not be avoided, and why then shouldst thou be so much troubled?" (II, 128). Instead of long digressive sentences full of examples, Burton uses the short epigrammatic statement: "Thy lot is fallen, make the best of it" (II, 131).

Truth is blunt, unqualified.

But it is important to note that this line of argument does not lead to pure Stoicism. Burton blurts, "Don't fret." with the certainty that man cannot help but fret. He gives us reasons why we should not succumb to despair but knows well enough that we will despair. His logic may be comforting and may even temporarily cure our melancholy, but we will never be immunized against the melancholic temperament. And so the Christian view of life as a test of human virtue returns: "We are sent as so many soldiers into this world, to strive with it, the flesh, the devil; our life is a warfare . . ." (II, 132). Man is doomed to fall, yet man must try to remain upright.

Burton's cyclical theory of history is borrowed from Machiavelli's Florentine History: ". . . virtue and prosperity beget rest; rest idleness; idleness riot; riot destruction: from which we come again to good laws; good laws engender virtuous actions; virtue, glory, and prosperity" (II, 155). Other versions of the cycle are documented above (see pp. 21-23). Burton reflects his own obsession with "idleness" as man's worst enemy. In periods of prosperity, man is liable to be lazy in guarding himself against pride and envy. Hence war often comes as a surprise and pitches the unprepared into a fit of melancholy. Burton offers advice in the form of a Venetian motto: "Happy is that city which in time of

peace thinks of war" (II, 187).<sup>31</sup> Nobody should enjoy the benefits of peace and prosperity without the fear of losing them. This is the same no-win situation described earlier. To lack is to be miserable for want; to have is to be miserable for fear of loss.

Finally, man need not fret too much over this dilemma. He should get busy with something to avoid melancholic meditation which can only drag him further into despair. To meditate is to stop and Burton believes in motion:

The heavens themselves run continually round, the sun riseth and sets, the moon increaseth and decreaseth, stars and planets keep their constant motions, the air is still tossed by the winds, the waters ebb and flow, to their conservation no doubt, to teach us that we should ever be in action. (II, 69)

Always ready with practical suggestions, Burton recommends all kinds of possible hobbies, sports, and pastimes. Tennis, hunting, fishing, walking and travelling are just a few. For those who would rather watch than participate, there is the pleasurable role of the spectator. But this line of argument leads to one of the most startling paradoxes in all of The Anatomy:

What so pleasant as to see some pageant or sight go by, as at coronations, weddings, and suchlike solemnities, to see an ambassador or a prince met, received, entertained with masks, shows, fireworks, etc. To see two kings fight in single combat, as Porus and Alexander, Canutus and Edmund Ironside; Scanderbeg and Ferat Bassa the Turk; when not honour alone but life itself is at stake. . . . To behold a battle fought, like that of Cressy, or Agincourt, or Poitiers, *qua nescio* (saith Froissart) *an vetustas*

*ullam proferre possit clariorem* [than which I doubt if antiquity can show any more glorious]. (II, 76-77)

That Burton enjoys fireworks we can accept, but that he would also find a battle entertaining is outrageous considering the tirade against war in the Preface. Of course combat here becomes sport, and Burton's reference to the fight between "Breaute the Frenchman, and Anthony Schets a Dutchman, before the walls of Sylvaducis in Brabant, anno 1600" (II, 77) sounds like some modern commentator on a boxing match.

Still this *homo ludens* attitude grates on the reader after Burton's lengthy exposition on the horrible absurdity of war. In fact, enjoying a good war fought between men is something which Burton attributed to evil spirits in the First Partition: ". . . wars are procured by them [evil spirits], and they are delighted perhaps to see men fight, as men are with cocks, bulls and dogs, bears, etc." (I, 198). Human curiosity or what can be called spectator entertainment is marked by a sadistic element. Furthermore, one cannot be a proponent of the war-as-game theory and a moral philosopher at the same time. In light of this, however, we may understand Burton's paradox. As a moral philosopher, Burton believes that war is a criminal folly and ought to be condemned. Yet as a practical therapist, he recognizes that by watching spectacles such as a war an individual may alleviate his melancholy. Burton does not

try to be all things at once. Nor does he seem to mind the paradoxes which arise from his many roles. Instead of weakening The Anatomy, this chameleon-like flexibility contributes to the richness of Burton's book. Diversity and contradiction reflect man's world more accurately than any one single vision.

#### War in the Third Partition: Love Melancholy

The Third Partition deals specifically with love-melancholy. One of the major themes in the Partition is the curious relationship between love and war, or between Venus and Mars. Burton argues that "love and hatred are the first and most common passions, from which all the rest arise, and are attendant" (III, 11). According to him, there are three kinds of love: "natural, sensible, and rational" (III, 15). "Natural love" is defined in conjunction with its opposite: "Natural love or hatred is that sympathy or antipathy which is to be seen in animate and inanimate creatures, in the four elements . . . as a stone to his centre, fire upward, and rivers to the sea" (III, 15). "Sensible love is that of brute beasts," and "rational love . . . is proper to men" (III, 16). The sensible is purely of the body or instinct, while rational love involves the intellect or higher faculties of men. Burton's real topic is rational love, which can have either

"*Profitable, Pleasant, [or] Honest*" objects (III, 18).

When an honest object—such as virtue or wisdom—is lacking, this love is doomed to break out "into enmity" and "open war" (III, 29). Because human love is seldom perfectly honest, the opposite passion of hatred is often aroused.

Burton elaborates this idea in his discussion of charity. He claims that the object of "charity" may be compounded of all three kinds: profitable, pleasant, and honest. To die for love of country may be spoken of as most honest, "*Dulce et decorum pro patria mori* ['tis sweet and honourable to die for one's country]," but it is of "little worth" if it "proceed not from a true Christian illuminated soul" (III, 31, 32). Consistent with the harsh satire of the Preface, Burton goes on to expound upon how far the nature of man is from such pure Christianity:

". . . our whole life is a perpetual combat, a conflict, a set battle, a snarling fit" (III, 35). He then follows his tendency for extremes and derides the most grotesque manifestations of love—the wars of religion, which are perfect inversions of charity: ". . . when we see and read of such cruel wars, tumults, uproars, bloody battles, so many men slain, so many cities ruined . . . so many murders and massacres, etc., where is charity?" (III, 38). In Burton's eyes, man is more mad than evil since he is not even aware of what he is doing for the sake of love.

Numerous examples of the contradictory nature of



love occur throughout the Third Partition. Discussing its negative symptoms—specifically love's connection to pain—Burton repeats the old maxim: "For love is . . . a warfare, *militat omnis amans* [every lover is in the wars]" (III, 149).

When he turns to the positive symptoms, he praises the fact that love gives the soldier more courage in battle:

"Castilio thinks Ferdinand King of Spain would never have conquered Granada, had not Queen Isabel and her ladies been present at the siege" (III, 173). Burton himself is well aware of the paradox: "As it [love] makes wise men fools, so many times it makes fools become wise" (III, 172); and he continually reminds his reader of it: "Love is the son of Mars and Venus; as he hath delights, pleasures, elegancies from his mother, so hath he hardness, valour and boldness from his father" (III, 162). Love rules the cyclical nature of the world: birth-death, construction-destruction:

Love indeed (I may not deny) first united provinces, built cities, and by a perpetual generation makes and preserves mankind, propagates the Church; but if it rage, it is no more love, but burning lust, a disease, frenzy, madness, hell. . . . It subverts kingdoms, overthrows cities, towns, families, mars, corrupts, and makes a massacre of men . . . (III, 49)

Hence much of the Third Partition deals with ways to prevent love from degenerating into "lust" or "frenzy."

Religious melancholy is a subspecies of love melancholy. In the final section of The Anatomy, Burton poses the ultimate eschatological questions, to which he

offers limited answers according to the human predicament. He also repeats his views—in scathing terms—on the absurdity and criminality of conducting armed aggression in the name of God. Love of the deity is at the root of more physical violence than the love between the sexes, and Burton is not sure of how to respond to such "a stupend, vast, infinite ocean of incredible madness and folly . . . such comedies and tragedies, such absurd and ridiculous . . . that I know not whether they are more to be pitied or derided" (III, 313). The extremes of human superstition are mad enough, but, as in everything else, it is the fragmentation which produces a variety of forms and conflicts that is most lamentable (see III, 336).

At the beginning of the Subsection on "Symptoms," Burton recalls the rhetorical formula from the Preface to express what we referred to earlier as the grotesque response—that perfect suspension between the fearful and ludicrous: "*Fleat Heraclitus, an rideat Democritus?* in attempting to speak of these symptoms, shall I laugh with Democritus, or weep with Heraclitus?" (III, 346). Burton is near the end of his long study and still cannot respond one way or the other. The possible extremes, however, remain the same. When he sees "a priest say mass, with all those apish gestures," he is moved to laughter, but when he sees "so much blood spilt, so many murders and massacres, so many cruel battles fought, etc., 'tis a fitter subject

for Heraclitus to lament" (III, 346). Having dissected the paradoxical nature of love, Burton picks up from where he left off in the Preface. Wars, waged to demonstrate a love of God, epitomize the terrible paradox at the heart of man, and Burton cannot say it enough times:

For the first, which is love and hate . . . no greater concord, no greater discord than that which proceeds from religion. It is incredible to relate, did not our daily experience evince it, what factions . . . have been of late for matters of religion in France, and what hurly-burlies all over Europe for these many years. . . . No greater hate, more continue, bitter faction, wars, persecution in all ages, than for matters of religion; no such feral opposition, father against son, mother against daughter, husband against wife, city against city, kingdom against kingdom . . . (III, 348)

Amplification and repetition express how strongly Burton feels about his subject. Ironically, these techniques can easily be used in excess and produce a ludicrous effect which is the opposite to the author's intention.

Considering man's past record of conflict, Burton cannot predict anything more optimistic about the future. But his argument is not simply that, human nature being what it is, one cannot expect otherwise. Rather he seems to uphold the idea of the inevitable scourge with its self-perpetuating evil. Wars are caused by man's sinful folly and are also meant to be a punishment for that folly:

What is it that hath caused so many feral battles to be fought, so much Christian blood shed, but superstition? . . . there is a general fault in us all, and something in the very best, which may justly deserve God's wrath, and pull these miseries upon our heads. (III, 372-373)

Burton's beliefs seem to lie completely on the side of inevitable punishment, but just as the reader begins to see a definite position emerge, Burton marks the extreme case and swings back the other way. If superstition is our love for God gone mad, then it is within our power to regain our senses and—to an extent—correct our excesses. There will always be religious differences but we need not kill each other over them. This is what Burton suggests as a cure for religious melancholy in the next Subsection—a degree of religious toleration. Fearful of extremes, Burton does not believe in complete freedom to choose and practise any faith whatsoever. People should be gently coaxed toward the right religion: "The medium is best, and that which Paul prescribes (Gal. vi,I): 'If any man shall fall by occasion, to restore such a one with the spirit of meekness, by all fair means, gentle admonitions . . .'" (III, 378). In spite of the horrible numbers of people slain for religious differences, Burton none the less feels that one must exercise some demonstration of faith which includes taking an interest in the spiritual life of one's neighbor. Man may be a foolish and pugnacious creature, but that is no reason for him to become an atheist:

When those bloody wars in France for matters of religion (saith Richard Dinoth) were so violently pursued between Huguenots and papists, there was a company of good fellows laughed them all to scorn for being such superstitious fools . . . Such loose atheistical spirits are too predominant in all kingdoms. (III, 379-380)

The nonbelievers represent an extreme backlash to the "superstitious fools" and irreverently scorn all spiritual matters.

Further on Burton takes a new course by citing the cyclical theory of the Peripatetics (Aristotelians):

And because, according to their tenents, the world is eternal, intelligences eternal, influences of stars eternal, kingdoms, religions, alterations shall be likewise eternal, and run round after many ages;  
*Atque iterum ad Trojam magnus mittetur Achilles* . . .  
 ["Once more to Troy shall great Achilles be sent"  
 . . . (III, 386)]

The line, "*Atque iterum ad Trojam magnus mittetur Achilles*," is taken from Virgil's "Messianic" Eclogue IV (l. 36), in which a second golden age is prophesied. When it comes to theories about the world, Burton is pragmatic above all else. If apprehensions about war are particularly depressing to an individual, that individual can benefit from the thought that such matters are destined to come and go, and therefore he need not fret. But if an individual embraces such a concept only to go to the other extreme of absolute indifference, he should reverse his thinking and have some concern for the events around him. For Burton, a balance between the neurotic and the lackadaisical is the ideal state. Hence, individual subscription to one theory or the other should be fluid according to the individual's need. The cyclical view of war will help cure a phobia, while the scourge theory of war will put the fear of God back into the "loose" atheist.

With this in mind, one is in a better position to understand how Burton treats the question of justifying God's ways to man: "Why doth He suffer Turks to overcome Christians . . . and so many such bloody wars, murders, massacres, plagues, feral diseases? (III, 417). Again two extremes are outlined. On the pessimistic side, there are those who cannot believe in God's providence. They see only the work of the devil in themselves and others. Also on the pessimistic side are those who fret too much about whether or not they will be saved. The common fault here seems to lie in allowing the general situation to cast a shadow of doom over one's individual fate. Much evil has been committed and there are those who are sure to be damned, but God can only require that each one repent for his own sins: ". . . stay thyself in that certainty of faith; let that be thy comfort, Christ will protect thee" (III, 420). Even if the virtuous are caught by God's scourge, they will eventually be delivered into a happy afterlife. On the optimistic side, there are those who believe that God will forgive all: "The world shall end like a comedy, and we shall meet at last in heaven, and live in bliss together" (III, 423). This sense of ensured salvation can too easily be used to sanction evil on earth. There may be something inevitable about the occurrence of war, but one must not use this idea to justify waging a war.

The scourge theory of war resembles the punitive

function of satire. There is nothing like a good whipping to put the fear of damnation back into mankind. The cyclical theory of war lends itself to the comic reconciliation; all will follow a predictable pattern and work itself out in the end. Burton is somewhere in between the two, in no man's land. Man should not be over curious about the mechanics of salvation. If he has lived a morally sound life, he should not fear but put his trust in God. As for God's ways, they are as paradoxical as the world: "God often works by contrarities, He first kills and then makes alive" (III, 428). Like everything else, war is part of this inscrutable process. The world is in constant motion, and hence our response to it should also be dynamic: Heraclitus's tears or Democritus's laughter.

### NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

<sup>1</sup> For an excellent analysis of the nature of paradox and its uses in The Anatomy, see Rosalie L. Colie Paradoxia Epidemica (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 431-458.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Burton, The Anatomy of Melancholy, 3 vols., ed Holbrook Jackson (1932; rpt. London: The Everyman Library, 1968), Vol. I, p. 19. All references are made to this edition and included in the text.

<sup>3</sup> Michel de Montaigne, "On Democritus and Heraclitus," in The Complete Works of Montaigne, trans. Donald M. Frame (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1948), p. 221.

<sup>4</sup> Don Cameron Allen, "The Degeneration of Man and Renaissance Pessimism," Studies in Philology, 35 (1938), 206.

<sup>5</sup> Epistles II.i.194.

<sup>6</sup> Bud Korkowski, "Genre and Satiric Strategy in Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy," Genre, 8, No. 1 (1975), 74-87.

<sup>7</sup> Lee A. Sonnino, A Handbook to Sixteenth-Century Rhetoric (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 56.

<sup>8</sup> Sonnino, pp. 111-112.

<sup>9</sup> In the Aeneid X.24, the Teucrians "*inundant sanguine fossas* [flood the trenches with gore]." Virgil, Vol. II, 2 vols., trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, Loeb Classical Library, rev. ed. (I 1935, II 1934; rpt. London: Heinemann, I 1965, II 1966). All references to Virgil are made to these volumes and included in the text.

<sup>10</sup> One might recall the reason that Tamburlaine



has for attacking his ally, Cosroe: "Techelles, take a thousand horse with thee / And bid him [Cosroe] turn back to war with us, / That only made him king to make us sport." Christopher Marlowe, Tamburlaine the Great, Part One, ed. Una Ellis-Fermor, rev. ed. (London: Methuen, 1951), II.v. 99-101.

11 The "*inanes ditionum titulos*" or "for vain titles" might come from St. Augustine's criticism of the Roman consuls (Bk V.xii). I cannot locate "*praereptum locum*" anywhere. (Rather than St. Augustine, the "*interceptam mulierculam*" may have been inspired by Horace: "*connus taeterrima belli / causa* [a wench was the most dreadful cause of war]," Satires I.iii.107-108—in Horace: Satires, Epistles and Ars Poetica, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, Loeb Classical Library, rev. ed. (1929; rpt. London: Heinemann, 1966).) The "*vel quod e stultitia natum, vel e malitia*" may have been based on St. Augustine's "*vel malitia vel miseria*" (Bk II.xxv). The "*cupido dominandi*" and "*libido nocendi*" or some combination of these terms is the most common reason which St. Augustine gives for war (see Bk II.xxv; Bk III.xiv,xvi; Bk V.xii,xiii,xvii, xix,xx). St. Augustine: The City of God, Vols. I and II, Loeb Classical Library, Vol. I trans. George E. McCracken (1957; rpt. London: Heinemann, 1966), Vol. II trans. William M. Green (London: Heinemann, 1963). All references are to these volumes.

12 Morris W. Croll, Style, Rhetoric, and Rhythm, ed. J. Max Patrick and Robert O. Evans (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 212.

13 More's statement is worth quoting more fully because it introduces a question that concerned many of the Humanists, like Erasmus, and later satirists, including Rochester and Swift—are men superior to beasts? "*Bellum utpote rem plane beluinam, nec ulli tamen beluarum formae in tam assiduo, atque homini est usu . . .* [War, as an activity fit only for beasts and yet practised by no kind of beast so constantly as by man . . .]." Utopia, in The Complete Works of St. Thomas More, Vol. IV, trans. G. C. Richards, rev. and ed. Edward Surtz S.J. and J. H. Hexter (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), pp. 198-199.

The most detailed analysis of Humanist (More, Erasmus, Colet, and Vives) anti-war writing is Robert P. Adams, The Better Part of Valor (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1962).

14 Bridget Gellert Lyons, Voices of Melancholy,

(London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 137.

The exaggeration of statistical data is a common theme in satiric and comic treatments of war. Marlowe's Tamburlaine abounds with numerical references which verge on the ludicrous; see especially Part Two III.v.32-59. Rabelais obviously exaggerated the number of casualties inflicted by Friar John on Picrochole's army—13,622; see Gargantua and Pantagruel Bk I.xxii.

Perhaps the best example occurs in the opening scene of Plautus's The Braggart Warrior. Pyrgopolynices asks his servant, Artotrogus, to tally the number of men he has slain:

Art. . . . (calculating) One hundred and fifty in Alicia. . . . a hundred in Jugotheevia. . . . thirty Sardiens. . . . sixty Macedonians—that's the list of men you slew in a single day, sir.

Pyrg. The sum total being what?

Art. Seven thousand, sir.

Pyrg. (reflecting) Yes, it should come to that. Your computation is correct.

See Plautus, Vol. III, trans. Paul Nixon, Loeb Classical Library (1924; rpt. London: Heinemann, 1950), pp. 128-129. St. Augustine also mocks historians who attempt to be statistically accurate about wars; see The City of God Bk III.xxvi: "Whose eloquence can cope adequately with the facts, the number and the horror of their acts of brigandage, and, soon to follow, the wars waged stoutly by the pirates."

<sup>15</sup> Desiderius Erasmus, Dulce Bellum Inexpertis, in Opera Omnia, Vol. II (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1961), p. 951F: ". . . ut placidum illud animal, quod natura paci benevolentiaeque genuit, quod unum omnium salutis prodidit, tam ferina vesania, tam insanis tumultibus in mutuam rueret perniciem."

In fact, Burton probably owes more to Erasmus's Dulce Bellum Inexpertis and Querela Pacis (Opera Omnia, IV, pp. 626-642) for his anti-war views than any other classical or Humanist writer. Bruce MacFarlane Chapin makes a passing reference to this in his dissertation, "Robert Burton and Renaissance Satire," Columbia University, 1974, pp. 106-107. However, it would be useful to list a few specific examples. In Dulce Bellum Inexpertis, Erasmus is especially horrified at how Christians could

fight among themselves. He also calls war sheer madness and Alexander the Great crazy for regretting that there were no more kingdoms for him to conquer. There is even an expostulation with nature on the subject of man. In both Dulce Bellum Inexpertis and Querela Pacis, one finds the statement that the Christians are worse in their wars than the pagans, and that war is nothing but legalized murder. In the latter work, one also finds the argument that the princes are the real cause of war and that there is such a thing as a just war. All of these ideas, as we shall see, are present in Burton's Anatomy.

The English translations which I have used are for Dulce Bellum Inexpertis, Margaret Mann Philips, The "Adages" of Erasmus (Cambridge: University Press, 1964), pp. 308-353; and for Querela Pacis, John P. Dolan, The Essential Erasmus (New York: New American Library, 1964), pp. 174-204.

16 Aeneid II.390. I am indebted to Arthur R. Shilleto for the identification of many of the classical allusions; see his notes to The Anatomy of Melancholy, 3 vols. (London: Bohn Popular Library, 1923), Vol. I, pp. 58-65.

17 As Nestor rallies the Greeks in the Iliad: "Wherefore let no man make haste to depart homewards until each have lain with the wife of some Trojan, and have got him requital for his strivings and groanings for Helen's sake" (II.354-356). Homer: The Iliad, Vol. I, trans. A. T. Murray, Loeb Classical Library (1924; rpt. London: Heinemann, 1965).

18 Aeneid VII.340. The line is actually not an interrogative but the call of Allecto which commences the Latin War: "*arma velit poscatque simul rapiatque iuventus* [In the same hour let the men crave, demand, and seize the sword!]."

19 See especially Dulce Bellum Inexpertis, pp. 961F-963A, or Philip's translation, pp. 333-335; and Querela Pacis, pp. 633A-634A, or Dolan's translation, pp. 188-190.

20 Querela Pacis, p. 633A. "I will not recall the tragedies of antiquity" (trans. Dolan, p. 188). This is a rhetorical technique known as "*Occupatio*—That which is told by pretending to omit it," see Sonnino, p. 259. St. Augustine uses the more serious kind of rhetorical omission (*adynaton*) when he repeatedly claims that the horrors of war

are beyond his power to convey in words (see The City of God Bk III.xiv,xix,xxvi; Bk IV.ii; Bk XIX.vii).

Burton's reference to "our gunpowder machinations" (I, 59) is similar to Erasmus's "*Tartareis machinis*" and "*bombardas*" (Querela Pacis, p. 634A).

21 The "he" may refer to Virgil: "*insania belli*" (Aeneid VII.461)—a line which Burton quotes later on, see note 28.

22 I cannot find the exact source for the Erasmus quotation and suspect that it must be a paraphrase of Querela Pacis or Dulce Bellum Inexpertis. Shilleto attributes it to the former, but I cannot find the precise expression anywhere in Querela Pacis.

23 Burton describes what he means by a "just" war in more detail later in the Preface (I, 106-107) when he imitates More and gives his own brief sketch of a utopia.

24 This description calls to mind Albrecht Altdorfer's painting, "The Battle of Issus," which depicts both Alexander's and Darius's armies in exaggerated brilliance and density. Upon closer examination, however, one notices that beneath the bright and orderly lines of troops are dark pictures of fierce combat and mangled bodies. This contrast is Burton's essential point: beyond the appearance of military heroism is the despicable reality. See Albrecht Altdorfer, Die Gemälde (München: Hirmer Verlag, 1975), plates 50a-50f.

25 Shilleto suggests that Burton may have had Jaques's famous "All the world's a stage" speech in mind from Shakespeare's As You Like It: ". . . a soldier . . . sudden and quick in quarrel, / Seeking the bubble reputation / Even in the cannon's mouth" (II.vii.149-153).

26 The Latin "*vox iniquissima* [sic *iniquissima*] *et stultissima*" seems to be Burton's. His marginal note refers to "*De benef. lib. 2, cap. 16.*" See "*De Beneficiis*," VII, in Seneca: Moral Essays, Vol. III, trans. John W. Basore, Loeb Classical Library (1928; rpt. London: Heinemann, 1964), pp. 460-463. A harsher criticism of Seneca can be found in Seneca's "On the Value of Advice," VCIV, in Seneca: Epistulae Morales, Vol. III, trans. Richard M. Gummere, Loeb Classical Library (1917; rpt. London: Heinemann, 1962), pp. 50-53.

27 See Juvenal, "The Tenth Satire," ll. 168-173; and Lucan, The Civil War X.23-46.

28 Aeneid VII.461. Shilleto gives this reference and also notes that the first Latin phrase is quoted verbatim from Cyprianus ad Donatum.

29 But the idea is much older than the Renaissance. In The City of God, St. Augustine endorses Sallust who blamed the Roman civil wars on the fact that her foreign enemy, Carthage, had been annihilated (see Bk II.xviii).

30 St. Augustine also employs the demon-as-scavenger motif in connection with war and joins it to the idea of play: ". . . the great abundance of dying men that enriched the gods of the lower world put them too in the mood to enjoy sport, though, to be sure, the venomous wars and blood-stained quarrels, accompanied by deadly victories, now on one side, now the other, themselves provided great sport for demons and rich banquets for the nether gods" (Bk III.xviii).

31 The inscription is probably adapted from Vegetius's De Re Militari (Prologue to Book Three): "*Qui desiderat pacem, praeparet bellum*" [Let him who desires peace, prepare for war]. "The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations," 3rd. ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 556.

## PART TWO: PRELIMINARIES

*Fama ferebat enim diffusa per oppida nostra  
Extremum genti classe venire diem.  
Atque metum tantum concepit tunc mea mater,  
Ut pareret geminos, meque metumque simul.*

For Fame now raised and scattered through the land  
News that the day of judgment was at hand,  
Which struck so horribly my mother's ear  
That she gave birth to twins, myself and fear.<sup>1</sup>

Thomas Hobbes apparently wrote the above lines to describe the circumstances of his birth, which occurred on Good Friday in 1588. Fear of an imminent invasion by the Spanish precipitated his mother's labor. So as fear and war had something to do with bringing Hobbes into the world, so they also had something to do with giving birth to his pessimistic view of man. The Civil War between the Cavaliers and Roundheads certainly played a large part in creating that enlightened cynicism which colors much Restoration and Eighteenth-Century English Literature. Hobbes's famous statement in Leviathan (1651), "that during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war,"<sup>2</sup> must have seemed, at the time, more like a glib comment on the previous ten years in England than a piece of abstract philosophy. Leviathan may have enabled its author to return

to Cromwell's England in 1651, but as John Aubrey points out, Hobbes himself eventually remained a favorite of Charles II and fitted in easily with the Restoration wits:

His Majesty . . . was always much delighted with his [Hobbes's] witt and smart repartees. The Witts at Court were wont to bayte him. But he feared none of them, and would make his part good. The King would call him *the Beare*: Here comes the Beare to be bayted.<sup>3</sup>

Although the more serious members of the court and government feared Hobbes's philosophy almost as if it were the anti-Christ,<sup>4</sup> this welcome among the Restoration wits reflects the greater welcome of his secularism by the age. Moreover, it is not merely coincidental that satire and science became two of the most popular diversions in Augustan England. Both depend on sharp observation of the external world, and if the scientific approach led to rational cynicism then satire could not be far behind. Hobbes's belief that the natural state of man was one of warfare formed the premise for much of the bitter disillusion expressed by the Augustan satirists.

The two Renaissance attitudes which explained war as either part of an inevitable cycle or a scourge from God were no longer enough. Even the opening of Clarendon's The History of the Civil Wars, as much as it seems to blend these two attitudes, smacks of the scientific approach:

I say, though the immediate finger and wrath of God must be acknowledged in these perplexities and distractions, yet he who shall diligently observe the distempers and conjectures of time, the ambition, pride, and folly of persons, and the sudden growth of

wickedness, from want of care and circumspection in the first impressions, will find all this bulk of misery to have proceeded, and to have been brought upon us, from the same natural causes and means which have usually attended kingdoms swoln with long plenty, pride and excess, towards some signal mortification, and castigation of Heaven.<sup>5</sup>

As Sir George Clark says in War and Society in the Seventeenth Century, "Seventeenth-century writers . . . took a rationalist view of war."<sup>6</sup> Naturalistic and spiritual attitudes tended to come together under the broad heading of deism. There were many shades of deistic belief, and it may be said that Alexander Pope inadvertently expressed mainstream deism when he entertained the following question in An Essay on Man:

Who knows but he, whose hand the light'ning forms,  
Who heaves old Ocean, and who wings the storms,  
Pours fierce Ambition in a Caesar's mind,  
Or turns young Ammon loose to scourge mankind?<sup>7</sup>

Voltaire, who epitomizes the enlightenment, shows that Hobbes's bleak view of the human race and war continued well into the eighteenth century. In his Dictionnaire Philosophique, Voltaire begins his entry under "*Guerre*" with the statement, "*Tous les animaux sont perpetuellement en guerre*" [All animals are perpetually at war]. He goes on to call war "*le partage affreux de l'homme*" [the dreadful lot of man] and "*un fléau inévitable*" [an inevitable scourge].<sup>8</sup> Hence, a rationalist approach could range from the atheistic cynicism of some Hobbesians to the noncommittal suggestiveness of Pope.



Some consensus, however, did exist about how the English viewed their Civil War. As with all conflicts of that kind, it brought home the tragic sense of loss and destruction; again one might cite Pope: "A dreadful Series of Intestine Wars, / Inglorious Triumphs and dishonest Scars."<sup>9</sup> But this may have made the English feel closer to the French or the people living in the German states insofar as both these groups had suffered through civil wars which were fomented by religious zeal. Nobody could remain exempt for mankind was thought by many to be naturally predisposed toward fragmentation and dissension. At least the various sects and conflicts which grew out of the Reformation—Counter Reformation made this pessimistic view tenable.

One indication of how this particular theme of internal strife permeated Augustan consciousness is the popularity of Samuel Butler's political satire Hudibras (1663-1678). To deride the Puritans in the condemnatory spirit of the time, Butler exposes their own inner dissension:

For now the War is not between  
The Brethren, and the Men of sin:  
But Saint and Saint, to spill the Blood,  
Of one another's Brotherhood.<sup>10</sup>

Sir Hudibras and Ralpho, who represent the Presbyterian and Independent causes respectively, are constantly squabbling after the model of Don Quixote and Sancho. Of course the

Hobbesian view of man as naturally existing in a state of war was quickly forged into a sweeping indictment of the human race. In "A Satyr against Reason and Mankind" (1679), the Earl of Rochester wrote a scathing attack against "that vain animal / Who is so proud of being rational."<sup>11</sup> Rochester's argument that human passion ruled reason far more than vice versa, a position which Swift also holds, constitutes an interesting undercurrent in the enlightenment.

In an age given to satire, one would expect there to be a prevalence of the grotesque as well since the two are so closely connected.<sup>12</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin argues that after the Renaissance the grotesque lost its living tie with folk culture and became far more formalized in terms of literary genres and tradition.<sup>13</sup> The sheer vitality of Nashe's grotesque language disappears as Neil Rhodes concludes at the end of his study, Elizabethan Grotesque.<sup>14</sup> Instead of balance between saturnalian and satiric elements, the grotesque of the Restoration and eighteenth century seems to be heavily slanted toward the satiric. For Bakhtin, the saturnalian element was the positive pole of the grotesque, which had its life in folk culture, and when this was lost, it was replaced in the post-Renaissance "by moral sententiousness and abstract concepts."<sup>15</sup> One certainly feels this with Swift, but Sterne shows us the positive or regenerative power of laughter in Tristram Shandy.

Related to this break with the language of folk culture is the call by Thomas Sprat and the Royal Society for a prose which was scientific, clear, and concise. The ornamental prose of the Renaissance, which lent itself to rich and colorful amplification, was no longer part of the rhetoric of the grotesque. Hence in Swift, Smollett and Sterne, one finds that the grotesque depends much more on the abstract paradox and the odd shocking image. There is still some rhetorical amplification, but rather than a series of elaborate metaphors or similes one is more apt to find enumerations of single items.

Science had a far more important effect on war than it did on the language of the grotesque. Rapid improvements in war technology and corresponding revolutions in war strategy marked the beginning of so-called modern civilization. Not surprisingly, the horrific implications of devising better engines to cause mass destruction and death became a central concern in the eighteenth century's comic grotesque treatments of war.

Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels may still contain the greatest indictment of war technology, because it reminds us of how much the human intellect is in the service of fear. The subject of war is addressed in all four Parts of Gulliver's Travels and hence works to unify the work. The Lilliputian-Blefuscuian war is as ludicrous to Gulliver as human wars are to the King of Brobdingnag,

because war will always appear childish to those who possess a greater perspective. A greater perspective results in a more humanitarian attitude. Therefore as Gulliver refuses to act as a secret weapon for the Emperor of Lilliput, so the King of Brobdingnag refuses to hear Gulliver's method of producing gunpowder. The human fascination with military parades is a theme in Parts I and II and reaches a climax in Part III when, on the island of Glubbdubdrib, Gulliver summons up ancient military heroes in scenes of pomp and magnificence.

The most scathing and direct attack on modern human warfare comes in the Voyage to the Country of the Houyhnhnms. War engines are not products of pure reason but of a faculty that is used only to magnify the Yahoo's natural vices. Fear corrupts all, and Gulliver is banished because the Houyhnhnms fear that he may organize the other Yahoos with this grotesque faculty. Gulliver represents the predicament of man's Yahoo-Houyhnhnm duality. His natural vices combine with his imperfect rudiments of reason and pose a greater threat than if he had no reason at all.

While the comic grotesque treatments of war in the Renaissance seem to display a rhetorical incongruity, those of the eighteenth century seem to focus on an abstract incongruity. The Cartagena expedition in Smollett's Roderick Random dramatizes the horrible and seemingly hopeless task of the medical unit which must deal with countless

numbers of wounded men. Grotesque battle scenes reminiscent of Nashe mix with a political satire against the management of the expedition by General Wentworth and Admiral Vernon. Like Nashe, Smollett is writing very much in the picaresque tradition. Random's reason for joining the Picardy regiment in France is exactly the same as Jack Wilton's for enlisting at Marignano—it represents the only available means of self-support. Smollett uses Random's experience in the French army to mock the superficiality of the common soldier who believes that he is contributing to the glorification of his monarch. Wars may arise because two princes cannot control their passion, but they develop into grotesque affairs by the willingness of the people to give their leaders unquestioned allegiance.

Laurence Sterne's Tristram Shandy portrays war's abstract incongruities in a most entertaining way. The novel's good-natured humor and engaging characters are unforgettable. Uncle Toby delights in reproducing, as exactly as he can, Marlborough's actual campaigns. This is enough to remind the reader that the bowling green diversion is not pure fantasy but is tied directly to the real battles. War may disfigure, even endanger, the human race, but Sterne believes in laughter and love—the true forces of life. Very much under Burton's influence, Sterne holds a dynamic and cyclical view of human affairs. There will be war and there will be peace, and everything is big with jest if we

can but find it out. As an emblem of love, the war wound is a grotesque mystery. Uncle Toby is very proud of his, but it almost costs him his life before he escapes from death's reach on his hobby-horse.

The climactic affair with the widow Wadman is related entirely in the language of love militancy. This reminds the reader of the paradoxical relationship between love and war and is a means of identifying the aggressive strategists. Human interaction casts individuals into roles as attackers or defenders. Walter Shandy's last, unanswered harangue is an attack on man's confounded expressions of love. Love turns men into beasts, and men love to glorify the instruments of their bestiality.

Unlike the Renaissance selections, which were largely treated as isolated passages, Gulliver's Travels and Tristram Shandy must be considered in their entirety because the war theme is an inextricable part of the whole. The shift from rhetorical to abstract incongruity in the comic grotesque of the post-Renaissance is only one of degree. The satiric implications in Sidney and Nashe perhaps become a little clearer in the eighteenth century, while their colorful metaphors and amplifications are toned down. An emphasis on satire replaces the wit for wit's sake that especially characterizes Sidney and Nashe. More specific connections can be made. Burton's legacy of learned wit passes down to Swift and Sterne. The picares-

que tradition unites Smollett and Nashe. As with the Renaissance writers discussed in Part One, Swift, Smollett and Sterne have all been associated with the grotesque.<sup>16</sup> Yet there has been little effort to go beyond individual associations and recognize how various attributes of the genre are modified to achieve certain effects. Nor has there been any effort to demonstrate the suitability of addressing the subject of war in the comic grotesque form.

NOTES TO PART TWO: PRELIMINARIES

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Hobbes, "Vita," Opera Latina, Vol. I, ed. Sir William Molesworth (1839; rpt. Germany: Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1966), p. lxxxvi. The translation appears in The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Vol. I, 3rd. ed. (New York: Norton, 1974), p. 1627, n. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, ed. Micheal Oakeshott (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946), p. 82.

<sup>3</sup> Aubrey's Brief Lives, ed. Oliver Lawson Dick (London: Secker and Warburg, 1958), pp. 152-153.

<sup>4</sup> For an assessment of how Leviathan was received in England, see Samuel I. Mintz, The Hunting of Leviathan, (Cambridge: University Press, 1969); and John Bowle, Hobbes and His Critics (London: Jonathan Cape, 1951).

<sup>5</sup> Edward, Earl of Clarendon, The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England, Vol. I, ed. W. Dunn Macray (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888), p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Sir George Clark, War and Society in the Seventeenth Century (Cambridge: University Press, 1958), p. 23.

<sup>7</sup> Alexander Pope, An Essay on Man, I.157-160, ed. Maynard Mack (London: Methuen, 1964).

<sup>8</sup> "Guerre," Dictionnaire Philosophique, in Oeuvres Completes de Voltaire, Vol. IXX (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1879), pp. 318,321. English translation by William F. Fleming, in The Works of Voltaire, Vol. XIV, ed. Tobias Smollett (Akron: The Werner Company, 1905), pp. 193,198.

<sup>9</sup> Alexander Pope, Windsor Forest. ll. 325-326, in Pastoral Poetry and An Essay on Criticism, ed. E. Audra and Aubrey Williams (London: Methuen, 1961).

<sup>10</sup> Samuel Butler, Hudibras, III.ii.686-689, ed.



John Wilders (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

<sup>11</sup> "A Satyr against Reason and Mankind," ll. 6-7, The Complete Poems of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, ed. David M. Vieth (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968).

<sup>12</sup> See pp. 10-12. For an interesting discussion of how the grotesque may be a combination of progressive (rational) and regressive (irrational) processes, see Arthur Clayborough, The Grotesque in English Literature (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 79-118.

<sup>13</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1968), p. 34.

<sup>14</sup> Neil Rhodes, Elizabethan Grotesque (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), pp. 164-165.

<sup>15</sup> Bakhtin, p. 53.

<sup>16</sup> For Swift, see Arthur Clayborough above, note 12; Patrick G. Gleeson, "Gulliver's Travels as a Version of the Grotesque," Diss. University of Washington, 1964; and Hamida Bosmajian, "The Nature of the Grotesque Image in Eighteenth-Century English Literature," Diss. University of Connecticut, 1968.

For Smollett, see Robert Hopkins, "The Function of the Grotesque in Humphrey Clinker," Huntington Library Quarterly, 32 (February 1969), pp. 163-177; and Joanne Lewis Lynn, "Configurations of the Comic Grotesque in the Novels of Tobias Smollett," Diss. University of California Irvine, 1974.

For Sterne, see Bosmajian above; and Lilian R. Furst, "The Dual Face of the Grotesque in Sterne's Tristram Shandy and Lenz's Der Waldbruder," Comparative Literature Studies, 13 (1976), 15-21.

## CHAPTER FOUR:

### SWIFT'S GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

#### Swift and War before "Gulliver's Travels"

This study of the comic grotesque and war in Gulliver's Travels brings together two areas in Swiftian scholarship. The first area is the association of Swift with the genre of the grotesque, and the second is the discussion of Swift's attitudes toward war and the military. Considering the amount of work done on Swift, it seems odd that nobody has yet connected the two since Swift's vision is probably never so saturated with the tenets of the grotesque than when he is addressing the subject of war.

In The Grotesque in English Literature (1965), Arthur Clayborough attempts to explain the genre by conceptualizing a matrix of psychological processes: "Both the creation and the reaction to grotesque art are illuminated by considering them in terms of the progressive-regressive polarization of the mind, and the corresponding opposition between direct thinking and dream or fantasy thinking."<sup>1</sup> The "progressive" mind utilizes conscious reason while the "regressive" relies on the influence of the subconscious. Caricaturists or satirists like Swift

fall into the category of the "Progressive-Negative" artist because, although their minds are dominated by the operation of straightforward thinking and common sense, they resort to fantastic imagery to emphasize what is in blatant contradiction to the reasonable. The model which Clayborough sets up may serve as an aid to understanding some of Swift's works, but it is also restrictive. Patrick Gleeson's dissertation, "Gulliver's Travels as a Version of the Grotesque" (1964), identifies more general characteristics of the grotesque genre: "deliberate contradiction, surprise, ambivalent attack, narrative discontinuity and distortion."<sup>2</sup> He also puts forth a good case for the presence of these characteristics in Gulliver's Travels but does not treat the subject of war or any of the passages dealing with military affairs in any depth. Still, his dissertation forms an important part of the foundation of mine and is all the more interesting for having been written before the recent boom in studies of the grotesque. Also important is Hamida Bosmajian's dissertation, "The Nature and Function of the Grotesque Image in Eighteenth-Century English Literature" (1968).<sup>3</sup> Bosmajian analyzes only A Tale of A Tub in his chapter on Swift, but this is probably because of Gleeson's earlier work on the Travels. Bosmajian's comments on Tristram Shandy will be of more concern when we get to Sterne.

Swift's view of military affairs is a much more

recent area of study. In fact, one is hard pressed to find anything on the subject outside of Robert Gordon's excellent article "Jonathan Swift and the Modern Art of War."<sup>4</sup> Gordon places Swift's argument against standing armies and war machines within the context of the contemporary debate between the military modernists and their conservative opponents.<sup>5</sup> The Whigs and Walpole's political methods were associated with the modernists, while the opposite voice belonged to Bolingbroke and his Tory followers. Modernists, such as Defoe, argued for scientific professionalism.<sup>6</sup> The traditionalists, like Swift, held to a nostalgic belief in volunteer militias. Of course the debate was largely political for a parliament controlled standing army favored the Whigs while the locally controlled militias favored Tory landowners.

A review of how Swift treats the subject of war in some of his earlier writings will contribute to our study of the Travels. In A Tale of A Tub, one finds a fanciful and explicit reference to the madness of war. This comes, of course, in Section IX, "A Digression concerning the Original, the Use and Improvement of Madness in a Commonwealth," wherein the narrator identifies "*The Establishment of New Empires by Conquest*" as one of the "greatest Actions that have been performed in the World, under the influence of Single Men."<sup>7</sup> Two examples follow. The first is of "Harry the Great of France" who suddenly

amasses "a mighty Army":

It was afterwards discovered, that the Movement of this whole Machine had been directed by an absent *Female*, whose Eyes had raised a Protuberancy, and before Emission, she was removed into an Enemy's Country. . . . Having to no purpose used all peaceable Endeavours, the collected part of the *Semen*, raised and enflamed, became adust, converted to Choler, turned head upon the spinal Duct, and ascended to the Brain. The very same Principle that influences a *Bully* to break the Windows of a Whore, who has jilted him, naturally stirs up a Great Prince to raise mighty Armies, and dream nothing but Sieges, Battles, and Victories. (TT, 164-165)

Swift's absurd, physical explanation of the mechanical "Vapour" hints at a real connection between the thwarted passion of love and violent animosity. We have already encountered this paradoxical love-war relationship in Nashe and Burton.<sup>8</sup> Here it is all part of the Tale's upside-down world in which madness is a beneficial condition.

The second example is the "*Present French King*," Louis XIV, who "amused himself to take and loose Towns; beat Armies, and be beaten; drive Princes out of their Dominions; fright Children from their Bread and Butter; burn, lay waste, plunder, dragoon, massacre Subject and Stranger, Friend and Foe, Male and Female" (TT, 165). The King's amusement in winning and losing suggests the playful or sportive attitude toward war. War's indiscriminate destruction is also emphasized. The perverse pleasure of the warmonger comes from scaring the helpless and wreaking havoc in an absurdly random way, on "Subject and Stranger" or "Friend and Foe." This is utter madness,

but that is exactly the point of the digression. Some of the most insane acts of man are regarded not only as worthwhile but great.<sup>9</sup>

The narrator of A Tale of A Tub then goes on to look at the two other kinds of great actions which, along with conquest, are dependent upon madness: "*The Advance and Progress of New Schemes of Philosophy; and the contriving, as well as propagating of New Religions*" (TT, 162). To devise new philosophical or spiritual systems, one must first overthrow the old, hence the parallel between the physical and intellectual conqueror. The same "Vapour" or madness marks "*Alexander the Great, Jack of Leyden, and Monsieur Des Cartes*" (TT, 170). Again, as we saw in Nashe and Burton, religious zeal often leads to the sword.

One of the "Additions to The Tale of A Tub," contained in Miscellaneous Works (1720) reinforces this ironical view of greatness. It is entitled "A Digression of the nature usefulness & necessity of Wars & Quarrels" and is meant to be appended to Section IX of the original work. Here the narrator endorses Hobbes: "The State of War [is] natural to all Creatures" (TT, 305).<sup>10</sup> War is then defined as "an attempt to take by violence from others a part of what they have & we want" (TT, 305), and it is in accordance with this definition that greatness can be measured:

The higher one raises his pretensions this way, the more bustle he makes about them, & the more success he has, the greater Hero. Thus greater Souls in

proportion to their superior merit claim a greater right to take every thing from meaner folks. This [is] the true foundation of Grandeur and Heroism, & of the distinction of degrees among men. . . . The greatest part of Mankind loves War more than peace: They are but few & mean spirited that live in peace with all men. (TT, 305)

The digression also demonstrates that Swift was aware of the theory, so popular during the Renaissance, that a foreign war is the best preventative against a civil one (see, p. 67 above). Remembering that this passage is meant to be appended to the Section on the use of madness, one may safely assume that Swift had his narrator repeat the theory to expose its grotesque implication: "War therfor [is] necessary . . . to purge Bodys politick of gross humours. Wise Princes find it necessary to have wars abroad to keep peace at home" (TT, 305).

One of the traditional arguments against the superiority of man over animals is to cite how animals do not normally fight with members of their own species or use machines in order to cause mass destruction. These are characteristics which belong to man alone. The narrator of A Tale of A Tub elaborates generally on human life as war and on the escalation in actual human warfare as being things which elevate men above beasts:

The inclination to war [is] universal: those that cannot or dare not make war in person, employ others to do it for them. This maintains Bullys, Bravos, Cutthroats, Lawyers, Soldiers, &c. Most Professions would be useless if all were peaceable. Hence Brutes want neither Smiths nor Lawyers, Magistrats nor Joyners, Soldiers nor Surgeons. Brutes having but

narrow appetites are incapable of carrying on or perpetuating war against their own species, or of being led out in troops & multitudes to destroy one another. These prerogatives [are] proper to Man alone. The excellency of human nature [is] demonstrated by the vast train of appetites, passions, wants, &c. that attend it. (TT, 306)

These ideas anticipate many of the issues raised in Part IV of Gulliver's Travels. Does mankind possess reason or does he simply have some grotesque faculty which only serves to increase his natural vices?

War is the central metaphor for the polemical dispute in The Battle of the Books. This work does not reveal much about what Swift thought about war itself, but it does indicate that he had recognized a certain comic potential in the Iliad. The mock-epic style of Swift's narrative and the frequent allusions to Homer as a model are indirect signs of support for the Ancients but, as Philip Pinkus has argued, the real target of the satire is the polemical dispute itself.<sup>11</sup>

Swift begins the work with a mocking reference to Mary Clark's almanac sheet as a source for the cyclical theory of war: "Riches produceth Pride; Pride is War's Ground, &c." (BB, 217). In their note, Swift's editors (Guthkelch and Smith) reproduce the inscription of the theory in full which appeared in the top left hand corner of the almanac sheet next to a figure showing the signs of the Zodiac:



War begets Poverty,  
 Poverty Peace:  
 Peace maketh Riches flow,  
 (Fate ne'er doth cease:)  
 Riches produceth Pride,  
 Pride is War's ground,  
 War begets Poverty, &c.  
 (The World) goes round. (BB, 217, n. 1)

As we have seen (pp. 21-23 above) this cyclical theory is actually classical in origin, and Swift's readers may well have been expected to recognize it as such. Swift, however, alters the usual version of the theory by going on to argue that poverty, instead of pride, has a tendency to invade prosperity inasmuch as a needy country will try to steal from an affluent one. The more traditional version, expressed by Sallust and reproduced on the almanac sheet, is simply that war leads to poverty which in turn leads to peace. Yet even Swift's altered version of poverty being an aggressor against prosperity may have a classical antecedent, namely Lucan's The Civil War: "For when Rome had conquered the world and Fortune showered excess of wealth upon her virtue was dethroned by prosperity . . . poverty, the mother of manhood, became a bug-bear; and from all the earth was brought the special bane of each nation."<sup>12</sup> In any case, the theory smacks of classical learning and hence is another indirect endorsement of the Ancients. All this still misses the main point which is that the poverty and pride both belong to the Moderns who are thus guilty of being the aggressors against the riches of the Ancients.

Swift wittingly implies that chronology must make it so because an Ancient-Modern controversy would not be possible unless the Moderns wanted it.

Bentley's entrance into the action is modeled on Homer's Thersites (Iliad II.211-275), as Swift's note makes clear. Famous for his "Talent of Railing," Bentley uses a "Flail" as his weapon which represents the scourge of satire. Of course, Thersitical satire refers to extremely indiscriminate and abusive attacks, and again Swift makes the parallel clear in his note: "The Person here spoken of, is famous for letting fly at every Body without Distinction, and using mean and foul Scurrilities" (BB, 251). Like Thersites, Bentley is said to be ugly and deformed. The difference between the two is that Bentley is a major figure in the action of The Battle of the Books, while Thersites appears in only one scene of the Iliad. Following the model of Thersites, Swift has Bentley burst forth with some low and abusive language about the weakness of his fellow moderns: ". . . they were all a Pack of *Rogues*, and *Fools*, and *Sons of Whores*, and d\_mn'd *Cowards*, and confounded *Loggerheads*, and *illiterate Whelps*, and *nonsensical Scoundrels*" (BB, 251-252). He then boasts about his own superiority, something which Thersites never does but which is common to the epic: "That if Himself had been constituted General, those *presumptuous Dogs*, the *Antients*, would long before this, have been beaten out of the Field" (BB, 252).

It can be said that Homer's Thersites is not without reason in criticizing Agamemnon's childish behavior as well as that of all the Greeks for putting so much emphasis on spoils, but it is not Thersites's part to criticize the Greek commander. Odysseus scolds Thersites for his presumption in rebuking Agamemnon but does not answer his specific criticisms. Instead he strikes the deformed Thersites who begins to cry. Thersites's status among the Greeks seems to be that of an irresponsible and scurrilous joker who would say anything to get a laugh (Iliad II. 211-224). Here, however, the situation is reversed and the Greeks laugh at the tearful Thersites. This Homeric episode contains all the basic elements of the grotesque and relates them to the Trojan War: the scurrilous satire, the deformity, the irreverent laughter, and the violence. Swift bases Scaliger's response to Bentley on Odysseus's but no blow is struck. Scaliger just refers to how Bentley's temper "*perverteth Nature*" and teaches "ill Manners" (BB, 252), which alludes to Bentley's alleged incivility to Robert Boyle.

Bentley's nighttime raid is loosely copied from the one carried out by Odysseus and Diomedes (Iliad X.482-511). The suggestion to relate the dreams of the intended victims does not come from Homer (nor from Virgil's nighttime raid, see Aeneid IX.314-366) despite Swift's note that Homer "tells the Dreams of those who were kill'd in their sleep"

(BB, 254). Homer does describe Diomedes standing above the sleeping Thracian king as if he were "an evil dream" (Iliad X.496),<sup>13</sup> but that is all. At any rate, Boyle recognizes the stolen armor in the hands of Bentley just as Achilles does his own on Hector (Iliad XXII.322-325).

Wotton prays for success against Temple and the reader is told that the prayer is partially granted and denied according to Achilles's prayer for Patrocles (Iliad XVI.249-252). As for Wotton's cowardly attack itself, it may have a Homeric antecedent in Euphorbus's stabbing of the blind Patrocles (Iliad XVI.805-817) or it may show the influence of Shakespeare who has Achilles slay an unarmed Hector (see Troilus and Cressida V.viii). So much for epic heroism.

Boyle appears in armor "*given him by all the Gods*" (BB, 256), as Achilles receives the armor forged by Hephaestus to replace that which Hector took from Patrocles (Iliad XIX.8-13). Then there is the seemingly absurd metaphor used to describe how Boyle attempts to chase both Bentley and Wotton at the same time:

And as a Woman in a little House, that gets a painful Livelihood by Spinning; if chance her *Geese* be scattered o'er the Common, she courses round the Plain from side to side, compelling here and there, the Stragglers to the Flock; They cackle loud, and flutter o'er the Champain. So *Boyle* pursued . . . (BB, 257-258)

Here Swift is correct in his note: "*This is also, after the manner of Homer; the Woman's getting a painful Livelihood*

*by Spinning, has nothing to do with the Similitude, nor would be excusable without such an Authority*" (BB, 257). Low domestic metaphors such as these are definitely part of the Homeric mode (see Iliad XX.251-255 and XII.421-426), and one may even locate the woman-spinning simile in the Iliad (XII.433-436). Swift was aware of how the epic, specifically Homer, contains a comic potential.

There are other Homeric motifs that are pregnant with the ridiculous. Swift has Dryden trade armor with Virgil (much to Dryden's favor), as Hector exchanges gifts with Ajax after their evenly fought contest (Iliad XII.279-302). That the latter two part as friends is not exactly a statement on the ridiculousness of war, but it does hint that there is no real conflict between Greek and Trojan (with the obvious exception of Menelaus and Paris). Shakespeare, of course, follows his own Hector-Ajax contest with a joint feast of Trojans and Greeks, which accentuates the same idea (see Troilus and Cressida IV.iv-V.ii)—how could men get along so wonderfully if they are at war with one another?<sup>14</sup> Another Homeric motif, which Swift uses grotesquely, concerns the role of fate or providence in dealing out death in a way that mocks the intentions of the participants. Aristotle fires an arrow at Bacon; it misses Bacon but strikes "Des Cartes" in the eye (BB, 244). Similarly in the Iliad, Aias throws a spear at Polydamas, "And Polydamas himself escaped black fate, springing to one

side; but Archelochus, son of Antenor, received the spear; for to him the gods purposed death" (Iliad XIV.462-464). Of course, the gods and ultimately the book of Destiny control everything which happens in the epic battle. In this sense, all human action becomes rather insignificant and at times even ridiculous.

The Battle of the Books has nothing to do directly with war, but Swift's use of the war metaphor reveals a familiarity with classical views on war and epic-battle motifs. More accurately, it shows that Swift had a good sense of the mock-epic when it came to describing a battle and realized that at times a thin line separates the mock-epic from the epic itself. In its very primitiveness, the Homeric mode contains certain comic tendencies.

The relatively straightforward or journalistic attitude toward war in The Conduct of the Allies (1711) is worth noting if only to distinguish it from the grotesque vision in Gulliver's Travels. Swift wrote the tract to gain support for the Tory position which favored an end to England's involvement in the War of the Spanish Succession. Swift's purpose was not to condemn war in the abstract but to show how an immediate peace would benefit England. He goes to great length arguing that England's allies have not lived up to their obligations and therefore that England has carried more than her fair share of the burden. He also claims that those who favor prolonging the

war only do so for their own financial or political advantage. The war debt and its financing have been exploited for profit by the "*Monied Men*" and they in turn support the Whigs.<sup>15</sup> General Marlborough, who became very rich during the course of the war, was Swift's favorite personal target.<sup>16</sup> Although the tone of The Conduct of the Allies remains eminently serious throughout, Swift occasionally resorts to a witty understatement or rhetorical climax to clarify the issues. For one thing, Marlborough's image as a great conqueror had to be put in perspective:

Getting into the Enemy's Lines, passing Rivers, and taking Towns, may be Actions attended with many glorious Circumstances: But when all this brings no real solid Advantages to us, when it hath no other End than to enlarge the Territories of the *Dutch*, and encrease the Fame and Wealth of our *General*, I conclude however it comes about, that Things are not as they should be . . . (CA, 20)

Having thus disarmed the other side, Swift quickly goes for the kill by expressing the ever-growing debt in extreme terms:

But the Case is still much harder, We are destroying many thousand Lives, exhausting all our Substance, not for our own Interest, which would be but common Prudence; not for a Thing indifferent, which would be sufficient Folly, but perhaps to our own Destruction, which is perfect Madness. (CA, 20)

Swift has a particular gift for highlighting the absurd character of human actions.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, he exposes the absurdity with what appears to be just plain old, but badly needed, clear thinking. To clinch his point about ending the war, Swift merely reminds the reader of England's

remote interest in it: "What Arts have been used to possess the People with a *strong Delusion*, that *Britain* must infallibly be ruined, without the Recovery of *Spain* to the House of Austria?" (CA, 58). Reflective questions like this one raise Swift's argument above the dust of Tory and Whig infighting. There is also a satiric element in the question that begins to indict both those in power for misleading the masses and the masses for being stupid enough to follow. Treaty obligations are forgotten, and the reason for Britain's involvement in the War of the Spanish Succession seems ridiculously petty. These elements anticipate the ultimate attitude toward war that Swift expresses in Gulliver's Travels.

### "Gulliver's Travels" and War: Ludicrous to Fearful

#### Voyages to Lilliput and Brobdingnag

One might explain the difference in Swift's position on the War of the Spanish Succession in The Conduct of the Allies and Part I of Gulliver's Travels by citing Swift's own comments on how the ridiculous nature of such an event only becomes apparent after the passage of time:

Reflect on Things past, as Wars, Negotiations, Factions; and the like; we enter so little into those Interests, that we wonder how Men could possibly be so busy, and concerned for Things transitory: Look on the present Times, we find the same Humour, yet wonder not at all.<sup>18</sup>

This sense of distance, which comes with time, from the



immediate subject or reality appears to be a necessary part of assuming a grotesque vision. Away from English politics and the war itself, Swift was able to conceive and develop a fantastic allegory of English history roughly covering the last years of Queen Anne's reign (died 1714) and the first few of George I's. According to Ehrenpreis, "*Lilliput* is a sublimation of the suppressed pamphlets and fragments" which Swift wrote concerning certain political events that had occurred between 1708 and 1715.<sup>19</sup>

Actually the subject of war is addressed in all four Parts of Gulliver's Travels. It is also treated consistently throughout, with a climax coming in Part IV, and hence serves to unify the work.<sup>20</sup> One might take Parts I and II together, for even though the Lilliputian microcosm of Part I seems to be inverted in the Brobdingnagian macrocosm of Part II, war is made to look petty and ridiculous in both.<sup>21</sup> In other words, the Lilliputian-Blefusculian conflict is in the same scale to Gulliver as human wars are to the King of Brobdingnag. There seems, however, to be a shift from an emphasis on the ludicrous in Part I to the fearful in the subsequent Parts. And while the ideas behind Swift's satire on war are rather traditional, as we shall see, they are still powerfully expressed because Swift at times manipulates the reader into sympathizing with Gulliver.

The Lilliputians are heavily armed and ready for

the worst when Gulliver first awakes. Considering Gulliver's size and strangeness, one might say that their preparations accurately represent human fear and suspicion. The first Lilliputian whom Gulliver sees has "a Bow and Arrow in his Hands," and when Gulliver attempts to seize one of them the Lilliputians fire two volleys of arrows at him as, Gulliver says, "we do Bombs in *Europe*."<sup>22</sup> Hence the association of Lilliputian hostilities with those in Europe is made very early in Part I. What is so effective about the grotesque mode in terms of fantasy or distortion is that, even though we may recognize our own fear in the Lilliputian precautions, everything Lilliputian seems ludicrous simply because of its relative inconsequentiality to Gulliver with whom we identify directly.

To express this sense of things being little, Swift emphasizes the pettiness in various Lilliputian affairs and perhaps the best example of this is Reldresal's account of the cause of the war with Blefuscu:

It began upon the following Occasion. It is allowed on all Hands, that the primitive Way of breaking Eggs before we can eat them, was upon the larger End: But his present Majesty's Grand-father, while he was a Boy, going to eat an Egg, and breaking it according to the ancient Practice, happened to cut one of his Fingers. Whereupon the Emperor his Father, published an Edict, commanding all his Subjects, upon great Penalties, to break the smaller End of their Eggs. The People so highly resented this Law, that our Histories tell us, there have been six Rebellions raised on that Account; wherein one Emperor lost his life, and another his Crown. These civil Commotions were constantly fomented

by the Monarchs of *Blefuscu*; and when they were quelled, the Exiles always fled for Refuge to that Empire. . . . Now the *Big-Indian* Exiles have found so much Credit in the Emperor of *Blefuscu*'s Court; and so much private Assistance and Encouragement from their Party here at home, that a bloody War hath been carried on between the two Empires for six and thirty Moons with various Success; during which Time we have lost Forty Capital Ships, and a much greater Number of smaller Vessels, together with thirty thousand of our best Seamen and Soldiers; and the Damage received by the Enemy is reckoned to be somewhat greater than ours. (33-34)

The allegory not only expresses the history of Catholic and Protestant animosities in the absurd, but it is also an imaginative synthesis of the hostilities between England and her long time enemy France. Swift is taking aim at his favorite satiric target—religious fanaticism or how trifling differences can result in monstrous wars. The phrase, "our Histories tell us," is worth noting because the tendency of man to dwell on wars in recording his past becomes an increasingly important theme in regard to the grotesque and Gulliver's Travels.

At the end of their meeting, Reldresal makes it clear that "his Imperial Majesty" has instructed him to relate the history of the war with *Blefuscu* to Gulliver in the hope that Gulliver will help the Lilliputians thwart an imminent invasion. The political allegory about Tory naval success versus Marlborough and the Whigs has been discussed extensively by others and is not part of this study.<sup>23</sup> What is important with respect to the comic grotesque is that Gulliver captures the *Blefuscu*dian fleet

with relative ease. The thousands of tiny arrows fired at him while he rounds up the fleet cause "much Disturbance" (36) but that is all. On the other side, the Blefuscudians "set up such a Scream of Grief and Despair, that it is almost impossible to describe" (36). From Gulliver's perspective, the grief may even be harder to understand than describe, and to the reader who shares Gulliver's perspective, the whole mission has the air of a simple favor that any decent fellow would do for his host. The simplicity with which Gulliver brings the war to a halt underscores the petty nature of the conflict.

The King of Brobdingnag finds Gulliver's history of England with its "wars by Sea and Land" just as humorous as the reader might find the conflict between Lilliput and Blefuscu (91). At first Gulliver feels that his "noble Country, the Mistress of Art and Arms, the Scourge of *France*" has been rudely insulted (91), but after gradually adjusting to his paltry stature he comes to see the King's response as more natural than contemptuous. The affairs of Gulliver and his fellow race of "Insects" (91) are a joke and cannot be taken seriously by somebody who could capture their armies as easily as Gulliver does the Blefuscudian fleet.

Hungry for a more sober hearing, Gulliver points to the respect accorded to "Bees and Ants" (111) for their industry. The King agrees to be a more solemn listener,

but the particulars of Gulliver's account remain beyond his focus. A history of brave and industrious insects is none the less a history of insects. What seems reasonable to Gulliver remains trivial in the King's perspective. When Gulliver finishes, the King can only formulate a generalized answer: "He wondered to hear me talk of such chargeable and extensive Wars; that, certainly we must be a quarrelsome People, or live among very bad Neighbours; and that our Generals must needs be richer than our Kings" (115). (This last comment is, of course, a reference to how rich General Marlborough became as a consequence of the War of the Spanish Succession.) The next part of the King's response is an indictment of foreign military involvements, an indictment which would be even more justified as the eighteenth century went on: "He asked, what Business we had out of our own Islands, unless upon the Score of Trade or Treaty, or to defend the Coasts with our Fleet" (115).

The King is at a loss to understand why Gulliver's country would maintain a standing army in times of peace. Having a reputation for being ruthless and desperate, soldiers could only represent a threat to domestic stability if they were kept in an idle state:

Above all, he was amazed to hear me talk of a mercenary standing Army in the Midst of Peace, and among a free People. He said, if we were governed by our own Consent in the Persons of our Representatives, he could not imagine of whom we were afraid, or against whom we

were to fight; and would hear my opinion, whether a private Man's House might not better be defended by himself, his Children, and Family; than by half a Dozen Rascals picked up at a Venture in the Streets, for small Wages, who might get an Hundred Times more by cutting their Throats. (115)

Ehrenpreis points out that the King's views on standing armies may be modeled on Sir William Temple's beliefs which Swift obviously inherited.<sup>24</sup> To Swift, the standing army was a misapplication of reason for the military was something to be regarded as a last measure and not a modern profession.

The King of Brobdingnag pronounces Gulliver's historical account "only a Heap of Conspiracies, Rebellions, Murders, Massacres, Revolutions, Banishments . . ." (116). This response introduces a new theme—the extent to which man records his past as little more than the consequences of armed aggression and military events. As fiction, histories often tend to read as an insane series, *ad infinitum*, of various battles and wars. After Gulliver relates the history of his fellow insects, the King of Brobdingnag makes his famous conclusion that they were "the most pernicious Race of little odious Vermin that Nature ever suffered to crawl upon the Surface of the Earth" (116).

Gulliver is dumbfounded. Ironically, he confesses to having served up a biased account in England's favor. Something has backfired, and again it has to do with

perspective. The King simply cannot see any English cause. His vision can only take in the overall generalities of the conflicts which Gulliver describes. Gulliver, on the other hand, seems to hold a shortsighted view. In a last desperate attempt to "ingratiate" himself with the King, Gulliver offers to reveal to him a method of producing gunpowder and, with his typical myopia, goes into unnecessary detail about its potential effects:

That we often put this Powder into large hollow Balls of Iron, and discharge them by an Engine into some City we were besieging; which would rip up the Pavement, tear the Houses to Pieces, burst and throw Splinters on every Side, dashing out the Brains of all who came near. (118)

Gulliver gets carried away with gory particulars, and the King is especially horrified at how he could remain so nonchalant about his subject "as to appear wholly unmoved at all the Scenes of Blood and Desolation . . . as the common Effects of those destructive Machines" (119).

While Gulliver accuses the King of having "*narrow Principles and short Views*" (119) for refusing his offer, the short view actually belongs to Gulliver who assumes that everybody is as unscrupulously power-crazy as his fellow Europeans. On the contrary, the King has a large or humanitarian view of "those terrible Engines" insofar as "he would rather lose Half his Kingdom" than consider using them (119).<sup>25</sup> Both are extremes though not as outrageous as Lilliputian pettiness in the war with Blefuscu. This distortion is

necessary to highlight how much man values the latest war technology and ignores its horrendous effects. War machines put a distance between killer and victim that allows the killer to remain unmoved by the death he causes.

In Part I, the situation is reversed. The Emperor of Lilliput wants to use Gulliver as a special weapon to reduce "the whole Empire of Blefuscu into a Province" (37). Gulliver rejects the scheme on the same humanitarian grounds that the King of Brobdingnag has for refusing to hear how to make gunpowder: "I would never be an Instrument of bringing a free and brave People into Slavery" (37). To the shortsighted Lilliputians, this is treason. Their singleminded and vicious nature is again exaggerated in how they draft Gulliver's second Article of Impeachment, accusing him of being unwilling to "destroy the Liberties and Lives of an innocent People" (53). For this and other absurd charges, Gulliver is sentenced to have his eyes "put out" (54). Such pronouncements are all the more shocking for being surrounded by general Lilliputian pettiness.

In fact, identifying with Gulliver allows the reader to enjoy the joke about the ridiculous nature of war in Part I, while in Part II it makes him the butt of the joke. In other words, in Part II the recognition of the horror and absurdity of war strikes closer to home. Hence, with respect to war and the grotesque in the Travels, it can be said that the movement from Lilliput to Brobdingnag is from



the humorous to the horrible and that this direction appears to continue in Parts III and IV.

Both the Lilliputians and Brobdingnagians love military parades. Swift introduces this subject to expose the peculiar fascination that man has for military spectacle. The Emperor of Lilliput gets Gulliver to stand like a Colossus and has his army march underneath, an incident which leads Gulliver to remark: ". . . my Breeches were at that time in so ill a Condition, that they afforded some Opportunities for Laughter and Admiration" (26). As readers we are struck with the silliness of it all. In Brobdingnag, Gulliver entertains his audience by performing a pike-drill. There are no standing armies in Brobdingnag, but there are volunteer militias made up of "Tradesmen" for Brobdingnag was "troubled with the same Disease, to which the whole Race of Mankind is subject; the Nobility often contending for Power, the People for Liberty, and the King for absolute Dominion" (122). Gulliver describes the "very good Discipline" of the "Lorbrulgrud" horse militia in glowing terms:

I have seen this whole Body of Horse upon the Word of Command draw their Swords at once, and brandish them in the Air. Imagination can Figure nothing so Grand, so surprising and so astonishing. It looked as if ten thousand Flashes of Lightning were darting at the same time from every Quarter of the Sky. (122)

A military drill or parade entertains because countless groups of uniform parts appear precisely ordered and

controlled. This artificially created order has no counterpart in the natural world. Edmund Burke's Of the Sublime and the Beautiful may help explain the aesthetics involved. Burke considers "why a successive disposition of uniform parts in the same right line should be sublime":

. . . each in its order as it succeeds, repeats impulse after impulse, and stroke after stroke, until the eye long exercised in one particular way cannot lose that object immediately; and being violently roused by this continued agitation, it presents the mind with a grand or sublime conception. . . . To produce therefore a perfect grandeur in such things as we have been mentioning, there should be a perfect simplicity, an absolute uniformity in disposition, shape and colouring.<sup>26</sup>

To this, the military parade adds movement, music and glitter. In its unnatural magnitude and order, the parade epitomizes the exact opposite of what the grotesque is supposed to embody: ugliness and disharmony. But, as we saw in The Anatomy of Melancholy (see p. 155 above), there is a terrible paradox in the order and discipline that an army flaunts to its own public when one considers the havoc and destruction it inflicts on the enemy. Swift is here preparing the reader for a more direct exposé of the morbid human fascination with all kinds of military spectacles, real as well as artificial.

A Voyage to Laputa, Balnibarbi, Glubbubdrib, etc.

Swift develops the theme concerning the morbidity of the human imagination and military affairs when Gulliver

visits Glubbdubdrib or the island of Sorcerers. Given the chance to summon anybody he wants from the dead, Gulliver first wishes to see famous military leaders in "Scenes of Pomp and Magnificence": "*Alexander* the Great, at the Head of his Army just after the Battle of Arbela," "*Hannibal* passing the *Alps*," and "*Caesar* and *Pompey* at the Head of their Troops just ready to engage" (179). With typical Swiftian prejudice, Gulliver is predisposed toward these Ancient heroes. Some of the idealization, however, dissolves. For example, Alexander confesses to Gulliver "that he was not poisoned, but dyed of a Fever by excessive Drinking" (179). Furthermore, we do not get the impression that the Roman or Greek civilization represents the golden age. To be fair to Gulliver, it should be pointed out that the majority of those figures whom he calls up seem to be of a positive nature: "I chiefly fed mine Eyes with beholding the Destroyers of Tyrants and Usurpers, and the Restorers of Liberty to oppressed and injured Nations" (180). These are admirable subjects and Gulliver, of course, could not derive any vengeful pleasure from seeing the tyrants destroyed since he never suffered under their rule. Still, the way in which Gulliver cuts the reader short may be a comment on the human imagination: "But it is impossible to express the Satisfaction I received in my own Mind, after such a Manner as to make it a suitable Entertainment to the Reader" (180). The "suitable Entertainment" is obviously

meant to be ironical. In other words, according to some grotesque perversion of the human mind, we would get more pleasure out of witnessing tyranny or usurpation themselves than the restoration of liberty.

Again, in keeping with Swift's own predisposition, Gulliver claims to be "chiefly disgusted with modern History" because its writers have too often been bribed to misrepresent the facts: "For having strictly examined all the Persons of greatest Name in the Courts of Princes for an Hundred Years past, I found how the World had been misled by prostitute Writers, to ascribe the greatest Exploits in War to Cowards . . ." (183). Gulliver is then struck by how the human imagination also has a tendency to fabricate heroism and how accident plays such a large role in events:

How low an Opinion I had of human Wisdom and Integrity, when I was truly informed of the Springs and Motives of great Enterprizes and Revolutions in the World, and of the contemptible Accidents to which they owed their Success. (183)

Not only is accident largely responsible for great actions, but it often turns military situations right around: "A General confessed in my Presence, that he got a Victory purely by the Force of Cowardice and ill Conduct: And an Admiral, that for want of proper Intelligence, he beat the Enemy to whom he intended to betray the Fleet" (183). Conversely, those who had actually done "some great Service" were "to be found on no Record, except a few of them whom History hath represented as the vilest Rogues and

Traitors" (185). This upside-down world of merit and dishonor is obviously extreme or too perfect.

The method by which the Laputian King suppresses the dominions of Balnibarbi continues the war technology theme. A flying island, controlled by a Load-stone, is used in three stages or degrees of force to quash any act of rebellion:

The first and the mildest Course is by keeping the Island hovering over such a Town, and the lands about it; whereby he can deprive them of the Benefit of the Sun and the Rain, and consequently afflict the Inhabitants with Dearth and Diseases. And if the Crime deserve it, they are at the same time pelted from above with great Stones, against which they have no Defence, but by creeping into Cellars or Caves, while the Roofs of their Houses are beaten to Pieces. But if they still continue obstinate, or offer to raise Insurrections; he proceeds to the last Remedy, by letting the Island drop directly upon their Heads, which makes a universal Destruction both of Houses and Men. (155)

The last and most drastic action is only used in extreme cases, since it would also result in great damage to the estates of the King's own ministers. There is always a selfish reason for not laying waste a country after conquering it; whatever is not destroyed can be pillaged. Gulliver, however, learns of a second reason why Laputians are hesitant about taking the ultimate action. They fear that grave damage might be done to their own island as it is lowered onto the city below. In other words, Swift is saying that even with a superior military machine a country can destroy itself trying to suppress foreign territory.

Superior technology is no guarantee of a successful conquest and can even draw a country into a ruinous action. Should the King feel that the ultimate step is necessary, as a precaution the island is lowered "with great Gentleness, out of a Pretense of Tenderness to [the] People, but indeed for fear of breaking the Adamantine Bottom" (156). It is not surprising, when one considers Swift's pessimistic view, that what is done in self-interest is advertised as an act of mercy.

Three additional paragraphs were hand-written in Ford's copy of the first edition and meant to be included before the last sentence of Chapter III in Part III (see 293-294). This addition relates the circumstances of the Lindalino rebellion which Case concludes "was an allegorical description of the controversy over Wood's half-pence," with Lindalino representing Dublin and Balnibarbi Ireland.<sup>27</sup> The rebellion is interesting insofar as the citizens of Lindalino are able to construct their own Load-stone defense system and nullify the threat posed by the flying island. As a result, the King is forced to submit to the Lindalinian demands. The story illustrates how one side can copy the technological advantage of the other and effect a stalemate. Hence, Swift gives the reader his own version of how the arms race shifts into higher gear with each new application of science and how the higher gear always means a greater potential for

inflicting death and destruction. As this rhythm of advantage-gained leading to advantage-nullified increases the power to kill, so it decreases the significance of individual lives. Mutual fear combines with science to place man in an increasingly dangerous predicament.

#### A Voyage to the Houyhnhnms

Swift's strongest attack against war comes in Part IV. Here he brings together and completes several of the earlier themes which deal with war. There is no Houyhnhnm word for "War", (228) which makes European history a difficult matter for Gulliver to communicate to his Houyhnhnm master and which also clearly reflects war's unreason.

When his Houyhnhnm master asks Gulliver about "the usual Causes or Motives that make one Country go to War with another," Gulliver's answer progresses from the satirical to the absolutely absurd:

Sometimes the Ambition of Princes, who never think they have land or People enough to govern: Sometimes the Corruption of Ministers, who engage their Master in a War in order to stifle or divert the Clamour of Subjects against their evil Administration. Difference in Opinions hath cost many Millions of Lives: For Instance, whether *Flesh* be *Bread*, or *Bread* be *Flesh*: Whether the Juice of a certain *Berry* be *Blood* or *Wine*: Whether *Whistling* be a Vice or a Virtue: Whether it be better to *kiss a Post*, or throw it into the Fire: What is the best Colour for a *Coat*, whether *Black*, *White*, *Red* or *Grey*; and whether it should be *long* or *short*, *narrow* or *wide*, *dirty* or *clean*; with many more. Neither are any Wars so furious and bloody, or of so long

Continuance, as those occasioned by Differences in  
Opinion, especially if it be in things indifferent.  
(229-230)

The ridiculous causes all represent some subject of religious controversy involving Roman Catholicism, the Church of England, and Puritanism. Swift's tendency to single out religious wars for special criticism shows that he is continuing the tradition of learned wit which goes back to Burton and Erasmus. To go to war out of some spiritual pretense or crusade is a terrible paradox. Religion should cultivate human benevolence not animosity, or to quote Swift, "We have just Religion enough to make us *hate*, but not enough to make us *love* one another."<sup>28</sup> But wars usually begin for reasons which are extremely complex and inter-related. Religious differences are often just a means of polarizing the greater struggle for economic and political power. By reducing the cause of a war to some absurdly expressed religious controversy, such as whether bread be flesh or bread (transubstantiation), Swift emphasizes how grotesquely out of proportion any war is regardless of what precipitated it.

In the next paragraph, Swift's tirade against war begins to sound more like that of Burton or Erasmus. Swift, however, dwells on a sense of absurd reciprocity: "Sometimes a War is entered upon, because the Enemy is too *strong*, and sometimes because he is too *weak*. Sometimes our Neighbours *want* the *Things* which we *have*, or *have* the



Things which we want; and we both fight, till they take ours or give us theirs" (230). In other words, wars are inevitable no matter what the situation is, and man can do nothing to avoid them. Up to this point the causes of war have all been ridiculous. We seem to hear the ironic author rather than the naive narrator. Moreover, Gulliver's repudiation of the human race is still to come. The unmerciful and selfish part of man is stressed in the bitter irony of the next sentence: "It is a very justifiable Cause of War to invade a Country after the People have been wasted by Famine, destroyed by Pestilence, or embroiled by Factions amongst themselves" (230). Swift continues in this vein until he gets to the following generalization: "*Poor Nations are hungry, and Rich Nations are proud; and Pride and Hunger will ever be at Variance*" (230). Guthkelch and Smith believe that Swift had the cyclical view of war in mind when he wrote this.<sup>29</sup> They are probably right, but the function of this entire passage is to draw a disturbing caricature of human animosity.

In the manner of Burton and Erasmus, Swift lashes out at the profession of the soldier: "For these Reasons, the Trade of a *Soldier* is held the most honourable of all others: Because a *Soldier* is a *Yahoo* hired to kill in cold Blood as many of his own Species, who have never offended him, as possibly he can" (230-231). The direct association of the soldier with the Yahoo points to the

animal in man whose fears are still primitive and who acts with instinctive ruthlessness. On the other hand, the phrase "who never offended him" expresses the artificial nature of how wars are fought between beings who have no reason themselves to fight but who are acting out—in a grotesquely disproportioned way—the natural animosities of those whom they serve. Hence, it is not inconsistent to see the origin of war as instinctive (a Hobbesian view) and the escalated state of war as artificial. In fact, the satirist tends to focus on both of these aspects. Swift then takes the mercenary element a step further and gives another reason for how wars may be monstrously escalated:

There is likewise a Kind of beggarly Princes in *Europe*, not able to make War by themselves, who hire out their Troops to richer Nations for so much a Day to each Man; of which they keep three Fourths to themselves, and it is the best Part of their Maintenance; such are those in many *Northern Parts of Europe*. (231)

Louis Landa identifies this as "an allusion to the mercenaries of George I when Elector of Hanover."<sup>30</sup>

Paradoxically, the military is a common means of livelihood for the lower classes and of profit for princes with armies for hire.

Gulliver estimates that there have been about a "Million" Yahoo casualties thus far in "the long War with *France*" which began under William of Orange (229). His Houyhnhnm master accuses him of saying "*the Thing which is not*", for the Yahoo bite is hampered by a flat face and

Yahoo claws are short and tender. Actually, the Houyhnhnm-Yahoos often engage in vicious battles (which, in the words of Gulliver, are "owing to the same Cause with ours"—like the desire for "*shining Stones*"), but "they seldom were able to kill one another, for want of such convenient Instruments of Death as we had invented" (244). When his master tells Gulliver why he believes that Gulliver is saying "*the Thing which is not*," Gulliver smiles and shakes his head at the Houyhnhnm ignorance of the "Art of War." He then goes on to display his own knowledge of the subject by giving an encyclopedic list of war machines and their effects:

I gave him a Description of Cannons, Culverins, Muskets, Carabines, Pistols, Bullets, Powder, Swords, Bayonets, Sieges, Retreats, Attacks, Undermines, Countermines, Bombardments, Sea-fights; Ships sunk with a Thousand Men; twenty Thousand killed on each Side; dying Groans, Limbs flying in the Air: Smoak, Noise, Confusion, trampling to Death under Horses Feet: Flight, Pursuit, Victory; Fields strewn with Carcasses left for Food to Dogs, and Wolves, and Birds of Prey; Plundering, Stripping, Ravishing, Burning and Destroying. (231)

This passage leans more to the side of the fearful (as opposed to the ludicrous) grotesque in its imagery and style. Gruesome pictures are piled one on top of another until, according to Bosmajian's notion of the literary grotesque, "conglomerations result, conglomerations so numerous that they could not possibly be represented graphically."<sup>31</sup>

Gordon says that the "whole sequence is designed to

suggest a causal connection between inhumane, systemized professionalism and human misery."<sup>32</sup> He then points to how Gulliver uses the terms "of a brave new technological world"; "Bayonets" and "Bombardments" represent the latest invention and jargon in the art.<sup>33</sup> The rhythm in the words "Sieges, Retreats, Attacks, Undermines, Countermines" anticipates the expressive but often confusing outbursts of enthusiasm from Sterne's uncle Toby. Modern warfare has become a grotesque science complete with its own trade language. What Gordon does not notice is how Swift effectively follows these newfangled technological terms with vibrant epic images of death and war. Four items in particular—the dying groans, the limbs flying in the air, the reference to horses, and the flight-pursuit action—suggest Virgil's description of the Trojan rout of the Latins in the Aeneid XI.619-635.<sup>34</sup> This is the same passage on which Sidney probably based his general battle description (see pp. 37, 41 above). The "dying Groans, Limbs flying in the Air; Smoak, Noise, Confusion, trampling to Death under Horses Feet" are true speaking pictures in Sidney's sense of what poetry should be, because the sound images poignantly complete the overall effect. Then there is the aftermath, the field covered with corpses, the vultures, the pillage and rape. Within one extended sentence Swift has reproduced the rhythm of a battle: the firing of cannons, the flow of the battle itself, and the

final sight of destruction and death. The epic motifs universalize the passage. The miseries of war will always be the same, and new technology will only compound what has always been the most sorrowful part of human history.

Gulliver, however, has not finished. We have seen in the three previous Parts how Swift has dealt with the seemingly perverse attraction that war holds for the human eye. If it is not bad enough that man engages in such monstrous murder, then it is even worse that he delights in studying it. The last part of Gulliver's tribute to his fellow Englishmen makes this point with startling irony:

And, to set forth the Valour of my own dear Countrymen,  
I assured him, that I had seen them blow up a Hundred  
Enemies at once in a Siege, and as many in a Ship; and  
beheld the dead Bodies drop down in Pieces from the  
Clouds, to the great Diversion of all the Spectators.  
(231)

It is the casualness of the last remark which emphatically expresses that morbid move from bloodshed to blood-thirst.

Gulliver would even go on "to more Particulars" (231), but the Houyhnhnm has heard enough to draw his conclusions about mankind. Herein one finds Swift's most pessimistic sentence on the grotesque nature of the human intellect:

. . . when a Creature pretending to Reason, could be  
capable of such Enormities, he dreaded lest the  
Corruption of that Faculty might be worse than  
Brutality itself. He seemed therefore confident,  
that instead of Reason, we were only possessed of some  
Quality fitted to increase our natural Vices; as the  
Reflection from a troubled Stream returns the Image of  
an ill-shapen Body, not only *larger*, but more *distorted*.  
(232)

The modern art of warfare has escalated or "distorted" conflicts beyond their natural proportions, because the intellect is used almost entirely in the service of fear thereby magnifying the expression of animosity instead of reducing it. As in A Tale of A Tub, Swift, in the Travels, joins the other satirists who saw the human intellect as something which degraded mankind below the rest of the animal kingdom.<sup>35</sup>

If fear is man's true enemy, then it is fitting—as well as ironic—that Gulliver is banished because the Houyhnhnms fear that he may organize the Yahoos into a rebellion:

. . . because I had some Rudiments of Reason, added to the natural Pravity of those Animals, it was to be feared, I might be able to seduce them into the woody and mountainous Parts of the Country, and bring them in Troops by Night to destroy the *Houyhnhnms* Cattle, as being naturally of the ravenous Kind, and averse from Labour. (263)

Gulliver's absolute repudiation of his own race makes no difference to the Houyhnhnms. In their eminent rationality, the Houyhnhnms can only see Gulliver as an unnecessary risk. Therefore he must be banished in spite of his avowed intention to model himself on their nature. What dooms Gulliver is that he is something of a bastardized cross between Houyhnhnm reason and Yahoo animalism. Unlike the Yahoos, he represents a potential threat that the Houyhnhnms cannot measure. The cynical implication is that imperfect reason is worse than no reason at all. One tends

not to feel that the Houyhnhnm fears about Gulliver are excessive as much as one is struck with the incompassionate nature of perfect Houyhnhnm rationality.

The end of Gulliver's Travels gives the reader a clearer idea of how the confusion between the flesh and the intellect constitutes the human dilemma. Gulliver is so impressed with the reason displayed by the Houyhnhnms that he wants to live the rest of his life among them. His reluctance to rejoin the members of his own species, combined with his fondness for the company of two horses, demonstrates how passion can corrupt one's better sense of what is natural. Swift makes it obvious that Gulliver is phobic but he also gives the reader some cause for the phobia. On the first island that he reaches after leaving the Houyhnhnms, Gulliver is attacked by savages and hit in the knee with an arrow. The subsequent scar or "Mark" which Gulliver carries to his "Grave" (268) symbolizes his extreme abhorrence and distrust of human beings. From the point of the savage attack on, however, Gulliver's excessive and irrational behavior stands out blatantly against the benevolence of the Portuguese Captain. In fact, Swift emphasizes Pedro de Mendez's kindness to make Gulliver seem more like a ludicrous fool. Gulliver's tendency to speak and "trot like a Horse" (263) is a consequence of his grotesque desire to become as much a Houyhnhnm as he possibly can. It may be considered an ultimate step in a

satire against mankind to want to escape the human form.<sup>36</sup>  
 But it is also the ultimate step *ad absurdum*, which is made jokingly as a comment on the foolishness of following what appears to be reasonable too far.

The importance of war as a unifying principle in Gulliver's Travels becomes more evident in the final chapter. Here Gulliver responds to an enquiry about his duty to advise the Secretary of State on the lands which he, as an English subject, has supposedly claimed for the Crown. At first, Gulliver seems to dodge the moral issue. To him the Lilliputians "are hardly worth the Charge of a Fleet and Army to reduce them" (277). He then questions "whether it might be prudent or safe to attempt the *Brobdingnagians*: Or, whether an *English* Army would be much at their Ease with the Flying Island over their Heads" (277). Gulliver, however, must admit that the Houyhnhnms are not "so well prepared for War, a Science to which they are perfect Strangers, and especially against missive Weapons" (277). He then makes a treasonous statement about refusing to give any advice for invading them and seems to overestimate their defense capacity. Moreover, when Gulliver claims that the Houyhnhnms are stronger for their "Unacquaintedness with Fear" (277), he is forgetting the reason for his own banishment. In any case, an attempt to conquer the Houyhnhnms would be of little use, according to Gulliver, who has other ideas on how man can benefit



from them: "But instead of Proposals for conquering that magnanimous Nation, I rather wish they were in a Capacity or Disposition to send a sufficient Number of their Inhabitants for civilizing *Europe*" (277-278). The real issue at hand is whether or not England has any moral right to invade these countries. In the next few paragraphs of Gulliver's final chapter, Swift is able to make his point and protect himself against government censure or retaliation.

First, Gulliver admits to having a "few Scruples" about the standard methods used by countries to establish colonies and expand their dominions. What follows is a gruesome and distorted account of how colonies are discovered and begun:

A Crew of Pyrates are driven by a Storm they know not whither; at length a Boy discovers Land from the Top-mast; they go on Shore to rob and plunder; they see an harmless People, are entertained with Kindness, they give the Country a new Name, they take formal Possession of it for the King, they set up a rotten Plank or a Stone for a Memorial, they murder two or three Dozen of the Natives, bring away a Couple more by Force for a Sample, return home, and get their Pardon. Here commences a new Dominion acquired with a Title by *Divine Right*. Ships are sent with the first Opportunity; the Natives are driven out or destroyed, their Princes tortured to discover their Gold; a free License given to all Acts of Inhumanity and Lust; the Earth reeking with the Blood of its Inhabitants: And this execrable Crew of Butchers employed in so pious an Expedition, is a *modern Colony* sent to convert and civilize an idolatrous and barbarous people. (278)

The account reads like a brilliantly animated short cartoon. Sharp ironic jabs build toward the climax which

resounds with the epic grotesque, "the Earth reeking with the Blood of its Inhabitants."<sup>37</sup> Swift exaggerates the barbarism of these so-called civilized nations, and their civilized pretense makes the barbaric suggestions all the more horrible.

Having implied as much corruption as he can in the account, Gulliver moves to the other extreme in considering his own country: "But this Description . . . doth by no means affect the *British* Nation, who may be an Example to the whole World for their Wisdom, Care, and Justice in planting Colonies" (278). From the sharp sarcasms the reader is led to a higher plane of irony, and this shift maintains the ironic intensity of the passage. The reference to "Gold" in the preceding account may be enough to satisfy some readers that Gulliver is talking about the Spanish. But the claim that England stocks her "Provinces with People of sober Lives and Conversations" is an unmistakable slap against the practise of transporting convicts (278). As barbarism is more disturbing when committed under a "civilized" cloak, so condemnation is somehow more unnerving when it comes in the form of ironic praise. Hence Swift's mode of defense doubles as the barb of his attack.

One last sarcastic blow is delivered in Gulliver's final statement on colonization:

But, as those Countries which I have described do not

appear to have a Desire of being conquered, and enslaved, murdered or driven out by Colonies; nor abound either in Gold, Silver, Sugar or Tobacco; I did humbly conceive they were by no Means proper Objects of our Zeal, our Valour, or our Interest.  
(279)

This reinstates the English association with the account of colonial barbarism and daringly negates the mocking qualification of "the *British* Nation" stated in the previous paragraph.

The way Swift handles the subject of war in Gulliver's Travels shows a marked shift from the ludicrous squabble of Part I to the shocking descriptions of Parts II and IV. Part III may even be more unsettling than Part II because here Gulliver reveals his delight in military spectacle. But the basic ambivalence, which is essential to the grotesque, runs throughout Gulliver's Travels. There remains something frightening in the familiarity of Lilliputian pettiness and something ridiculous in Gulliver's wish to be a horse. What Swift stresses the most is what modern man has had to recognize about himself—that his reason is far more in the service of his fear than vice versa.

#### NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Clayborough, The Grotesque in English Literature (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> Patrick G. Gleeson, "Gulliver's Travels as a Version of the Grotesque," Diss. University of Washington, 1964.

<sup>3</sup> Hamida Bosmajian, "The Nature and Function of the Grotesque Image in Eighteenth-Century English Literature," Diss. University of Connecticut, 1968.

<sup>4</sup> Robert C. Gordon, "Jonathan Swift and the Modern Art of War," Bulletin of Research in the Humanities, 83 (1980), 187-202.

<sup>5</sup> For an analysis of this debate, see Lois G. Schwoerer, No Standing Armies! (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1974).

For a discussion of Swift's relevance in the age of atomic weaponry, see James Gray, "The Modernism of Jonathan Swift," Queen's Quarterly, 67, No. 1 (1960), 11-17.

<sup>6</sup> See "An Argument Shewing, that a Standing Army, with Consent of Parliament, is not Inconsistent with a Free Government" (1698), in Daniel Defoe, ed. James Boulton (New York: Schocken Books, 1965), pp. 35-50.

<sup>7</sup> Jonathan Swift, A Tale of A Tub &c., ed. A. C. Guthkelch and D. Nichol Smith, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 162. All references to A Tale of A Tub and The Battle of the Books are made to this edition and included in the text after the abbreviations "TT" and "BB" respectively.

<sup>8</sup> See pp. 105-106, 126, 172-174 above. Swift cites the expression by Horace, "*Teterrima belli / Causa*" (Satires I.iii.107-108), which may also have inspired Burton; see

p. 182 n. 11 above. Shakespeare's Thersites says the following on the Trojan War: "All the argument is a cuckold and a whore" (Tro. II.iii.77-78).

<sup>9</sup> Swift's irony in the notion of greatness looks ahead to Henry Fielding's The History of Jonathan Wild the Great in which the pure "Greatness" of conquerors and tyrants is shown to be incompatible with goodness; see The Complete Works of Henry Fielding, Esq., Vol. II, ed. William Ernest Henley (New York: Croscup & Sterling, 1902), pp. 3, 66-67.

But the way Swift's narrator praises madness is probably more like Erasmus's Encomium Moriae in which Folly is praised for playing such a large role in human battles; see Desiderius Erasmus, Opera Omnia, Vol. IV (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagesbuchhandlung, 1962), p. 422D-E.

<sup>10</sup> See David P. French, "Swift and Hobbes—A Neglected Parallel," Boston University: Studies in English, 3 (1957), 243-255. For some reason French fails to link the two with reference to the subject of war or mention one of Swift's clearest endorsements of Hobbes's philosophy in "On Poetry" (1733): "Hobbes clearly proves that e'ery Creature / Lives in a State of War by Nature," ll. 319-320, in The Poems of Jonathan Swift, Vol. II. ed. Harold Williams, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), p. 651.

<sup>11</sup> Philip Pinkus, "Swift and the Ancients-Moderns Controversy," University of Toronto Quarterly, 29, No. 1 (1959), 51: "On the one hand Swift ridicules the controversy—the image of the battle is ridiculous; on the other, the Ancients win a series of victories over the Moderns, and Swift appears to be identifying himself with the details of the controversy. . . . [Swift's] first aim was to defend Sir William Temple against his opponents and put them in their place. At the same time he felt obliged to ridicule the controversy and keep Temple's ideas at a distance."

<sup>12</sup> Lucan: The Civil War I.160-170, trans. J. D. Duff, Loeb Classical Library (1928; rpt. London: Heinemann, 1962).

For further evidence of Swift's classical view of history (especially of how luxury leads to war), see J. W. Johnson, "Swift's Historical Outlook," Journal of British Studies, 4, No. 2 (1965), 68-69; and his more general study, The Formation of English Neo-Classical Thought (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), pp. 44-49.

13 Homer: The Iliad, Vol. I, 2 vols., trans. A. T. Murray, Loeb Classical Library (I 1924, II 1925; rpt. London: Heinemann, I 1965, II 1939). All references are to these volumes and included in the text.

14 The revelry of this feast underlines the needless loss of life in the war. Jonathan Miller, who directed the BBC production of Troilus and Cressida, included Paris in the Trojan entourage and had him bump with Menelaus as all the characters walked off stage at the end of the feast. This highlights the fact that the whole Trojan War is really just a personal dispute between Menelaus and Paris.

15 Jonathan Swift, The Conduct of the Allies, in Political Tracts: 1711-1713, ed. Herbert Davis (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1951), p. 41. All references are made to this edition and included in the text after "CA".

16 For a detailed study of the Swift-Marlborough controversy of 1710-1713, see Michael Foot, The Pen and the Sword (London: Macgibbon & Kee, 1957).

17 The Conduct of the Allies is not without Swiftian irony. On England's allies not carrying their share of the war burden, Swift writes: "It is therefore to be hoped, that his *Prussian* Majesty, at the end of this War, will not have the same grievous Cause of Complaint, which he had at the Close of the last; that his Military-Chest was emptier by Twenty thousand Crowns, than at the Time that War began" (CA, 33).

Swift also allows his humorous fancy some exercise: "If all this, I say be our Case, it is a very obvious Question to ask, by what Motives, or what Management, we are thus become the *Dupes* and *Bubbles* of Europe? Sure it cannot be owing to the Stupidity arising from the coldness of our Climate, since those among our Allies, who have given us most Reason to complain, are as far removed from the Sun as our selves" (CA, 40)

18 Jonathan Swift, "Thoughts on *Various* Subjects," in A Tale of a Tub with Other Early Works: 1696-1707, ed. Herbert Davis (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), p. 241.

19 Irvin Ehrenpreis, The Personality of Jonathan Swift (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), p. 91.

20 This position is supported by the view taken by

Samuel Kliger in "The Unity of Gulliver's Travels," Modern Language Quarterly, 6 (1945), 405-406—that through common themes and motifs Swift was arguing in all Parts of Gulliver's Travels that "reason itself produces the deadliest of animosities, as in war between nations or civil strife in politics and religion," and that consequently man is inferior to the "happy beast" who acts according to natural instinct as opposed to faulty reason.

21 Gleeson argues that a comparison of the war element in Parts I and II reveals Gulliver's contradictory nature: "Where he earlier works to bring the Lilliputian-Blefuscan war to a bloodless conclusion, he later demonstrates a bloodthirsty insensitivity to human suffering." p. 94. My comments on Gulliver's shift from a macro to a micro perspective will point to the naturalness of this contradiction.

22 Jonathan Swift, Gulliver's Travels, [ed. Herbert Davis] (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1941), pp. 5-6. All references are made to this edition and included in the text.

23 For an explication of the political allegory in Part I, see Arthur Case, "Personal and Political Satire in Gulliver's Travels," in Four Essays on Gulliver's Travels (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1958), pp. 69-80. Ehrenpreis's correction to this explication is worth noting—Part I corresponds to Swift's version of the political events and not to the events objectively; see Ehrenpreis, p. 85.

24 Ehrenpreis, p. 95.

25 Gordon comments on Gulliver's explanation of the King's refusal or that the Brobdingnagians have not "reduced *Politicks* into a *Science*, as the more acute Wits of *Europe* have done" (119): "Instead of '*Politicks*' the reader would ordinarily expect '*Military Affairs*' or '*War*' as most naturally connected with the scenes of '*Blood and Desolation*' just described by Gulliver. By substituting '*Politicks*' and adding the anti-Walpolean references to '*Mystery*, '*Refinement*, and '*Intrigue*,' Swift is emphasizing the connection in his mind and Gulliver's between the destructive technology of the new warfare and what he regards as the Caesaristic techniques of the new ministerial methods of government." Gordon, p. 195.

26 Edmund Burke, Of the Sublime and Beautiful, ed. J. T. Boulton (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), pp. 141-142.

27 See Case, pp. 80-84.

28 "Thoughts on *Various Subjects*," in A Tale of a Tub with Other Early Works: 1696-1707, p. 241.

29 Guthkelch and Smith, p. 218.

30 Louis Landa, ed., Gulliver's Travels (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960), p. 257.

31 Bosmajian, p. 28. This is close to the rhetorical technique of *amplificatio*.

32 Gordon, p. 197.

33 Gordon, p. 197.

34 The Latins "*fugiunt*" (623) or "flee" and the Trojans "*agunt*" (620) or "drive them." "[*G*]emitus morientum" (633) is "the groans of dying men." Next one reads "*sanguine in alto*" which means "in deep blood," but *altus* means high as well as deep and "*in alto*" could suggest "in the air." Lastly, there are the "*equi*" (635) or "horses." See Aeneid XI.618-635, in Virgil, Vol. II, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, Loeb Classical Library, rev. ed. (1934; rpt. London: Heinemann, 1966). I am indebted to Kevin McCabe of the McMaster Classics Department for the foregoing.

35 For More and Erasmus, see p. 182, n. 13. The Earl of Rochester makes the same point in "A Satyr against Reason and Mankind":

For hunger or for love they [animals] fight and tear,  
Whilst wretched man is still in arms for fear,  
For fear he arms, and is of arms afraid,  
By fear to fear successively betrayed; 11.139-142

The Complete Poems of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, ed. David M. Vieth (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 99.

Of course the satirist who was not so extreme as to place man below beasts could still criticize man's use of



war machines. One might remember Henry Fielding's aside to the reader after a fist-fight in Tom Jones: "Here we cannot suppress a pious wish, that all quarrels were to be decided by those weapons only with which Nature, knowing what is proper for us, hath supplied us; and that cold iron was to be used in digging no bowels but those of the earth. Then would war, the pastime of monarchs, be almost inoffensive . . ." In The Complete Works of Henry Fielding, Esq., Vol. III, pp. 267-268. This wish represents the Augustan belief in the virtue of living as close to nature as possible.

36 Rochester, for instance, begins his poem, "A Satyr against Reason and Mankind," by humorously claiming that he would rather be "a dog, a monkey, or a bear, / Or anything but that vain animal / Who is so proud of being rational" (ll.5-7).

37 This one the most common epic tropes. See the Iliad XVII.361; and Aeneid IX.455-456, XII.690-691.

CHAPTER FIVE:  
SMOLLETT'S RODERICK RANDOM

The Cartagena Expedition

It was suggested in the previous chapter that time created a sense of distance between the satirist and the object of his satire and that this distance allowed for the development of a grotesque vision. The theory at least could well account for the change in how Swift treats the War of the Spanish Succession in Part I of Gulliver's Travels as opposed to his earlier work, The Conduct of the Allies. With Smollett and the Cartagena episode, however, the situation is more complex. Two leading scholars on Smollett concur in the belief that the grotesque naval passages in Roderick Random (1748) were based on a personal diary which Smollett kept on the expedition seven years earlier.<sup>1</sup> Conversely, Smollett's more straightforward history and criticism of the expedition came sometime later in "An Account of the Expedition against Carthagene," published anonymously in The Compendium of Authentic and Entertaining Voyages (1756). According to Louis Martz, what had seemed "utter folly to the choleric young surgeon's mate became somewhat more understandable upon a mature and

calm consideration of objective accounts."<sup>2</sup> Hence, one is tempted to say that time cultivated Swift's grotesque vision but dissolved Smollett's.

Such a conclusion is, however, simplistic. First, even if Smollett did keep a diary, Roderick Random was written long after the expedition took place and this probably contributed to its heightened sense of the comic grotesque in comparison to the "Account." In any case, it must be admitted that the "Account" itself contains some grotesque passages which are very similar to those in the novel, so that there is a certain consistency in Smollett's attitude. Unlike Swift who only knew war in the abstract, Smollett had actually witnessed the spectacular horror of battle and was probably forever after affected by his first impressions. All this still ignores the more important issues of literary form and purpose. Both The Conduct of the Allies and "An Account of the Expedition against Carthagene" were written in a straightforward manner and meant to convince their readers of definite opinions concerning the events that they were addressing. Gulliver's Travels and Roderick Random, on the other hand, are both fictional worlds that exist quite apart from the respective realities that inspired them. Martz recognizes this point while discussing Smollett's novel and perceptively reconciles the fiction to the author's ultimate purpose as expressed in the "Preface":

Perhaps he [Smollett] wilfully distorted the truth; perhaps he was unconsciously carried away by a vein of vilification: in either case he was justified in warping the facts to achieve his implied purpose in the novel as a whole: to arouse "that generous indignation which ought to animate the reader, against the sordid and vicious disposition of the world." Aesthetically, the novel would have suffered from any break in the sustained tone of indignation which lends such fire and force to this account of the expedition.<sup>3</sup>

Like The Unfortunate Traveller, Roderick Random presents the reader with a picaresque world in which war seems to be a standard feature.

Roderick's views on the horrors of the Cartagena expedition foreshadow the absurdities which attend his involvement in the battle of Dettingen. The Cartagena expedition was part of the War of Jenkins's Ear (1739-1744) which pitted Britain against Spain for control of the Caribbean Sea and which merged with the wider War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748). The War of Jenkins's Ear? Henry Viets explains how the conflict came to be known by such a ridiculous name:

Jenkins's brig *Rebecca*, returning from Jamaica to London, was boarded by the [Spanish] guarda-costa off Havana on April 9, 1731. The brig was plundered and one of Jenkins's ears was cut off. This outrage caused considerable stir in London, where Jenkins finally arrived on the Thames, minus his ear. The affair died down, only to be revived in 1738, when Jenkins was examined before a committee of the House of Commons. The story lost nothing in the telling; the ear was even produced for the benefit of the committee. Public indignation was aroused and the "War of Jenkins's Ear" ensued.<sup>4</sup>

Imagination could not conjure up a pretext for going to war more ludicrous and fearful than that of a severed ear!

Even though the underlying causes went beyond this physical gesture, there is a morbidity in how the human imagination clings to absurd emblems and names.

Roderick first resolves to enlist in the navy because it is the only way he can support himself. He delays doing so until he is absolutely desperate: "I saw no resource but the army or navy, between which I hesitated so long, that I found myself reduced to a starving condition" (139). Once again one may recognize the old paradox of having to earn a living by killing others. However, the beginning of Roderick's military career is an interesting combination of personal volition and coercive violence. On his way to seek a friend's advice about enlisting, Roderick is beaten and forcibly taken aboard the *Thunder*, a British man-of-war. This incident is a fitting initiation into the military world. Of course, violent abductions are commonplace in the picaresque novel and this one just seems to represent the corrupt recruitment practices of the eighteenth century. On the other hand, it could be said that the whole spectrum of military violence epitomizes the brutality of the picaresque world.

In contrast to those satirists who attack mankind or universal human folly, Smollett aims his criticism at the management of this particular military strike against Cartagena. Considering that Smollett himself was a surgeon's mate, it is perfectly understandable that much of

his satire has to do with the medical arrangements.

Roderick's initial description of the Thunder's "sick birth or hospital" sets the grotesque mood for the horrors to come:

Here I saw about fifty miserable distempered wretches, suspended in rows, so huddled one upon another, that not more than fourteen inches of space was allotted for each with his bed and bedding; and deprived of the light of the day, as well as of fresh air; breathing nothing but a noisome atmosphere of the morbid steams exhaling from their own excrements and diseased bodies, devoured with vermin hatched in the filth that surrounded them, and destitute of every convenience necessary for people in that helpless condition. (149)

A sense of futility pervades the scene. The ship has not even left port and already the medical situation seems hopeless. Smollett elicits a claustrophobic mood about being on board a ship when its crew is stricken with the distemper. Roderick's description seems to be completely on the side of the terrible grotesque.

Much of the absurdity and horror of the expedition itself comes from the perspective of the medical unit of which Roderick is a part. When Captain Oakhum comes on board, he is given a sick list by the surgeon's first mate, Morgan. Seeing that sixty-one men were sick with the distemper, the Captain flies into a rage and vows that "there shall be no sick in this ship while I have the command of her" (157). The sick can only hamper the effectiveness of the expedition, and hence the Captain, aided by the surgeon Mackshane, reduces the list "to less than a dozen" by

ruthlessly ordering the sick back to their stations (157-159). Several die and thus relieve the Thunder from the burden of having to treat them. This act seems to be an abuse of the old argument, mentioned by Vegetius in De Re Militari,<sup>5</sup> that activity is better than medicine to keep soldiers healthy.

A second instance of the head surgeon's ruthlessness and ineptitude follows soon after the distemper incident. One of Roderick's companions, Jack Rattlin, suffers a broken leg when a mast falls on him during a storm. Mackshane resolves "to amputate the leg immediately" (164). Morgan intervenes and declares that an amputation is unnecessary. With Roderick's help, he sets the leg successfully and thereby saves it but at the expense of incurring the head surgeon's bitter wrath. Mackshane's ineptitude lends an added sense of horror to the battle scenes to come inasmuch as the crew begins to fear its own medical doctor as much as they do the enemy.

The most grotesque battle scene occurs before the Thunder even reaches her destination. Eight French men-of-war are met at open sea. France is not a declared enemy of Britain at this stage of the hostilities so an engagement is unnecessary as well as ill-advised. Nevertheless, Captain Oakhum demands that the French have someone board the Thunder and this raises the dispute: ". . . they refused, telling him, if he had any business

with them, to come on board of their ship: He then threatened to pour in a broad-side upon them, which they promised to return" (167). Both sides become stubborn victims of their own promises and the battle erupts. The scene illustrates how so many lives can rest in the hands of one man whose judgement is, at best, dubious.

When the engagement begins, Roderick is tied to the deck as a consequence of some absurd spy-charge made by Mackshane. Fully exposed to the battle and unable to move, Roderick may be said to be in a gothic-like predicament that plays upon our dread of enchainment, and Smollett spares nothing. At first, Roderick is able to contain his agitation but something happens to trigger his screaming:

I endeavoured to compose myself as much as possible, by reflecting that I was not a whit more exposed than those who were stationed about me; but when I beheld them employed without intermission, in annoying the foe, and encouraged by the society and behaviour of one another, I could easily perceive a wide difference between their condition and mine: However, I concealed my agitation as well as I could, till the head of the officer of Marines, who stood near me, being shot off, bounced from the deck athwart my face, leaving me well-nigh blinded with brains.—I could contain myself no longer, but began to bellow with all the strength of my lungs. (167-168)

The shattering of Roderick's ability to retain his composure accentuates the overwhelming horror of the scene. But there may be a curious delight for the reader in realizing how well Smollett has set the scene to maximize the palpability of the trauma. (There is a bit of irony



here too—after all, one sympathizes acutely with poor Roderick's predicament without any concern for the officer who is decapitated.) As for the gory image of the splattered brains, we have already seen that it is a standard epic-battle motif (see pp. 99-101 above). One might say that Smollett restores a truly grotesque feeling to what had become a literary commonplace.

In fact, Smollett even wades further into ghoulish, anatomical details: ". . . a drummer coming towards me, asked if I was wounded; and before I could answer, received a great shot in his belly which tore out his intrails, and he fell flat on my breast" (168). Our hero then screams himself into a stupor and remains in his messy condition all night. Smollett touches a primitive nerve by bringing together the grotesque horror of human carnage and the more mundane, yet delirious, feeling of not being able to wipe a foul substance from one's face. In his article, "The 'Show of Violence' in Smollett's Novels," Angus Ross says that "Roderick is the sufferer by the violence, not a spectator" and concludes that "Smollett's aim is to attack wanton brutality."<sup>6</sup> The incident, of course, does much more. Roderick's terror stems from being forced to witness, at close quarters, the awful bloodshed and not being able to lose himself in "annoying the foe" or in the "society" of his comrades. Although it is impossible to determine exactly how far Smollett intended us to interpret

this scene, Roderick's screams express what every man should feel who does not turn away from the bloody consequences of war. It is precisely because soldiers can lose themselves in mechanical functions and distance themselves from death that battles get as bloody as they do.

Since the engagement with the French men-of-war begins out of irrational stubbornness and irascible behavior, it is appropriate that it would have an equally absurd ending:

The engagement lasted till broad day, when captain Oakhum, finding he was like to gain neither honour nor advantage by the affair, pretended to be undeceived by seeing their colours; and hailing the ship with whom he had fought all night, protested he believed them Spaniards, and the guns being silenced on each side, ordered the barge to be hoisted out, and went on board of the French commodore. (168)

It is worth noting that Smollett records a similarly absurd encounter in his "Account."<sup>7</sup> The gross circumstances of Roderick's predicament are, however, completely fictitious, which lends the scene a greater importance in terms of Smollett's grotesque imagination. In any case, the whole night of bloody battle, to which Roderick is so fearfully exposed, does not change a single thing with respect to either side. All the cannon fire, material destruction and loss of life are for nothing. This terrible and senseless waste characterizes the rest of the expedition.

The final irony about the episode is that despite the reader's feeling for Roderick's situation, Roderick

himself escapes without a scratch—shaken yes, but otherwise completely unscathed. Joanne Lewis Lynn comments on how the incident poignantly represents the human condition in a grotesque world and how Roderick recovers: "The scene is both realistic and a grisly comic symbol of the human condition in a comic grotesque world. From such scenes of horror and bloodshed, Roderick rises again and again, with the resilience of Punch."<sup>8</sup> Smollett's picaresque hero, like Jack Wilton, always recovers and this is part of the comic or festive rhythm of the narrative.

When the Thunder first arrives at Cartagena, Roderick makes some criticisms of the English strategy in which the reader clearly senses Smollett's own indignation. First, Roderick calls into question the unnecessary delays of the English fleet. Had it proceeded directly to the target, the Spanish would have been caught unprepared. As it is, the English fleet gives the Spanish more than enough time to fortify their defenses as best they can. Roderick sarcastically expresses his criticism in the form of a tribute: "But if I might be allowed to give my opinion of the matter, I would ascribe this delay to the generosity of our chiefs, who scorned to take any advantage that fortune might give them, even over an enemy" (179). Next, Roderick mocks the site chosen for the camp:

At last, however, we weighed and anchored again somewhat nearer the harbour's mouth, where we made shift to land our marines, who encamped on the beach, in

despite of the enemy's shot, which knocked a good many of them on the head.—This piece of conduct in chusing a camp under the walls of an enemy's fortification, which I believe never happened before, was practised, I presume, with a view of accustoming the soldiers to stand fire, who were not as yet much used to discipline, most of them having been taken from the plough-tail a few months before. (179)

This ironical explanation leads right into the final criticism which is aimed at how inexperienced the troops are:

This again has furnished matter for censure against the Ministry, for sending a few raw recruits on such an important enterprize, while so many veteran regiments lay inactive at home: But surely our governours had their reasons for doing so, which possibly may be disclosed with other secrets of the deep. Perhaps they were loth to risk their best troops on such desperate service; or, may be the colonels and field officers of the old corps, who, generally speaking, enjoyed their commissions as sinecures or pensions, for some domestick services rendered to the court, refused to embark in such a dangerous and precarious undertaking; for which, no doubt, they are to be much commended. (179-180)

Here one begins to see the strong political element in Smollett's satire. While Swift resembles a pacifist, Smollett shocks the modern reader with his implied opinions on how the war could have been won.

On the other hand, there seems to be a general statement which transcends the political satire. The reluctance of veteran soldiers to join a military operation may naturally arise from the experience of past wars. Smollett continually emphasizes the danger and desperate nature of this particular expedition, but I cannot help but think that something more general is being suggested. It is difficult to read the closing, "for which . . . they

are to be much commended," with the same irony that runs through the whole passage. The veterans are wise to stay home, and perhaps all military operations depend to a large extent on luring naive recruits into battle. Those who escape death the first time are not so eager to face the risk again.

In the next chapter, the Thunder finds herself in an artillery duel with the fort of Bocca Chica. The bombardment gets so fierce that nerves are shattered and animosity breaks out on board. A sailor carries a wounded fellow to the cockpit "where he tossed him down like a bag of oats" (181). The man is already dead, and when Morgan tells the sailor to heave the body overboard, the sailor responds, "D\_\_n the body! . . . I think 'tis fair enough if I take care of my own" (182). Morgan chases him with a knife, but the incident is cut short by the appearance of Jack Rattlin with his hand "shattered to pieces with grape shot" (182). This time Rattlin's limb must be amputated, and while Roderick dresses the stump, Rattlin offers his views on another tactical error of the fleet:

. . . instead of dropping anchor close under shore, where we should have had to deal with one corner of Bocca Chica only, we had opened the harbour, and exposed ourselves to the whole fire of the enemy from their shipping and fort St. Joseph, as well as from the castle we intended to cannonade; that besides, we lay at too great a distance to damage the walls, and three parts in four of our shot did not take place; for there was scarce any body on board, who understood the pointing of a gun. (182)

Subjected to the terrible bombardment and caught in the confusion, the crew of the Thunder becomes increasingly ineffectual.

The madness and panic of the battle extends to the medical unit. To strengthen his resolution, Mackshane "had recourse more than once to a case-bottle of rum" (183). Consequently, he performs his duties with reckless abandon: ". . . he went to work, and arms and legs were hewed down without mercy" (183). There are few images as horrifying as an inebriated surgeon who amputates unnecessarily at the best of times. Joanne Lynn is certainly correct in calling this "a farcical scene" in which "the comic is . . . firmly in control and serves to heighten, rather than defuse the horror."<sup>9</sup> The parson and purser also indulge in the rum, and the former, whose job it is to calm the men in battle, becomes delirious: ". . . he stript himself to the skin, and besmearing his body with blood, could scarce be withheld from running upon deck in that condition" (183). This drunken madness reflects the unnatural madness of the bombardment.

Despite Rattlin's criticism, the fleet eventually does secure the harbour. This success, however, only makes Roderick wonder why the English forces do not push for a quick victory:

And indeed, if a few great ships had sailed up immediately, before they had recovered from the confusion and despair that our unexpected success had produced

among them, it is not impossible that we might have finished the affair to our satisfaction, without any more blood-shed: but this our Heroes disdained, as a barbarous insult over the enemy's distress; and gave them all the respite they could desire, in order to recollect themselves. (185)

Roderick is thinking like a military modernist who would use any available means to achieve his objective. He even gives his expeditious scheme a humanitarian appeal by claiming that it would minimize the bloodshed. But, according to Roderick, the "Heroes" of the campaign possess a chivalric attitude about war which forbids such a move. On the surface, Roderick's scheme seems only reasonable. The use of military force is a definite capitulation to physical violence, and half measures are only foolish (unless one sees war as a game). Any pretentious code of honour is also foolish; to the modernist, war is war. On the other hand, Roderick is in no position to know all the particulars of the situation. Perhaps a hasty pursuit of the enemy would have been unwise. Perhaps the English needed time to regroup and assess the situation. The fact that Smollett does not repeat the criticism in the "Account" suggests that he either changed his mind about such a maneuver after learning more facts or intended Roderick to be presumptuous.

In any case, Roderick continues his ironical attack when he counters the argument that the high casualties among the English were owing to "bad provision and want of

water" (186). First, the transport ships could have obtained fresh supplies "from Jamaica and other adjacent islands" (186). Second, "a sufficient number remained to fall before the walls of St. Lazar, where they behaved like their own country mastifs, which shut their eyes, run into the jaws of a bear, and have their heads crushed for their valour" (186). Here Roderick shifts his focus to the soldiers themselves and mocks the idea of military heroism by aligning it with blind stupidity. Still, the soldiers presumably are only obeying orders.

Roderick channels most of his frustration in a tirade against his own leaders for their poor decisions. His description of the disastrous assault on the castle of St. Lazur is marked by his typical wit, which is here reminiscent of Sidney's *conciliatio* (see p. 39 above). A resolution is made that the soldiers are to attack "with musquetry only" and "the enemy giv[es] them such a hearty reception, that the greatest part of the detachment took up their everlasting residence on the spot" (186-187). Roderick then mentions the horrible number of casualties:

Our chief not relishing this kind of complaisance in the Spaniards, was wise enough to retreat on board with the remains of his army, which, from eight thousand able men landed on the beach near Bocca Chica, was now reduced to fifteen hundred fit for service. (187)

The sarcasm overly simplifies the situation and makes it appear that the failure of the attack was due to blatant



and unaccountable idiocy. Roderick's ironical tirade exaggerates not the loss of life (his statistics are correct) but the senseless way in which it was lost.

Naturally, the disastrous assault means a great number of wounded and ceaseless work for the surgeons. Roderick describes the crammed "hospital ships" in all their wretchedness which recalls his first impressions of the Thunder's sick bay:

The sick and wounded were squeezed into certain vessels, which thence obtained the name of hospital ships, though methinks they scarce deserved such a creditable title, seeing none of them could boast of either surgeon, nurse or cook; and the space between decks was so confined, that the miserable patients had not room to sit upright in their beds. Their wounds and stumps being neglected, contracted filth and putrefaction, and millions of maggots were hatched amid the corruption of their sores. This inhuman disregard was imputed to the scarcity of surgeons; though it is well known, that every great ship in the fleet could have spared one at least for this duty, which would have been more than sufficient to remove this shocking inconvenience. . . (187)

One senses that the claustrophobic mood of being confined to one of these ships is partially projected by what must have been Smollett's own deeply felt helplessness in not being able to treat the victims.<sup>10</sup> Lack of care and space magnifies the infection. It seems that the deliberate disregard for the injured results from a policy whereby primary consideration is given the military operation.

Roderick, however, offers a more specific reason—a squabble between General Wentworth, commander of the

land forces, and Admiral Vernon, commander of the fleet. Apparently, Wentworth refused to ask Vernon for the use of some of the fleet's surgeons because "the general was too much of a gentleman to ask a favour of this kind from his fellow-chief" (187). The Admiral "on the other hand, would not derogate so far from his own dignity, as to offer such assistance unasked" (187). These same frivolous emotions, which leave the injured in desperate anguish, also doom the entire expedition. Roderick goes on to cite a classical parallel for the discord in Lucan's account of the civil war between Caesar and Pompey: ". . . it might be said of these great men, (I hope they will pardon the comparison) as of Caesar and Pompey, the one could not brook a superior, and the other was impatient of an equal" (187).<sup>11</sup> The request for pardon sharpens the irony. This theme of internal dissension, here given mock-epic treatment (Lucan's The Civil War is an epic), pervades the Iliad as well insofar as the dispute between Agamemnon and Achilles, over a concubine, greatly hampers the Greek war effort. Roderick then moves from classical profundity to an extremely crude proverb:

So that between the pride of one, and insolence of another, the enterprize miscarried, according to the proverb, "Between two stools the backside falls to the ground."—Not that I would be thought to liken any publick concern to that opprobrious part of the human body, although I might with truth assert, if I durst use such a vulgar idiom, that the nation did hang an a\_se at its disappointment on this occasion . . . (187)

The vulgarity of the metaphor reaffirms the grotesque vision of our picaresque hero and demonstrates how Smollett uses the character of Roderick as a medium for his own coarse humor.

The Admiral performs one final and mad act of war—the last desperate and unwarranted bombardment of St. Lazar. Various highly speculative reasons for the order are suggested, one of which was the same thing that "induced Don Quixote to attack the windmill" (188). Because war inflames the passions, such irrational acts are not unusual. Roderick mentions a few other possible reasons and then takes a backhanded swipe at the administration back in England: "But all these suggestions surely proceed from ignorance and malevolence, or else the admiral would not have found it such an easy matter, at his return to England, to justify his conduct to a ministry at once so upright and discerning" (188). Smollett's anti-Whig sentiments were well known, and through Roderick he makes his criticisms whenever he can.

Roderick's melancholy grows as the campaign becomes more desperate. The final description appropriately fixes on the scavenger motif:

Such was the oeconomy in some ships, that, rather than be at the trouble of interring the dead, their commanders ordered their men to throw the bodies overboard, many without either ballast or winding-sheet; so that numbers of human carcasses floated in the harbour, until they were devoured by sharks and carrion crows; which afforded no agreeable

spectacle to those who survived. (189)

We have seen the scavenger motif in three of the four selections thus far in this study and have traced it back to the epic (see pp. 109, 166-167, 232 above). Samuel Johnson also used it in an Idler paper (September 9, 1758) which he later tried to suppress, probably because it was so pessimistic. In a simple allegory, the paper presents a dialogue between two vultures in which they conclude that mankind is "a friend to vultures" because his frequent and fierce battles provide them with savoury feasts.<sup>12</sup> The older vulture refers to a battlefield as one might describe a tossed salad: ". . . the ground smoaking with blood and covered with carcasses, of which many are dismembered and mangled for the convenience of the vulture."<sup>13</sup> Out of every death comes a renewed form of life.

One final comment might be added to this study of the grotesque and the Cartagena expedition. A "bilious fever" breaks out among the fleet and strikes Roderick just after the Thunder sets sail from Bocca Chica. Disease frequently accompanies military operations because they are conducted in the worst sanitary conditions and because the troops are already suffering from wounds and sores.<sup>14</sup> Roderick's case provides Smollett with the opportunity to criticize the medical practices of the time, something which he does sparingly in this whole episode.

Roderick claims that his recovery is owing to his refusal of "all medicine," which he believes "co-operated with the disease" (191).<sup>15</sup> The whole naval episode in Roderick Random dwells on the theme of human self-destruction. Through his folly and grossly exaggerated animosity, man finds all sorts of unnatural ways to end his life prematurely.

#### The Battle of Dettingen

Since repetition is an integral part of the episodic rhythm in the picaresque novel,<sup>16</sup> Roderick's adventures would somehow be incomplete if there were not a recurrence of the military theme. Jack Wilton appears at the battles of Marignano and Munster; Barry Lyndon deserts the British army only to be forced into the Prussian; and Roderick Random survives the Cartagena expedition only to have no choice but to join the French and fight at Dettingen.

The circumstances surrounding Roderick's enlistment with the Picardy regiment are similar to those which made him join the navy. In short, he is once again destitute. In between these two military episodes, however, Roderick meets his love object, Narcissa. Although he eventually marries her at the novel's conclusion, Roderick is here forced to leave England for France where he is reunited with his uncle Bowling and afterwards robbed

by a priest of Rabelaisian appetites, Father Balthazar. Just as Roderick hits the nadir of despair, he hears the festive sounds of a group of people who are singing and dancing. What follows is a miraculous transformation scene:

As I lay in this manner, groaning over my hapless fate, I heard the sound of a violin, and raising my head, perceived a company of men and women dancing on the grass at some distance from me.—I looked upon this to be a favourable season for distress to attract compassion, when every selfish thought is banished, and the heart dilated with mirth and social joy; wherefore I got up and approached those happy people, whom I soon discovered to be a party of soldiers, with their wives and children, unbending and diverting themselves at this rate, after the fatigue of a march.—I had never before seen such a parcel of scare-crows together, neither could I reconcile their meagre gaunt looks, their squalid and ragged attire, and every other external symptom of extreme woe, with this appearance of festivity.—I saluted them however, and was received with great politesse; after which they formed a ring and danced around me.—This jollity had a wonderful effect upon my spirits! I was infected with their gayety, and in spite of my dismal situation forgot my cares, and joined in their extravagance. (243-244)

Roderick is moved from self-pity to sheer joy by the magic of the festive mood. On the surface, this scene may appear to be just another ingenious reversal of picaresque fate, but it actually dramatizes the regenerative power of the saturnalia. As the "scare-crows" are invested with a carnival spirit which transports them beyond their physical decrepitude, so Roderick himself is transported beyond his depression. Joanne Lynn describes the scene as a "Breughelesque representation,"<sup>17</sup> which it is, but Smollett may have also had Rabelais in mind and Father Balthazar may well appear as a Rabelaisian trickster figure. In any case,

we have seen in our study of Nashe how the cyclical and paradoxical nature of the picaresque world is not incongruous with Rabelais's saturnalian vitality.<sup>18</sup>

Before the festive mood of the scene passes, Roderick has enlisted. He never mentions any scruples about joining an army which is set to fight his native countrymen. First, Roderick's unofficial mercenary status is clear; and second, after being forced from England, Roderick declares it to be "the worst country in the universe for a poor honest man to live in" (236). Roderick is broke, and more important, the picaresque hero remains loyal only to himself. Smollett, however, does separate Roderick from his comrades-in-arms and has his hero observe them with a detached objectivity. This military episode focuses more on the behavior of the enlisted men than the tactical skill of the commanding officers as was the case with the Cartagena expedition (although there is some criticism of the command). The physical toil of the march to Germany takes its toll of Roderick who is piqued by the fact that his comrades, however ragged and worn in appearance, bear up much better than he. Roderick feels superior to "these miserable wretches" yet he cannot match their resilience (245). The festive mood which invested him in the previous scene has completely departed. Although the soldiers and their wives go dancing again, Roderick chooses to remain in camp with a comrade. In the ensuing

conversation, Smollett explores the subject of soldier motivation.

A veteran in the army, the comrade first tries to bolster Roderick's sagging spirits and in so doing reveals a strong sense of allegiance to his sovereign: "Have courage, therefore, my child (said he) and pray to the good God, that you may be as happy as I am, who have had the honour of serving Lewis the Great, and of receiving many wounds in helping to establish his glory" (245). The veteran is as proud of his wounds as is Sterne's uncle Toby. They are emblematic of his love for his king who, in his opinion, merits unquestioned devotion by divine right. Roderick, on the other hand, does not believe in the absolute power of the monarchy and hence looks upon his companion with utter contempt:

I looked upon the contemptible object that pronounced these words, I was amazed at the infatuation that possessed him; and could not help expressing my astonishment at the absurdity of a rational being, who thinks himself highly honoured in being permitted to encounter abject poverty, oppression, famine, disease, mutilation, and evident death, merely to gratify the vicious ambition of a prince, by whom his sufferings were disregarded, and his name utterly unknown. (245)

Exonerating his own motivation, Roderick goes on to say that one is justified in joining the army if fate can offer nothing better or if it is in defense of one's country. He then launches into a tirade against those who commit "the most flagrant crimes, to sooth the barbarous pride of a



fellow-creature" (246). Roderick and the veteran soldier represent extremes. While Roderick's motives are rational yet selfish, the veteran's are irrational yet unselfish. The veteran's deep sense of loyalty would make him a better soldier whomever he serves, but if everyone were to adopt Roderick's view, monstrous and unnecessary wars would not be so likely to occur. It seems that the ideal lies somewhere between the blind patriotism of the one and the narrow self-interest of the other.

What was supposed to be a friendly conversation soon degenerates into a heated argument. The veteran is quick to associate Roderick's enlightened view with the "notorious" insolence with which the English treat their kings. Recognizing the nationalistic slur as a reference to Cromwell's Roundheads and the Glorious Revolution of 1688, Roderick counters with a plausible vindication of such events on the principle of reciprocal allegiance and protection between sovereign and subject. Tempers get out of control and Roderick makes a motion to "box" his comrade-turned-adversary on the ear. With his fondness for ceremony, the Frenchman asks for a "parlay" to set the terms—in a gentlemanly way—for a duel. They duel with swords, the chivalric weapons of old, and the veteran gets the better of Roderick. However, when the veteran demands a pardon, Roderick is disturbed that he "did not bear his success with all the moderation that might have been expected" (247).

Moreover, Roderick's refusal to meet the demand is accompanied with a promise that, if his adversary persists, he will respond by asking for satisfaction with the "musket." Thus the new answers the old. This seemingly mundane picaresque incident is full of implications about human bellicosity.

First, there is the simple idea of how quickly friendship can sour and conflict flare up. Second, one sees how strong nationalistic feelings can run, especially when they are provoked. Having just called England "the worst country in the universe," Roderick is here angered by the accusations of the Frenchman into a staunch defense of the English. Finally, there is the symbolic confrontation between the old, Dox Quixote style of chivalry, and the modern, enlightened kind of political thinking. Zealous patriotism may seem to be a Don Quixote chimera, but the rational approach can lead to ruthless machiavellism.

The French army is thrown into the battle of Dettingen (1743) before Roderick and the veteran finally settle their dispute. Here the reader is given another critical analysis of military leadership and strategy, but this time an element of fate is introduced. For example, Roderick points to how the French commander, the Duc de Gramont, unaccountably left an excellent position and engaged the English on the plain: ". . . providence or destiny acted miracles in their [Allies'] behalf, by

disposing the Duc de Gramont to quit his advantageous post" (248).<sup>19</sup> Perhaps spurred by the remarks of the veteran, Roderick is quick to praise the English for not slaughtering the French after routing them on the plain. Furthermore, Roderick blames the heavy French casualties on their own fear and chaotic retreat:

. . . we turned our backs without ceremony, and fled with such precipitation, that many hundreds perished in the river, through pure fear and confusion; for the enemy was so generous, that they did not pursue us one inch of ground; and if our consternation would have permitted, we might have retreated with great order and deliberation. (248)

The French losses are needless, and though Roderick may stress this only to acquit the English, it certainly adds to the grotesque atmosphere of the scene.

Roderick's eulogistic reference to George II seems somewhat ironic considering his indictment of kings and their vainglory in the previous chapter: "But notwithstanding the royal clemency of the king of Great Britain, who headed the allies in person and no doubt, put a stop to the carnage, our loss amounted to 5,000 men, among whom were many officers of distinction" (248-249). The battle of Dettingen was the last in which the English army was led personally by their king. (Although Smollett describes the role of George II favorably in The History of England, nowhere does he say that the king was personally responsible for the apparent mercy on the part of the English. In fact, Smollett here blames the English for failing to pursue,

which would have resulted in a "total overthrow" of the French.<sup>20)</sup> Roderick uses whatever he can to reverse his former indignation against the English and champion the cause of English humanitarianism. This complete turnabout is consistent with the picaresque form in which characters and situations are continually being reversed.

As far as the French are concerned, Roderick does say that they "treated the living with humanity" after the English had marched on directly to Hanu leaving their sick and wounded behind (249). But in The History of England, Smollett is more explicit about the magnanimity of the French:

The Earl of Stair sent a trumpeter to Mareschal de Noailles, recommending to his protection the sick and wounded that were left on the field of battle: and these the French General treated with great care and tenderness. Such generosity softens the rigours of war, and does honour to humanity.<sup>21</sup>

To have Roderick deliver such an eulogy would have been incongruous with the nature of the picaresque hero. It also would have been awkward in view of the fact that Roderick then launches into his own satire on how the French boasted about their "victory" after the English departed from the field:

. . . the genius of the French nation never appeared more conspicuous than now, in the rhodomontades they uttered on the subject of their generosity and courage: Every man, (by his own account) performed feats that would have shamed all the heroes of antiquity.—One compared himself to a lion retiring at leisure from his cowardly pursuers, who keep at a wary distance, and gall him with their darts.—Another likened himself to

a bear that retreats with his face to the enemy, who dare not assail him; and a third assumed the character of a desperate stag, that turns upon the hounds and keeps them at bay.—There was not a private soldier engaged, who had not by the prowess of his single arm, demolished a whole platoon, or put a squadron of horse to flight. (249)

The bestial metaphors and boasts go back to the epic (see p. 57 above). Moreover, the *miles gloriosus* was a stock character from Roman comedy that enjoyed great popularity both during the Renaissance and afterwards. Within the context of the picaresque novel, this old idea is given new force for Roderick does not criticize the braggart soldiers for seeing glory in murder, rather he mocks them for having nothing to boast about!

The scene also renews the animosity between Roderick and the veteran who "extoiled his exploits above those of Hercules or Charlemagne" (249). Roderick deliberately provokes him by countering with an opposite set of exaggerated comparisons:

I magnified the valour of the English with all the hyperboles I could imagine, and decried the pusillanimity of the French in the same stile, comparing them to hares flying before the grey-hounds, or mice pursued by cats; and passed on ironical compliment on the speed he exerted in his flight, which, considering his age and infirmities, I said was surprising. (249)

Their subsequent combat is a mock-heroic farce. Roderick kicks the veteran "on the breech, which overturned him in an instant" (249). A second duel is fought and Roderick, having since been instructed in swordsmanship, succeeds in disarming his opponent. The physical confrontation, of

course, is only a medium for their dueling pride, and so real victory is achieved by humiliation. When the veteran refuses "to beg his life," Roderick leaves his sword "in something . . . that lay smoaking on the plain [presumably manure]" and rejoins the rest of the soldiers "with an air of tranquillity and indifference" (250). Joanne Lynn refers to the scene as "a good illustration of the confused and reversed values of a comic grotesque world."<sup>22</sup> Actually, the dispute between Roderick and the Frenchman is an allegorical vignette which demonstrates how easily differences in opinion can injure pride and lead to physical violence. Their petty dispute symbolizes whatever petty squabble has initiated the War of the Austrian Succession and caught them up in it.

A short time later, Roderick meets up with his old friend, Straps, who is able to secure Roderick's discharge through an influential acquaintance. This ends the military career of our picaresque hero, and never again in the course of his up-and-down adventures is he brought so low that he must enlist a third time. That Roderick has served on both sides of the War of the Austrian Succession points to the absurd role of the individual in global conflicts. As a surgeon's mate on the Cartagena expedition, Smollett's hero concentrates his attention on the bloodshed of battle and the incompetence of the commanders. Graduating or regressing to a soldier "in earnest"—as Jack

Wilton would say—with the Picardy regiment, Roderick then shifts his focus to the simplemindedness of the man in-the-ranks. Thus Smollett's opinion of incompetent command mixes with this view of the naive foot soldier to form a perfectly frightening and ludicrous picture of the military.

Postscript on "The Adventures of an Atom"

No study of Smollett's use of the comic grotesque to address the subject of war could avoid commenting on The Adventures of an Atom (1769). This satire is a topical and gross attack on the Whig administration, particularly William Pitt, and not an indictment of the Seven Years War or of war in general.<sup>23</sup> However, the Atom does contain the grotesque image of the "Legion" or "hydra" (also called the "blatant beast") which represents the public,<sup>24</sup> and herein Smollett effectively conveys his view of how the masses must be either mad or manipulated if a war effort is to be maintained. In a way, the "Legion" image shows the development of a theme which Smollett touched upon in Roderick Random—the often perverse relationship between those with military power and those in allegiance with that power.

Pitt is represented by the figure of "Taycho" who controls the "beast" or masses through the magic of rhetoric. Once the "beast" has been spellbound by Taycho,

it indulges in an irrational and obsequious kind of hero-worship. For example, driven to promote the glory of its leader above all others, the beast picks up the following cry after the fall of Quebec: "Yaf-frai [General Wolfe] has slain his thousands; Ya-loff [Lord Amherst] has slain his five thousands; but Taycho has slain his ten thousands."<sup>25</sup> The cry parodies the biblical story of how David was triumphantly received by the Israelites after slaughtering the Philistines.<sup>26</sup> The use of Old Testament Israel as an allegory for contemporary England was an established genre of which Dryden's Absalom and Achitophel may be the best example.<sup>27</sup>

That Smollett elected to pursue the political satire beyond the conclusion of the Seven Years War to the return of Pitt and the Rockingham Whigs contributes to the universality of the "Legion" image. One war has passed, but another looms ahead—the American War of Independence. Smollett focuses on the civil nature of this conflict by pointing to how England's "Legion" is eager to battle its own offspring, "the unnatural monsters," and to be "drenched with the blood of its fellow subjects"<sup>28</sup>

Smollett's Atom may be largely a vicious attack on Pitt, but it also asks the question—who is ultimately responsible for war, the manipulative leaders or that mindless beast, the masses? Smollett leaves the question unanswered, yet he may have been the first to raise it



within the context of modern politics and the democratic will. As the eighteenth century wore on, the conventional Humanist attitude about war originating from the ambition and vanity of princes (which passed down through the tradition of learned wit) could no longer explain all. With the rise of a ministerial and more democratic system, the people had to share in the accountability and the folly of the beast became more apparent. William Cowper may have best expressed the grotesque truth: "But war's a game, which, were their subjects wise, / Kings would not play at."<sup>29</sup>

## NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

<sup>1</sup> See Louis L. Martz, "Smollett and the Expedition to Carthage," PMLA, 56 (1941), 435; and Lewis M. Knapp, "The Naval Scenes in Roderick Random," PMLA, 49 (1939), 595.

As the narrator, Roderick himself admits to keeping a diary on the expedition. In an incident which seems to be borrowed from Henry Fielding's Joseph Andrews (1742), Roderick's diary—written in Greek—is used as evidence of a secret code in his spy trial. See Tobias Smollett, The Adventures of Roderick Random, ed. Paul-Gabriel Boucé (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 174-176. All references are made to this edition and included in the text.

<sup>2</sup> Martz, p. 443. See also his book, The Later Career of Tobias Smollett (Hamden: Archon Books, 1967), pp. 183-184.

<sup>3</sup> Martz, pp. 444-445.

<sup>4</sup> Henry R. Veits, M.D., "Smollett, The 'War of Jenkins's Ear' And 'An Account of the Expedition to Carthage,' 1743," Bulletin of the Medical Library Association, Series I, 28 (1940), 178-179. According to Veits, the "Account" was first published anonymously in 1743 (five years before Roderick Random), edited later by Smollett and included in the Compendium in 1756. Ultimately, the chronology of publication dates is not as important as literary form and purpose.

<sup>5</sup> Flavius Vegetius Renatus, De Re Militari, trans. Lieutenant John Clarke (Harrisburg: Stackpole Books, 1944), p. 71: "However, the best judges of the service have always been of the opinion that daily practice of the military exercises is much more efficacious in preserving the health of an army than all the art of medicine."

<sup>6</sup> Angus Ross, "The 'Show of Violence' in Smollett's Novels," in The Yearbook of English Studies, Vol. II. ed. T. J. B. Spencer and R. L. Smallwood (London: Modern Human-

ities Research Association, 1972), p. 120.

<sup>7</sup> See "An Account of the Expedition Against Carthage," in The Complete Works of Tobias Smollett, ed. Thomas Roscoe (London: George Bell, 1887), p. 605.

<sup>8</sup> Joanne Lewis Lynn, "Configurations of the Comic Grotesque in the Novels of Tobias Smollett," Diss. University of California, Irvine, 1974, p. 82.

<sup>9</sup> Lynn, pp. 81-82.

<sup>10</sup> In fact, Smollett's "Account" repeats the same description (quoted on p. 262 above) and even adds to the horror: ". . . they wallowed in filth . . . nothing were heard but groans, lamentations, and the language of despair." The Complete Works, p. 610.

<sup>11</sup> As Boucé notes, this is a verbatim translation of Lucan, The Civil War I.125-126, and as Lucan goes on to say that it is impossible to tell who "had the fairer pretext for warfare"—or "*Quis iustius induit arma, / Scire nefas*" (I.127-128)—so it is impossible for Roderick to decide who is more blameworthy. See Lucan: The Civil War, trans. J. D. Duff, Loeb Classical Library (1928; rpt. London: Heinemann, 1962).

<sup>12</sup> Samuel Johnson, "Idler No. 22," The Idler and the Adventurer, ed. W. J. Bate, John M. Bullitt, L. F. Powell (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 320.

<sup>13</sup> Johnson, p. 319.

<sup>14</sup> The relationship is also symbolic. Wars and epidemics were both considered to be scourges of God in the Renaissance (see p. 33, n. 18 above).

One might also remember that the Iliad opens with a description of how the Greek camp is hit with an "evil pestilence," which is the consequence of Chyrses's plea to the gods to punish the Greeks because Agamemnon refuses to give back his daughter. This also starts the dispute between Agamemnon and Achilles. See Homer: The Iliad I. 1-187, Vol. I, trans. A. T. Murray, Loeb Classical Library (1924; rpt. London: Heinemann, 1965).

<sup>15</sup> See Boucé's note, p. 458.

<sup>16</sup> See Stuart Miller, The Picaresque Novel (Cleveland: Case Western Reserve University Press, 1967), p. 13. Miller refers to this repetition as the "dance pattern."

<sup>17</sup> Lynn, p. 83: "Roderick joins with the forces of life in this Breughelesque representation of ragged people dancing in the fields. Their mirth revives him. His swift, miraculous recovery is followed by his own participation in the grotesque dance."

<sup>18</sup> See Chapter Two, pp. 87-133 above.

For a recent consideration of the connection between Smollett's language and that of Rabelais (with reference to Mikhail Bakhtin), see Damian Grant, "Roderick Random: Language as Projectile," in Smollett: Author of the First Distinction, ed. Alan Bold (London: Vision Press, 1982), pp. 142-143.

<sup>19</sup> Curiously enough, Smollett treats Gramont more harshly in his History by claiming that the French Duke was "instigated by the spirit of madness." See Tobias Smollett, The History of England, Vol. III (London: D. S. Maurice, 1823), p. 108.

<sup>20</sup> Smollett, The History of England, Vol. III, p. 108. Smollett continues thus: "Lord Stair proposed that a body of cavalry should be detached on this service; but his advice was over-ruled." In Roderick Random, Smollett uses this claim about Lord Stair being over-ruled to free the English command of any responsibility in allowing the army to be cornered in the first place. Hence Smollett, or Roderick, plays loosely with the facts. According to Smollett's account in the History, it is the Duke of Cumberland who seems to be responsible for getting the allies in a precarious situation. See History, p. 107.

<sup>21</sup> Smollett, The History of England, Vol. III, p. 108.

<sup>22</sup> Lynn, p. 83.

<sup>23</sup> For the most detailed examination of the political satire, see Wayne Joseph Douglas, "Smollett and the Sordid Knaves: Political Satire in The Adventures of an Atom," Diss. University of Florida, 1976. For a review of the possible influences on Smollett's Atom, see Louis L. Martz, The Later Career of Tobias Smollett (Hamden: Archon Books,

1967), pp. 90-103.

24 Smollett uses these three terms synonymously throughout the Atom. Douglas traces the "Legion" to Mark 5:9 and the "blatant beast" to The Faerie Queen Book VI; see Douglas, pp. 94-97.

25 Tobias Smollett, The History and Adventures of an Atom, in The Complete Works of Tobias Smollett, ed. Thomas Roscoe (London: George Bell, 1887), p. 916. My reason for using this edition is largely convenience. However, the only difference between the George Bell text and that of the Shakespeare Head Edition, which I have consulted, is in punctuation.

The Atom is even more topical than Pope's Dunciad, which makes an identification-key necessary for the modern reader. The best key is in the Shakespeare Head Edition (1926) pp. 500-503. For corrections to this key and general comments on the various keys, see Paul-Gabriel Boucé, "The 'Chinese Pilot' and 'Sa-Rouf' in Smollett's Atom," English Language Notes, 4 (June 1967), 273-275; and Lewis M. Knapp, "The Keys to Smollett's Atom," English Language Notes, 2 (December 1964), 100-102.

26 See I Samuel 18:6-8. Smollett's indignation may be likened to Saul's envy.

27 Whether or not the Atom falls into this category is a question which lies beyond the scope of this study but which merits consideration.

28 The Atom, The Complete Works, p. 966.

29 "The Winter Morning Walk," ll. 187-189, in The Poetical Works of William Cowper, 4th ed., ed. H. S. Milford (London: Oxford University Press, 1934).

CHAPTER SIX:  
STERNE'S TRISTRAM SHANDY

Introduction

The last of our selections may contain the most memorable grotesque statement on war. Unlike any of the works studied in the preceding chapters, Sterne's Tristram Shandy is a novel in which the military theme cannot be isolated from the whole. Most ostensibly embodied by uncle Toby and corporal Trim, the military theme actually interweaves through the Shandean universe and is an integral part of it. Sterne's novel has its ancestry in the Renaissance tradition of learned wit, particularly Robert Burton. But again unlike any of the selections studied thus far, Tristram Shandy sports no gory descriptions of slaughter. As readers, we feel removed from the major military events, and this distance makes the final selection a suitable subject with which to conclude our study.

Sterne's gift for characterization has endeared him to many. Both uncle Toby and corporal Trim are engaging characters, not flat like most comic figures but fascinating in their very energy and uniqueness. Sterne

handles the military theme with a delightful subtlety that addresses fine abstract issues. Everything centers on uncle Toby. His wound represents the fearful aspect of the grotesque; his hobby-horse the sportive. Far from the din and dust of the battlefield the most absurd paradoxes in the nature of war and man can be clearly distinguished.

#### War as Play: Uncle Toby's Hobby-Horse

Uncle Toby's hobby-horse epitomizes the play, or *homo ludens*, aspect of war in English Literature. His miniature re-enactments on the bowling green turn the War of the Spanish Succession into a delightful game enjoyed by two loveable veterans.<sup>1</sup> Sterne puts the reader in the awkward situation of feeling sorry for uncle Toby because the Treaty of Utrecht ends the war, and the end of the war means the end of the play on the bowling green. Uncle Toby and Trim get their pleasure out of recreating the actual campaigns and battles as accurately as they can, which should remind us that their harmless fantasy is tied directly to the real world.<sup>2</sup> Pure imagination cannot sustain them; there must be a Marlborough, a Louis XIV, and an actual war. Walter Shandy's tactful "back-stroke" at his brother's hobby-horse expresses the paradox beautifully: "Never mind, brother Toby . . . by God's blessing we shall have another war break out again some of

these days; and when it does,—the belligerent powers, if they would hang themselves, cannot keep us out of play."<sup>3</sup> Moreover, Sterne never exhausts the reader's capacity to enjoy the paradox. By giving so much attention to the war-as-play world of uncle Toby and Trim, Sterne allows the idea of war-as-brutal reality to loom ominously by the power of implication. While uncle Toby and Trim lose themselves in harmless fantasy, the reader is invited to reconstruct the context of the actual War of the Spanish Succession.

The reality of battle is, of course, symbolized by the war wound. It is important to see that uncle Toby's hobby-horse originated in his attempt to communicate, again as accurately as he can, the circumstances which led to his horrific battle wound at the siege of Namur. The wound is as horrific as Sterne could have made it—a piece of a parapet breaks off and hits uncle Toby in the groin, crushing his hip bone and confining him to his room for four years. It is an unheroic and freak accident which can only be blamed on the conflict itself, since the parapet was presumably hit by the allies' own artillery. But reason cannot do justice to the feelings involved, as evidenced by Tristram's description of the surgeon who enthusiastically tries to interest his patient in exactly how the stone hit him: ". . . that the great injury which it had done my uncle *Toby*'s groin, was more owing to the gravity of the



stone itself, than to the projectile force of it,—which he would often tell him was a great happiness" (79). Neither the historian nor the veteran is apt to measure the misfortunes of battle in such meaningless terms. Nothing could ease the pain of uncle Toby's wound, except the relating of how it happened: "The history of a soldier's wound beguiles the pain of it" (79). Tristram's statement gives an insight into man's fascination with the subject of war and military history. All the pain and emotion contained therein cry for attention. Furthermore, war begs to be considered in some way, not because an analysis could eradicate war—it obviously cannot—but because some kind of analysis at least makes it easier for us to live with such a monstrous horror. The beauty of Tristram Shandy, like that of Burton's Anatomy, lies in its ambiguous nature. We may laugh satirically at uncle Toby's maps and military enthusiasm, but we also accept them according to a sentimental allowance for what seems necessary under the circumstances.

The struggle to come to terms with war is a complex affair. Tristram describes how uncle Toby's attempt to relate the events which led to his wound ironically produces more aggravation than relief:

. . . the many perplexities he was in, arose out of the almost insurmountable difficulties he found in telling his story intelligibly, and giving such clear ideas of the differences and distinctions between the scarp and counterscarp,—the glacis and covered way,—the half-

moon and ravelin,—as to make his company fully comprehend where and what he was about. . . . any one may imagine, that when he could not retreat out of the ravelin without getting into the half-moon, or get out of the covered way without falling down the counterscarp, nor cross the dyke without danger of slipping into the ditch, but that he must have fretted and fumed inwardly:—He did so . . .  
(82-83)

Uncle Toby frets and fumes so much about his failure to communicate the experience of his wound that frustration combines with physical injury to put his life in jeopardy. Suddenly, he gets the idea to consult a map and this begins his recovery. One map leads to another, to the science of fortification,<sup>4</sup> and then to the hobby-horse itself, which uncle Toby rides with all his love away from death's door. The force that sustains life comes directly from the sense of movement or progression. Tristram discovers the life of motion when he flees from death in Volume VII and, as readers, we are included insofar as Volume VII seems to be a narrative flight from the main story and extrapolated digressions: ". . . so much of motion, is so much of life, and so much of joy—and that to stand still, or get on but slowly, is death and the devil" (493). The hobby-horse is a way of adhering to Burton's golden rule, "be not idle," and the secondary part of the rule, "be not solitary," hints that man is a social creature who needs to communicate and share his experiences with his fellow men. Uncle Toby may seem utterly mad in his love for military affairs, and yet it is this very

madness which constitutes his life-energy.

The idea to construct a miniature re-enactment of the events of the War of the Spanish Succession actually comes from Corporal Trim, who is another in a long list of maimed war-veterans in the novel.<sup>5</sup> Corporal Trim suffers a disability in his left knee as a result of being hit "by a musket-bullet, at the battle of *Landen* which was two years before the affair of *Namur*" (94). After the battle of Landen, Trim becomes uncle Toby's faithful servant and the two are inseparable from then on. Both are so proud of their wounds that the only real dispute which arises between them is "Whether the pain of a wound in the knee is not greater than the pain of a wound in the groin" (569). For Trim and uncle Toby the war wound is an emblem of their love of country and freedom or the highest principles of humanity.

Sterne uses the motif of the battle wound to symbolize the disfiguring effect that war has on civilization. When Tristram defines his purpose in the novel, he claims that uncle Toby's wound "is a wound to every comparison of that kind" (301), and one may interpret this ambiguous statement in two ways. It is either of the military kind or of the groin kind. One is probably safe in saying that Sterne wants the reader to associate the two within the greater symbolic structure of the novel: the threat of castration, which is what uncle Toby's wound signifies,

reflects the danger that war poses to mankind. Animosity puts the harmonious fabric of the world into jeopardy. In a grotesque sense, war can be said to have permanently disfigured the human race. But accepting this, Sterne does not mean to point a finger at any war-mongers for the harmony of the world seems to come from a balance of conflicting forces. For the moment, suffice it to say that we recognize the horrible consequences of war but can only feel amiably toward an uncle Toby.

As mentioned, the game on the bowling green is tied directly to the actual war on the continent. In fact, the commitment to re-enact each event as accurately as possible imposes an uncommonly strict discipline on the game, but one which the military characters of uncle Toby and Trim welcome:

When the town, with its works, was finished, my uncle *Toby* and the corporal began to run their first parallel—not at random, or any how—but from the same points and distances the allies had begun to run theirs; and regulating their approaches and attacks, by the accounts my uncle *Toby* received from the daily papers,—they went on, during the whole siege, step by step with the allies. (445)

Their diversion on the bowling green incurs some expense as hobbies tend to do when one gets involved with them. Uncle Toby and Trim are, needless to say, quite involved, and here Sterne subtly criticizes the financial burden which wars place on their participants. Trim happens to use an old pair of "jack-boots" to make "two mortar-pieces for a

siege next summer" and this arouses some objection from Walter Shandy. It seems that the "jack-boots" have a sentimental—albeit absurd—value dating back to the civil wars, when they were worn by Roger Shandy "at the battle of *Marston-Moor*" (205). When uncle Toby offers his brother ten pounds for the boots, Walter Shandy goes into an harangue about how much money he has spent on outfitting the bowling green with all its miniatures: ". . . you mean well brother,—but they carry you into greater expences than you were first aware of" (205). But uncle Toby will not be denied in his campaign: ". . . 'tis for the good of the nation" (206). Walter Shandy relents at this good-natured, yet absolutely mad, response. The fantasy of uncle Toby's hobby-horse is a convenient means of distancing reality because Sterne can dissolve the fantasy whenever it serves his purpose.

In order to add a few cannon to the artillery, Trim melts down a good part of uncle Toby's rain gutters and spouts and even his pewter shaving basin, "going at last, like Lewis the fourteenth, on to the top of the church, for spare ends" (377). As Work notes, Louis XIV financed many of his "long and expensive campaigns" by obtaining "forced loans from the clergy" (377). Shortly after Trim's enthusiasm lays claim to the sash-window pullies, the matter comes to a head. While Tristram is relieving himself at the window ("The chamber-maid had

left no \*\*\*\*\* \*\*\* under the bed"), the curtain falls! Tristram's wound is fortunately a minor one, yet like uncle Toby's it too represents the threat of castration. And so the financial burden of war can bring a country's economy to the brink of disaster. Sterne, however, does not want to upset his reader unduly. The sash-window incident throws a scare into the bowling green campaigners and suspends their fun but only temporarily. Likewise, the satiric implication of Trim's military earmarking treads softly upon the reader's mind.

Hence, although the hobby-horse brings uncle Toby back to life, Sterne uses it as a subtle means of commenting on the darker side of human affairs. Further evidence of this lies in the way that Tristram recalls the funerals of both Trim and uncle Toby in the middle of his description of their bowling green campaigns (452). These sentimental remembrances prevent the chapter from degenerating into a purely ridiculous portrait. By reminding the reader that all men must die, even the most generous hearts, Sterne appeals to the emotions just when one is about to give full vent to derisive laughter.<sup>6</sup> That grey area of tragicomedy obviously fascinated Sterne. This observation was first made by continental writers,<sup>7</sup> and ever since W. B. C. Watkins's landmark essay, "Yorick Revisited" (1939), the mingling of the serious and the comic has generally been recognized as Sterne's method.<sup>8</sup>

In the Introduction, it was pointed out that the tension between the ludicrous and the fearful was the most essential element of the grotesque. Therefore Sterne becomes one of the most likely candidates to be included in the genre.<sup>9</sup>

Yorick's reaction to Trim and uncle Toby develops the war-as-play idea. When news of the sash-window incident arrives in the parlor, uncle Toby is giving an account of the battle of Steenkirk to Yorick who, more than any other character, enjoys seeing others in full gallop on their hobby-horses. Yorick draws uncle Toby into the vigor of his spirit by allowing him to indulge himself in the particulars "of the strange conduct of count *Solmes* in ordering the foot to halt, and the horse to march where it could not act; which was directly contrary to the king's commands, and proved the loss of the day" (378-379). Trim interrupts to explain how he should take responsibility for Tristram's injury since he took the "leaden weights from the nursery window" in his search for raw materials to build more artillery pieces (378). Uncle Toby gallantly contests for the blame by insisting that Trim was only following his orders, and this prods Yorick into drawing an analogy between the historical account and the hobby-horsical crisis: "Had count *Solmes*, *Trim*, done the same at the battle of *Steenkirk*, said *Yorick*, drolling a little upon the corporal, who had been run over by a dragoon in the retreat,—he had saved thee" (379). Yorick may be

"drolling . . . upon the corporal," but it is only "a little" and done with the knowledge that such a comment would only give the pair a chance to escape—momentarily at least—from the immediate crisis back into their glorious remembrances. This they do with Trim passionately calling out the names of the regiments that were "cut to pieces" for Solmes's disobedience, and recalling those "who marched up boldly to their relief, and received the enemy's fire in their faces, before any one of their own platoons discharged a musket" (379-380). The climax of Trim's discourse comes when he actually blames Solmes for his own wound which came "at the very next campaign of *Landen*": "'Twas owing, an please your honour, entirely to count *Solmes*,—had we drub'd them soundly at *Steenkirk*, they would not have fought us at *Landen*" (380). The subject of blame relates directly to the immediate crisis concerning Tristram's injury. Although Trim gets carried away in claiming that his own wound was owing to Solmes, he and uncle Toby are both ready to accept full responsibility for the fall of the sash-window. Sterne's point is clear enough. Life is a confused muddle of intention and accident. The fault for human disasters is usually shared by many, and perhaps the most blameworthy factor is the totally impersonal and often incredible web of incident over which nobody can exercise any control. We must suffer the disaster as best we can and, like Yorick,



might find it better for drolling a little.

Uncle Toby and Trim get so emotionally caught up in recalling Solmes and military history that their own exuberance takes on the form of a battle:

There is no way but to march coolly up to them [the French],—receive their fire, and fall in upon them, pell-mell—Ding dong, added *Trim*.—Horse and foot, said my uncle *Toby*.—Helter skelter, said *Trim*.—Right and left, cried my uncle *Toby*.—Blood an' ounds, shouted the corporal;—the battle raged,—*Yorick* drew his chair a little to one side for safety . . . (380-381)

As with the bowling green campaigns, this energetic duet comically mocks human warfare. That the mockery arises entirely out of love or enthusiasm for the military is the central paradox. Again, like his predecessor, Burton, Sterne is intrigued by the relationship between love and war. This will be even more obvious when we get to the choicest morsel of *Tristram's* story.

*Yorick* continues to indulge uncle Toby when he offers to define "a polemic divine" by reading "the account of the battle fought single hands betwixt *Gymnast* and captain *Tripet*" (387). Uncle Toby brims with eager anticipation and, out of sheer benevolence, requests that Trim be called in for "the description of a battle, will do the poor fellow more good than his supper" (387). The request is granted, and *Yorick* sits down to read from his copy of Rabelais which he carries in his pocket. In his own spirit of jesting, *Yorick* can easily be seen as a Rabelaisian figure. The meeting between *Gymnast* and *Tripet*

occurs as part of the Picrochole War (see pp. 112-113 above) and parodies the epic idea of the taunting soldier. Both combatants attempt to outdo each other by performing all kinds of acrobatic feats and, for the first part of the fight anyway, never so much as touch. To Trim it resembles "a Tom-fool-battle . . . making so many summersets, as they advanced" (389). Yorick sees their physical agility as representing the rhetorical eloquence of the polemic divine, which serves no purpose in itself except maybe to mesmerize the audience or opposition. Although Trim, "losing all patience," interrupts with "one home thrust of a bayonet is worth it all," one might well assume that Yorick himself would have stopped before he reached the grotesque description of how Gymnast slaughters great heaps of Picrochole's men and slices Tripet's stomach open (Gargantua and Pantagruel, Bk I.xxxv). Such gore would obviously be disturbing to Sterne's more refined sensibility. Furthermore, only the acrobatic segment illustrates Yorick's point about the polemic divine. Drolling a little again, Yorick sides with Trim, "one thrust of a bayonet is worth it all," but, as men seem dependent on dialectic order, Walter Shandy sounds the voice of opposition, "I am of a contrary opinion" (389). The speculative philosopher adamantly prefers rhetorical contests to physical ones.

The Treaty of Utrecht (1713) throws uncle Toby from his hobby-horse because it officially ended the War of the

Spanish Succession. Since the bowling green diversion is not a game for the sake of play but a game to mirror reality, the peace kills the object of uncle Toby's love. The demolition of Dunkirk is the last painful act that uncle Toby and Trim must perform, yet the play on the green almost returns five years later as a new outbreak of hostilities threatens. In the middle of this anticipation, the Dutch draw-bridge is "crush'd all to pieces" and only Trim can explain how it happened:

I was shewing Mrs. *Bridget* our fortifications, and in going too near the edge of the fossé, I unfortunately slipp'd in.—Very well *Trim*! my father would cry,—(smiling mysteriously, and giving a nod,—but without interrupting him)—and being link'd fast, an' please your honour, arm in arm with Mrs. *Bridget*, I dragg'd her after me, by means of which she fell backwards soss against the bridge . . . (210)

The broken bridge incident symbolizes the fallen nature of human communication. It also reinforces the relationship between love and war. This is the thrust of Sigurd Burckhardt's comments on Sterne's purpose behind the "bridge" motif:

It is possible that he found the metaphor of missiles and cannon too univocally militaristic, and that the more ambiguous one of a bridge—an instrument both of peace and war, of harmony and conflict—seemed more adequate to his medium. . . . The ambiguity of the bridge, if I have rightly interpreted it, fits well with what is manifestly the chief structural metaphor of the novel: the interchangeability of sex and war. Its purport surely is this: direct communication between people, of the kind that would eliminate the pitfalls of language, is radically ambiguous; at this level, no distinction between love and enmity is possible.<sup>10</sup>

Language is hopelessly inadequate to convey the reality of experience, but in Tristram Shandy this failure is forged into comic ambiguity. The broken bridge refers to both Tristram's nose and uncle Toby's bowling green, and as a long nose is supposed to signify greatness so the bowling green diversion is an expression of uncle Toby's love. Despite the "pitfalls of language," love and true greatness are always ready to mend human fractures.

Excited about a return to the bowling green, uncle Toby plans to replace his Dutch bridge with an Italian one because he believes that Spain and the Empire will soon be at war in either Naples or Sicily. His brother, however, reminds him of the Quadruple Alliance (England, France, Holland, and the Empire) and points out that the hostilities will in all likelihood take place on the "old prize-fighting stage of *Flanders*":

. . . my father, who was infinitely the better politician, and took the lead as far of my uncle *Toby* in the cabinet, as my uncle *Toby* took it of him in the field, —convinced him, that if the King of *Spain* and the Emperor went together by the ears, that *England* and *France* and *Holland* must, by force of their pre-engagements, all enter the lists too;—and if so, he would say, the combatants, brother *Toby*, as sure as we are alive, will fall to it again, pell-mell, upon the old prize-fighting stage of *Flanders*; then what will you do with your *Italian* bridge? (212)

This is a picture of how alliances escalate military conflicts and how old enmities run deep. With the tension between Spain and her enemies running high in 1718, uncle Toby has cause to hope that he will soon be back on his

beloved hobby-horse. Unfortunately—according to the paradoxical world of Tristram Shandy, no spectacular war breaks out.

### The Irreconcilable Pluralities of the World

Uncle Toby is a man of action, whether it be on the glorious "old prize-fighting stage of *Flanders*" or the bowling green, and not of words. At one point in the novel, however, we read his eloquent self-defence for having assumed the profession of soldier. It is irrefutable. Tristram, believing his uncle's "apologetical oration" to be "so fine a model of defence . . . so sweet a temperament of gallantry and good principles" (459), reproduces it verbatim or as his father transcribed it. It bears the provoking title "*My brother Toby's justification of his own principles and conduct in wishing to continue the war*" (459). Uncle Toby immediately gains the sympathy of his audience, his brother and Yorick, by stating his awareness of how ill an aspect his profession has to the world and how "he stands in an uneasy posture in vindicating himself" (459). Then he goes right to the crux of the matter. Addressing his brother, who uncle Toby claims is intimately acquainted with his every fault and weakness of character, he asks the following question:

. . . when I condemned the peace of *Utrecht*, and grieved the war was not carried on with vigour a

little longer, you should think your brother did it upon unworthy views; or that in wishing for war, he should be bad enough to wish more of his fellow creatures slain,—more slaves made, and more families driven from their peaceful habitations, merely for his own pleasure:—Tell me, brother *Shandy*, upon what one deed of mine do you ground it? (460)

Walter Shandy records his response to the question which reasserts the ludicrous tone: "*The devil a deed do I know of, dear Toby, but one for a hundred pounds, which I lent thee to carry on these cursed sieges*" (460). Even within the record of another man's speech, Walter Shandy will be heard if he has something to say. After defending himself against the charge of cruelty, uncle Toby expresses what is essentially an acceptance of the plurality of the human world:

—'Tis one thing, brother *Shandy*, for a soldier to hazard his own life—to leap first down into the trench, where he is sure to be cut in pieces:—'Tis one thing, from public spirit and a thirst of glory, to enter the breach the first man,—to stand in the foremost rank, and march bravely on with drums and trumpets, and colours flying about his ears:—'Tis one thing, I say, brother *Shandy*, to do this—and 'tis another thing to reflect on the miseries of war; —to view the desolations of whole countries, and consider the intolerable fatigues and hardships which the soldier himself, the instrument who works them, is forced (for six-pence a day, if he can get it) to undergo. (461)

The paradox is clear. One cannot harmonize the ideals of soldiership with the horrible consequences of war. Uncle Toby is caught up in the first but not completely ignorant of the second. H. J. Jackson points out that this passage "was taken from an outright attack upon war in Burton's

Anatomy" (see p. 155 above) and observes that "Sterne inverted the moral bias as well as the sequence of ideas when he transposed the passage into Tristram Shandy."<sup>11</sup> Burton's tirade against war is a satiric view; uncle Toby's defense an heroic one. Mutually exclusive, they both constitute legitimate perspectives on the world. I concur with Jackson's conclusions, but he dismisses uncle Toby's defense too easily. For Sterne and Burton, the situation is more complex than what is suggested by any one passage. Furthermore, uncle Toby is not the aggressor here. He merely wants to vindicate his profession from what he considers to be an unjust condemnation. Hence, he recalls the Erasmus quotation, which Yorick apparently included in his funeral sermon for Le Fever—"That so soft and gentle a creature, born to mercy, and kindness, as man is, was not shaped for this [war],"<sup>12</sup> only to qualify it:

But why did you not add, *Yorick*,—if not by NATURE—that he is so by NECESSITY?—For what is war? what is it, *Yorick*, when fought as ours has been, upon principles of *liberty*, and upon principles of *honour*—what is it, but the getting together of quiet and harmless people, with their swords in their hands, to keep the ambitious and the turbulent within bounds? (462)

Even if there is something to be said for the heroic view, uncle Toby remains a simpleton whose wish to continue the war is both humorous and disturbing. And yet it may be that very simplicity which puts him in touch with the naturalness of his role in the world:

And heaven is my witness, brother *Shandy*, that the

pleasure I have taken in these things,—and that infinite delight, in particular, which has attended my sieges in my bowling green, has arose within me, and I hope in the corporal too, from the consciousness we both had, that in carrying them on, we were answering the great ends of our creation. (462)

If the omnipotent powers mean wars to serve a purpose in their providential plan, then people like uncle Toby and Trim are naturals to play the part. As the former says in his defense, "If, when I was a school-boy, I could not hear a drum beat, but my heart beat with it—was it my fault?—Did I plant the propensity there?—did I sound the alarm within, or Nature?" (460). This innocent avowal is really no different from Pope's position on war in An Essay on Man (see p. 189 above).

Despite his profession, uncle Toby could not, quite literally, hurt a fly, "This world surely is wide enough to hold both thee and me" (113), or anything else. This good-natured benevolence charms the reader. Uncle Toby's rebuttal of Erasmus, that man is inclined to war by necessity, is supported by the rest of the novel. As early as the first volume, Tristram cites the cyclical theory of war to argue for a similar cycle in the dissemination and assimilation of knowledge:

. . . the want of all kind of writing will put an end to all kind of reading;—and that in time, *As war begets poverty, poverty peace*,—must, in course, put an end to all kind of knowledge,—and then—we shall have all to begin over again; or, in other words, be exactly where we started. (64)

If war is inevitable, then man has a duty to defend the



rights and liberties of the innocent. Uncle Toby may be a simpleminded military enthusiast, but the reader is constantly reminded that this zeal is based on the highest principles. He reaffirms this idealism to Trim:

I hope, *Trim*, answered my uncle Toby, I love mankind more . . . and as the knowledge of arms tends so apparently to the good and quiet of the world—and particularly that branch of it which we have practised together in our bowling-green, has no object but to shorten the strides of AMBITION, and intrench the lives and fortunes of the *few*, from the plunderings of the *many* . . . (609-610)

Inasmuch as uncle Toby confuses the fantasy of the bowling green with the reality of the battlefield, he is quite mad; still, we know that he means well and that counts for everything. This delight in paradox characterizes both Sterne and Burton.

Individual happiness and enthusiasm depend to a degree on how well the individual finds his role in the affairs of the world and keeps in motion. To recall the maxim of Tristram's flight to France in Volume VII, "so much of motion, is so much of life" (493). His flight occurs in 1762 while the Seven Years War (1756-1763) is still in progress, but this situation does not impede his mobility since civilian populations were not drastically affected by wars in the eighteenth century.<sup>13</sup> Tristram makes absolutely no mention of the war. Of course in view of the way the military is portrayed in Tristram Shandy any reference to the war would probably have dragged its

author into the political debate of the time. Sterne keeps his distance from current affairs and even the dedications to William Pitt (3, 597) lack concrete allusions to contemporary events.<sup>14</sup> Therefore the War of the Spanish Succession, having occurred a half century beforehand, serves his purpose better than the Seven Years War. Still, one cannot help but think that when Tristram is arrested in Volume VII for not paying a post fee to the French officials, Sterne is mock-heroically representing the contemporary conflict (France's attempt to confine British imperialism). Tristram pays the fee, even though he considers it unjust, because "we have nothing to do but to make the best peace with you we can" (528). In spite of the dedications to William Pitt, who of course opposed the peace treaty of 1763 for what it gave France,<sup>15</sup> Sterne suggests that everyone should be willing to sacrifice something to obtain peace: "AND SO THE PEACE WAS MADE;—And if it is a bad one—as *Tristram Shandy* laid the corner stone of it—nobody but *Tristram Shandy* ought to be hanged" (528). In A Sentimental Journey, Yorick is detained in Paris specifically on account of the war. When a passport is finally issued to him to allow him to continue, it is issued to "let Mr. Yorick, the king's jester, and his baggage travel quietly along."<sup>16</sup> Sterne implies that humor is the best way for one to make peace with the world and then go merrily forward.

Returning to the character of uncle Toby, one might call him a Carlylean figure for he certainly knows how to body-forth his enthusiasm and he possesses a keen sense of duty. This sense of duty becomes another means by which Sterne can point to the irreconcilable pluralities of the world. The issue first comes up in the sash-window incident. In taking the "leaden weights," Trim—according to uncle Toby—was only following his orders. Neither Trim nor uncle Toby is guilty of any malice, and yet through a combination of their actions and accident a near disaster occurs. Following one's prescribed duty is not a safeguard against calamities in the physical world. Furthermore, a very grey area lies between absolute guilt and innocence. Trim's case is an example. He intended no harm yet should have known better. The disobedience of count Solmes, being the contrapuntal parlor-story to the sash-window incident, is on the other hand clear cut. Having a good sense of fairness in spite of his love for the corporal, uncle Toby becomes most upset when Yorick suggests that Walter Shandy will be as "provoked" at Trim as King William apparently was at Solmes. In fact, he feels so strongly about the matter that his emotions, rising to a ludicrous extreme, make him threaten extreme physical action:

But 'twould be singularly hard in this case, continued he, if corporal *Trim*, who has behaved so diametrically opposite to count *Solmes*, should have the fate to be rewarded with the same disgrace;—too oft in this world, do things take that train.—I would spring a

mine, cried my uncle *Toby*, rising up,—and blow up my fortifications, and my house with them, and we would perish under their ruins, ere I would stand by and see it. (381)

His remark that "too oft in this world, do things take that train" is really an astute comment on how the human mind does not discriminate enough when it comes to determining responsibility and guilt. As Shakespeare uses his clowns, so Sterne puts some heavy wisdom in the mouth of his simplest characters. Here the astute comment is immediately swallowed up by the hilarious and disturbing vow. This pattern typifies Sterne's method; the profound is allowed to surface but usually in conjunction with the laughable.

Later in the novel, uncle Toby refers to duty as the only thing which a man can be sure of in the human world of strife and confusion. We must act as best we can, and a benevolent deity will be the judge: "God Almighty is so good and just a governor of the world, that if we have but done our duties in it,—it will never be enquired into, whether we have done them in a red coat or a black one" (421-422). Contained herein are the camaraderie of soldier-ship, regardless of side, and the suggestion that conflicting pockets of allegiance mark man's fallen existence. Every man-at-arms should proceed from the highest principles and carry out his small role in the greater scheme. That the soldier must relinquish his own judgement to his superiors, who may not share those principles, is a subtlety

which uncle Toby does not address. Sterne's novel, however, portrays the human world as fraught not only with conflicting obligations and ambiguous moralities but with misunderstanding as well. Against these terrible odds—the stuff of all tragicomedy, the individual must still mock-heroically do the duty "which lies nearest" him.<sup>17</sup>

As Burckhardt argues, the imperfection of words is central to the fallen world of Tristram Shandy. Moreover, this inability to communicate constantly leads to squabbles and disputes. In the parlor—which is a microcosm of the world theater, the Shandy brothers are usually the main participants in what might best be described as a wrangle for an audience. (This fraternal war has mythic implications; see p. 43 above.) And yet uncle Toby and Walter Shandy do not bear any hatred toward one another. On the contrary, their filial bond is strong. It is the Jonsonian "humour" which is responsible for those irritable interruptions and moments of temper; as Tristram remarks, "This contrariety of humours betwixt my father and my uncle, was the source of many a fraternal squabble" (68). Walter Shandy would talk of philosophy: uncle Toby of fortifications. The arrival of Dr. Slop gives uncle Toby a chance to expound upon the common confusion between the "ravelin" and "half-moon" (111):

For when a ravelin, brother, stands before the curtain, it is a ravelin; and when a ravelin stands before a bastion, then the ravelin is not a ravelin;—it is a

half-moon;—a half-moon likewise is a half-moon, and no more, so long as it stands before its bastion;—but was it to change place, and get before the curtain, —'twould be no longer a half-moon; a half-moon, in that case, is not a half-moon;—'tis no more than a ravelin. (112)

Such is the imperfection of language. Walter Shandy actually enjoys the semantic chaos remarking "that the noble science of defence has its weak sides,—as well as others" (112). But uncle Toby's love for his subject renders him blind to the greedy demands he makes on his audience's attention. Soon he begins a description of the "horn-works," then the "epaulments or demi-bastions," and gets as far as the "double tenaille" before his brother fires back in a fit of irritation:

By the mother who bore us!—brother *Toby*, quoth my father, not able to hold out any longer,—you would provoke a saint;—here you have got us, I know not how, not only souse into the middle of the old subject again:—But so full is your head of these confounded works, that tho' my wife is this moment in the pains of labour,—and you hear her cry out,—yet nothing will serve you but to carry off the man-midwife [Dr. Slop] . . . I wish the whole science of fortification, with all its inventors, at the devil; it has been the death of thousands,—and it will be mine, in the end. (112-113)

Images of birth and death play back and forth as they do so often in the Shandy parlor.<sup>19</sup> Tristram politely turns the reader away from the tension of the scene and relates the story of how uncle Toby gallantly freed a fly, "which had buzz'd about his nose, and tormented him cruelly all dinner-time," from the house: "This world surely is wide enough to hold both thee and me" (113). Ideally, this is

how irritation should be handled; differences exist and forces will clash, but there should be room for all. Back in the parlor, one tender and fraternal glance from uncle Toby makes his brother melt with shame for his outburst. Their reconciliation is sentimental, from the heart, as only a true peace can be.

Few disagreements end so amicably. The battle which Tristram carries on with his critics, for example, only seems to escalate.<sup>20</sup> Of course Tristram must be at odds with his critics. Early in the novel, however, he offers the familiar Shandean peace terms to his readers: ". . . as we jogg on, either laugh with me, or at me, or in short, do any thing,—only keep your temper" (11). Once again one finds the suggestion that having a sense of humor is the best way to find peace "in this vile, dirty planet of ours" (10).

Sterne forms his paradoxes with great care. Uncle Toby, who is so loving and generous, is also the worst provoker of other men, and the provocation—always unintentional—invariably stems from his love of military subjects. When Walter Shandy receives the news about Tristram's squashed nose, he turns to his brother for sympathy: ". . . did ever a poor unfortunate man, brother *Toby*, cried my father, receive so many lashes?" (274). Uncle Toby's answer comes as a slap in the face to the pity-seeking philosopher: "The most I ever saw given . . .

was to a grenadier, I think in *Makay's* regiment" (274). Tristram's metaphor extends the militaristic associations: "Had my uncle *Toby* shot a bullet thro' my father's heart, he could not have fallen down with his nose upon the quilt more suddenly" (274). For Sterne, the world is full of such affronts and disappointments that occur with a complete absence of malice.

Language is not enough and its inadequacy is caused by different frames of reference. The closest that Walter Shandy can come to his brother's enthusiasm is a mock discourse on ancient war technology, which he repeats on the occasion of Trim's accidental destruction of the bridge on the bowling green:

At other times, but especially when my uncle *Toby* was so unfortunate as to say a syllable about cannons, bombs or petards,—my father would exhaust all the stores of his eloquence (which indeed were very great) in a panegyric upon the BATTERING-RAMS of the ancients,—the VINEA which *Alexander* made use of at the siege of *Tyre*.—He would tell my uncle *Toby* of the CATAPULTAE of the *Syrians* which threw such monstrous stones so many hundred feet, and shook the strongest bulwarks from their very foundation; he would go on and describe the wonderful mechanism of the BALLISTA, which *Marcellinus* makes so much rout about,—the terrible effects of the PYRABOLI,—which cast fire,—the danger of the TEREBRA and SCORPIO, which cast javelins.—But what are these, he would say, to the destructive machinery of corporal *Trim*?—Believe me, brother *Toby*, no bridge, or bastion, or sally port that ever was constructed in this world, can hold out against such artillery.  
(211)

The provocation, or ridicule, is deliberate. Walter Shandy is the intellectual who has absorbed too much knowledge for his own good and tends to call it up for satiric purposes.



Uncle Toby, on the other hand, provokes unintentionally because of his naive innocence and limited knowledge.

Unlike Walter Shandy, who can counter sharply, uncle Toby simply channels his emotions into non-retaliatory acts such as whistling Lillabulero or smoking his pipe. And when a vigorous performance of the latter has the undesigned effect of sending his brother into "a suffocating fit of violent coughing," uncle Toby is the first to come to his assistance (211). Men will aggravate one another by intentional ridicule or unintentional affront, but sentiment—the underlying bond of humanity—can always bring the sides back together.

When one moves out of the Shandy parlor, this reconciliatory power of brotherhood is hard to find. Miscommunications and misunderstandings are exaggerated out of all proportion when they occur at higher levels. Tristram interrupts his narrative to relate an anecdote about Francis I of France, the same Francis who was besplattered with the brains of his own men at Marignano (see p. 99 above). Seeking to solidify the understanding between his country and Switzerland, Francis decides to pay Switzerland the honor of standing godmother to his next child. When the "godmother" insists on her right to name the child and chooses "*Shadrach, Mesech, and Abed-nego*" (300), Francis tries to buy back the honor. The act of naming, and misnaming in Tristram's case, is an important issue in Sterne's

novel. To Francis I it warrants going to war after he learns that no funds are available: ". . . we'll go to war with 'em" (300). Hence a miscarried attempt to strengthen relations ends in open hostility. Name calling is the substance of insults and, between men and countries, it can easily lead to violence.

The ambiguities of duty, the tensions of nature, and the inadequacies of language all reflect a pluralistic world. For Sterne and Burton, paradox rules all. The forces of life and death are mysteriously combined in a world which is dynamic as well as fragmented. Harmonious gatherings and idealistic intentions are apt to degenerate into squabbles and corruption. However, this low state of affairs either expends itself or is resurrected by an act of the heart. All these ingredients are part of Sterne's comic grotesque vision.

#### Metaphor and the Ultimate Paradox: Love and War

The inscrutable connection between love and war may be best contained in a comment that the Duchess of Marlborough apparently made about her husband: "The Duke returned from the wars today and did pleasure me in his top-boots."<sup>21</sup> As in Burton's Anatomy, the ultimate paradox in Tristram Shandy involves the contradictory entities of love and war. Through much of the novel this paradox is

represented by uncle Toby and his hobby-horse, or the soldier's love of war. Everything, however, builds toward the climactic affair with widow Wadman,<sup>22</sup> which is related completely in the language of "Love-militancy" (552). This is the other side of the paradox: love as war instead of war as love.<sup>23</sup> Widow Wadman uses her "eye" as a "cannon" and attempts to blow up uncle Toby in his own sentry-box (577). The attack comes eleven years after the widow first falls in love with him, for she has to wait until he "returns," so to speak, from his bowling green campaigns. The widow succeeds because the demolition of Dunkirk has thrown uncle Toby from his hobby-horse, and he must find another love object: ". . . the trumpet of war fell out of his hands,—he took up the lute" (466).

Before uncle Toby's amours, however, the reader is entertained by the story of Trim's first encounter with love and the female sex. Feeling idly lost and remorseful after the demolition of Dunkirk, Trim recalls a phrase commonly used by King William, "every ball had its billet," and then pours out his feelings to his master:

And I believe, continued *Trim*, to this day, that the shot which disabled me at the battle of *Landen*, was pointed at my knee for no other purpose, but to take me out of his service, and place me in your honour's, where I should be taken so much better care of in my old age . . . (567)

Almost as an afterthought, he adds, "Besides . . . if it had not been for that single shot, I had never, 'an please your

honour, been in love" (568). And so we hear Trim's story of how war leads to love, which enters in the form of a Beguine nurse. According to Trim, "Love . . . is exactly like war, in this; that a soldier, though he has escaped three weeks compleat o' *Saturday*-night,—may nevertheless be shot through his heart on *Sunday* morning" (572). The physicalness of Trim's analogy becomes clearer when he describes how love "burst" upon him "like a bomb" while his nurse was rubbing "every part" of his frame (573-574). Tristram turns from the scene just as "passion rose to the highest pitch" to make a general statement on how close the low and the high concepts of love actually are: ". . . it is enough that it [Trim's experience] contain'd in it the essence of all the love-romances which ever have been wrote since the beginning of the world" (575). In a true Rabelaisian way, Sterne marries the physical world of passion with the ideal world of romance.

In the amours of uncle Toby, this same marriage between the physical and the ideal miscarries and produces the novel's most hilarious example of miscommunication. Although matters move at a much slower pace than in Trim's affair, when uncle Toby is finally smitten he simply turns to the corporal and, "pointing to his breast," says "I am in love. . . . she has left a ball here" (580-581). The language of "Love-militancy" is a means of identifying the aggressive strategists. We have already seen the widow's

planned assault on the sentry-box. Trim's suggestion to launch an immediate counterattack probably has more to do with gallantry than calculation, yet it too connotes a kind of art: "She can no more . . . stand a siege, than she can fly" (581). Tristram remarks that his uncle suffered the wound "like a lamb" (579), as he did the one upon his groin. Unlike Walter Shandy, who goes into paroxysms when love strikes, uncle Toby accepts love as his fate ("every ball had its billet") and, like a good soldier, resolves on doing whatever he feels it is his duty to do. Completely unassuming and direct, he courageously marches right up to the widow and "in three plain words . . . told her, '*he was in love*'" (633). He says no more and acts entirely in accordance with his natural feelings.

The other participants, however, are hard at their strategies. Widow Wadman and Bridget devise a scheme to relieve the former's anxieties about the extent of the permanent damage to uncle Toby's groin. Anticipating a two-pronged attack, Bridget suggests that she distract the corporal and "get it all out of him": "We'll know the long and broad of it . . ." (582). (Sterne has a veritable genius for the sexual innuendo.) All the stratagems on the other side come from the corporal: ". . . we'll march up boldly, as if 'twas to the face of a bastion; and whilst your honour engages Mrs. *Wadman* in the parlour, to the right

—I'll attack Mrs. *Bridget* in the kitchen, to the left" (583). Unknowingly, they play right into the hands of the enemy.

Before Tristram relates the circumstances of the attack, Trim finishes the parallel story of how his brother Tom courted the Jew's widow. The Jew's widow is a sausage-maker and Tom advances by joking about the products of her trade: ". . . as how they were made . . . With what skins—and if they never burst—Whether the largest were not the best" (608). Trim adds that his brother took care "to season what he had to say upon sausages, rather under, than over;—that he might have room to act in—" (608). Uncle Toby seizes upon the military relevance of this concept to remount his old hobby-horse:

It was owing to the neglect of that very precaution, said my uncle *Toby*, laying his hand upon *Trim's* shoulder, That Count *de la Motte* lost the battle of *Wynendale*: he pressed too speedily into the wood; which if he had not done, *Lisle* had not fallen into our hands, nor *Ghent* and *Bruges*, which both followed her example; it was so late in the year, continued my uncle *Toby*, and so terrible a season came on, that if things had not fallen out as they did, our troops must have perished in the open field. (608)

When Trim returns to the basic analogy, "may not battles . . . as well as marriages, be made in heaven?" uncle Toby is torn between "religion" and "his high idea of military skill" (608). Sterne is so intent on the language of "Love-militancy" and the hobby-horse of battle theory that the entities of love and war threaten to merge.

Tom's strategy is to jest and use laughter as a means of disarming the enemy:

All womankind, continued *Trim*, (commenting upon his story) from the highest to the lowest, an' please your honour, love jokes; the difficulty is to know how they chuse to have them cut; and there is no knowing that, but by trying as we do with our artillery in the field, by raising or letting down their breeches, till we hit the mark.— (609)

Uncle Toby "likes the comparison . . . better than the thing itself" because in Trim's estimation he "loves glory, more than pleasure" (609). Very conscious of the unfavorable light in which many view his profession, uncle Toby must revise Trim's comment: "I love mankind more than either . . . as the knowledge of arms tends so apparently to the good and quiet of the world" (609). Uncle Toby's innocent simplicity allows him to think that his military actions had the highest principles as objectives. As for poor Tom, his love for the Jew's widow is, according to Trim, the sole reason for his disappearance into the darkness of the Inquisition—the worst example of abusive idealism.

Walter Shandy concurs with the ancients in his belief that there are two kinds of love: one is divine and "excites to love heroic," and the other is physical and "excites to *desire*" (587). Both can be connected to war. The first or heroic kind is the reason which uncle Toby has for taking up arms. Uncle Toby is also aware of how the most famous war in literature, the Trojan, was caused by Paris's physical desire. The only harsh word which uncle

Toby mutters throughout the whole of Tristram's book is his designation of Helen as a "bitch" (461). Singling out Helen for rebuke and not Paris indicates that uncle Toby has always been predisposed against the female sex.

That the life-threatening world of war, which epitomizes human folly and discord, disrupts the life-preserving world of love, which epitomizes harmony, is nowhere more apparent than in the story of Le Fever's wife who is killed "with a musket shot" as she lay in the arms of her husband (422). Uncle Toby remembers the story, but "with a circumstance his modesty omitted" (423). Even Tristram himself is vague about the details: ". . . he [Le Fever], as well as she, upon some account or other, (I forget what) was universally pitied by the whole regiment" (423). Sterne piques reader curiosity by deliberately leaving the circumstances of such incidents fuzzy. The urge to know all peaks by the time the reader gets to the "choicest morsel."

H. J. Jackson believes that the exchange between Mrs. Shandy and her husband at the end of the chapter, in which the latter describes the two kinds of love (588), is based on a passage in The Anatomy of Melancholy: "Consider the excellency of virgins; *Virgo coelum meruit* . . . marriage replenisheth the earth, but virginity Paradise" (Anatomy III, 224).<sup>24</sup> It is Mrs. Shandy who asserts, "To be sure . . . *love* keeps peace in the world." Walter Shandy amends the last phrase to "In the house," but his wife goes on to



state with positive conviction "It replenishes the earth," to which Walter Shandy responds, "But it keeps heaven empty." The final line is spoken by Dr. Slop: "'Tis Virginity . . . which fills paradise" (588). Mrs. Shandy obviously represents the maternal figure who has an instinctual faith in the regenerative power of love. Her husband begs to differ—thus the dispute is raised by male contention.

As mentioned, the amours of uncle Toby miscarry because the physical and heroic notions of love get confused. Touched by the widow's inquisitiveness about the particulars of where he received his wound, uncle Toby sends Trim for a map and enthusiastically remarks, "You shall lay your finger upon the place" (624). To him, the widow's queries are proof of her humanity, and so they are, only not in the idealistic context of that ambiguous word. Trim finally learns of the widow's true intentions from Bridget, but a breakdown in "all communication" between him and uncle Toby perpetuates the confusion (641).

Curiosity is the devil who raises doubt in the widow's mind about uncle Toby's capacity to fulfill his marital obligations. In Slawkenbergius's Tale, curiosity dooms the Strasburgers who "all marched out to follow the stranger's nose" and thus allowed the French to march in (271). It also plays the devil with Mrs. Shandy who cannot resist "to look through the key-hole" and see how uncle

Toby's advance on the widow is proceeding (594). Tristram admits that he owes his own knowledge of the affair to his mother: ". . . I could never yet get fairly to my uncle Toby's amours, till this very moment, that my mother's *curiosity* . . . wished her to peep at them at the key-hole" (599), Attitude determines all, and Tristram's veneration for his uncle distinguishes him from the scandal-mongers of the public world who threaten the private world of love: "[There was] not an old woman in the village or five miles round, who did not understand the difficulties of my uncle Toby's siege, and what were the secret articles which had delay'd the surrender" (644). Private enthusiasms or hobby-horses have no limit, but the desire to pry into the affairs of others should be kept under control.

The idea of attitude brings up Tristram's purpose in writing his book, and this is also understandable in terms of the war metaphor. Tristram, or Sterne for that matter, avoids the "pelting kind of *thersitical* satire" which is grossly abusive and impudent and named after "so ugly and foul-mouth'd a man as *Thersites*" (617). As Richard Lanham points out, Sterne's only satiric target may be the Catholic Dr. Slop<sup>25</sup> (himself a Thersitical abuser), whose fierce temper seems to represent Catholic extremism. Trim's horror of the Inquisition and the fate of his brother is the horror of aggressive religion. Instead of provoking indignation by a satiric attack,

Tristram for the most part means to give his readers therapeutic laughter by writing "against the spleen" (301) or seriousness. The best expression of Sterne's comic grotesque philosophy is made by Walter Shandy: "Every thing in the world . . . is big with jest,—and has wit in it, and instruction too,—if we can but find it out" (393). "Every thing" includes all the histrionics of love and war. More important, man must learn to laugh at himself. Feeling that he has been the "continual sport" of Fortune who has "pelted" him with "pitiful misadventures" (10), Tristram does just this in writing his *Life and Opinions*.

Of course Yorick is the only other character in the novel who practises this philosophy of laughter.<sup>26</sup> In his description of Yorick, Tristram focuses on his role as a jester or clown:

His character was,—he loved a jest in his heart—and as he saw himself in the true point of ridicule, he would say, he could not be angry with others for seeing him in a light, in which he so strongly saw himself . . . he chose rather to join in the laugh against himself. (19)

It can be said that Yorick's philosophy of laughter bears the same stamp of simple sincerity that characterizes uncle Toby: "In the naked temper which a merry heart discovered, he [Yorick] would say, There was no danger,—but to itself;—whereas the very essence of gravity was design, and consequently deceit" (26). Yorick fails to

recognize that the grave mind, preoccupied with "design," will tend to misconstrue the "merry heart" for sarcasm and satire. Personal insult will be felt when none was intended. Yorick finds himself in "scrapes and difficulties" simply because he is blind to the fact that, unlike him, others cannot join in the laughter when it is directed at themselves. A harmless joke may provoke as well as a declaration of war:

. . . it happens, that a person laugh'd at, considers himself in the light of a person injured, with all the rights of such a situation belonging to him; and when thou viewest him in that light too, and reckons up his friends, his family, his kindred and allies,—and musters up with them the many recruits which will list under him from a sense of common danger;—'tis no extravagant arithmetic to say, that for every ten jokes,—thou hast got a hundred enemies . . .  
(28-29)

Yorick possesses "little suspicion," is "over-power'd by numbers, and worn out at length by the calamities of the war" (30). This chapter is a rather sentimental reaction on Sterne's part to the charge that he had neglected his mother and sister.<sup>27</sup> A better incident for illustrating how human conflict arises from a faulty assumption of satire is Phutatorius's erroneous interpretation of a hot chestnut in his breeches as Yorick's "sarcastical fling at his book—the doctrines of which, they said, had influenced many an honest man in the same place" (323). Men are far more likely to be grave and suspect design than they are to join in the laughter when they themselves are

its target.

War metaphors not only help to express Sterne's view of satire, they are also used extensively to describe man's desire to know the truth. Walter Shandy is the speculative philosopher who finds it imperative "to investigate truth and fight for her on all sides" (229). Of course the truth must be discovered before it can be defended, and this task shifts the action from defense to offense. Ultimately, Walter Shandy must mourn "that truth . . . should shut herself up in such impregnable fastnesses, and be so obstinate as not to surrender herself sometimes up upon the closest siege" (238). Seige and fortification, aggression and resistance are the tides of the human universe.

Other parts of Walter Shandy's philosophical endeavors are given combat metaphors as well. Bombarded with all kinds of thoughts whenever he picks up the pen to continue his Tristrapaedia, Walter Shandy discovers "that the life of a writer . . . was not so much a state of *composition*, as a state of *warfare*" (374). Of course the same might be said of Sterne's novel. Lilian Furst argues that the chaotic narrative technique used in Tristram Shandy constitutes part of the "concrete image of the grotesque."<sup>28</sup> In a sense the disjointed narrative forces the reader to move or at least exercise his mind. Causes are often given only after effects, and this reversal of

the normal logical process challenges the reader to reconstruct events. Of course the necessary mental activity is supposed to be healthy. War metaphors prevail throughout the novel and reflect a dialectic vision.<sup>29</sup>

As in Gulliver's Travels, the most disturbing paradox in Tristram Shandy is the human fascination with war's spectacle. At the center of the paradox is uncle Toby and his hobby-horse, but behind uncle Toby there lurks an universal human tendency or curiosity in the grand show of war. While recounting uncle Toby's bowling green campaigns, Tristram mentions that the storming of the counterscarp in the siege of Lille "was the most memorable attack in the whole war,—the most gallant and obstinate on both sides,—and I must add the most bloody too, for it cost the allies themselves that morning above eleven hundred men" (450). The grotesque formula for how man views war is the implied apposition between memorable, gallant, obstinate, and bloody. The more blood, the more memorable. Sterne is only playing with the reader when he says that he cannot resist giving a fifty page description of the "most memorable" siege of Calais (486)—a threat he does not carry out, but there is a very serious side to Walter Shandy's last harangue. Precipitated by the revelation of widow Wadman's scruples, it starts out as an indictment of physical love but then turns into an attack on how mankind glorifies war. Hence, the first part is addressed to Mrs. Shandy, the

maternal figure of love and peace, and the second to uncle Toby, the fraternal figure of fragmentation and war:

—That provision should be made for continuing the race of so great, so exalted and godlike a Being as man—I am far from denying—but philosophy speaks freely of every thing; and therefore I still think and do maintain it to be a pity, that it should be done by means of a passion which bends down the faculties, and turns all the wisdom, contemplations, and operations of the soul backwards—a passion, my dear, continued my father, addressing himself to my mother, which couples and equals wise men with fools, and makes us come out of caverns and hiding-places more like satyrs and four-footed beasts than men.

—The act of killing and destroying a man, continued my father raising his voice—and turning to my uncle Toby—you see, is glorious—and the weapons by which we do it are honourable—We march with them upon our shoulders—We strut with them by our sides—We gild them—We carve them—We in-lay them—We enrich them—Nay, if it be but a *scoundril* cannon, we cast an ornament upon the breech of it. (644-645)

It rates as one of the most memorable runs in Walter Shandy's parlor oration. According to the Shandean dialectic, uncle Toby and Yorick are both ready "to batter the whole hypothesis to pieces" (645). But they never get the chance, for Obadiah interrupts with his cock and bull story and then the novel ends. The last harangue remains unanswered.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER SIX

<sup>1</sup> Possible sources for uncle Toby's hobby-horse in "raree" or "puppet" shows of the eighteenth century have been suggested. See J. M. Stedmond, "Uncle Toby's 'Campaigns' and Raree-Shows," Notes and Queries, New Series 201, No. 1 (1956), 28-29; and George Speaight's reply in the same issue, pp. 133-134.

<sup>2</sup> See Hamida Bosmajian, "The Nature and Function of the Grotesque Image in Eighteenth-Century English Literature," Diss. University of Connecticut, 1968, pp. 182-183: ". . . the fearful aspect of the grotesque is never entirely lacking. . . . The reader must keep in mind that these battles imitate historical events that caused the deaths of hundreds. Such a reminder gives the game a somber cast."

<sup>3</sup> Laurence Sterne, The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman, ed. James Aiken Work (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1940), p. 458. All references are made to this edition and included in the text.

<sup>4</sup> For a general discussion of Vauban's theories of fortification and siegecraft, see Henry Guerlac, "Vauban: The Impact of Science on War," in Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler, ed. Edward Meade Earle (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), pp. 26-48.

<sup>5</sup> Perhaps the most famous maimed war-veteran mentioned in the novel is Cervantes who lost his left hand at the battle of Lepanto in 1571. Tristram refers to the muse as having cast its "mystic mantle o'er his [Cervantes's] wither'd stump" in The Invocation (628). The reference is facetious insofar as Cervantes was obviously right-handed.

<sup>6</sup> Bosmajian comments as follows on Tristram's meditations on the deaths of Trim and uncle Toby: "The reflections, however, determine our attitude toward the warriors on the bowling green. They will die, and their



game can be no more than a momentary diversion from the knowledge of their ultimate fate. As fellow mortals, they have our sympathy. The idea of death is also lurking behind the playful whimsicality of Trim's war game," p. 182.

Bosmajian goes on to concentrate on the image of the pipe: "The narrator gives us a picture of Trim using his pipe to simulate the firing in battle: the image of war is fused here with the image of a smoker enjoying his pipe. . . . The fusion of two completely dissimilar activities results here in a playful grotesque image, for smoking is harmless and so is the battle on the green where no one is killed. Nevertheless, the fearful aspect of the grotesque is never lacking," pp. 182-183.

<sup>7</sup> See the comments on Sterne by Madame de Staël, Garat, Goethe, Richter, and Pushkin in Sterne: The Critical Heritage, ed. Alan B. Howes (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), pp. 405-415, 431-435, 477, 462-463.

<sup>8</sup> W. B. C. Watkins, "Yorick Revisited," in Perilous Balance (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1939), pp. 94-156. See also Ben Reid, "The Sad Hilarity of Sterne," Virginia Quarterly Review, 32 (1956), 107-130; G. Stanley Eskin, "Tristram Shandy and Oedipus Rex: Reflections on Comedy and Tragedy," College English, 24 (1963), 271-277; and Richard A. Lanham, Tristram Shandy: The Games of Pleasure (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), pp. 160-167.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Wolfgang Kayser, The Grotesque in Art and Literature, trans. Ulrich Weisstein (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963), p. 51: "I emphatically subscribe to the classification of Sterne as a writer of the grotesque, for the categories of humor, satire, and irony, of fantastic wantonness or wanton phantasmagoria fail to do full justice to the form and content of Tristram Shandy."

<sup>10</sup> Sigurd Burckhardt, "Tristram Shandy's Law of Gravity," English Literary History, 28, No. 1 (1961), 82.

<sup>11</sup> H. J. Jackson, "Sterne, Burton, and Ferriar: Allusions to the Anatomy of Melancholy in Volumes Five to Nine of Tristram Shandy," Philological Quarterly, 54 (1975), 464. In other words, uncle Toby makes the argument which Burton, following the Humanist tradition, mocks—that being a soldier is a glorious profession. To be precise, Burton admits that the ideals of soldiership are valuable but

that soldiers themselves commit despicable crimes (see p. 154 above). Although one may join Burton's attack on such crimes, one can also support the man-of-arms insofar as uncle Toby only means military courage based "upon principles of *liberty*, and upon principles of *honour*" (462). Extremes aside, who can argue that it is not honorable to fight for liberty?

12 Jackson also points out that this quotation is from Erasmus and may have been indirectly borrowed from Burton's tirade, p. 464; see p. 145 above.

13 See Michael Howard, War in European History (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 72-73: "On the Continent commerce, travel, cultural and learned intercourse went on in wartime almost unhindered."

14 The first dedication actually expresses the hope that Pitt has taken Tristram Shandy "into the country" and that it has made Pitt laugh, or in Sterne's words, "beguiled you of one moment's pain" for whenever a man "laughs . . . it adds something to this Fragment of Life" (3).

15 See J. H. Plumb, England in the Eighteenth Century (1950; rpt. Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 114.

16 Laurence Sterne, A Sentimental Journey, The Journal to Eliza, and A Political Romance, ed. Ian Jack (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 88.

17 Thomas Carlyle, Sartor Resartus, ed. Charles Frederick Harrold (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1937), p. 196.

18 Burckhardt, p. 73.

19 Dr. Slop would expand upon "what Improvements we have made of late years in all branches of obstetrical knowledge," but uncle Toby—caught up in the boastful mood—must interrupt with "I wish . . . you had seen what prodigious armies we had in *Flanders*" (144).

20 "Sir Critick" finds it incongruous that uncle Toby, a "military man" and "no fool," could "be at the same

time such a confused, pudding-headed, muddle-headed fellow" (84-85). Tristram retorts by appealing to the critic's sense of pity. Later he feels attacked by "the monthly Reviewers" but refuses to give "a worse word or a worse wish, than my uncle *Toby* gave the fly" (162). However, at the beginning of the third instalment, Tristram loses his patience and calls them "such a number of Jack Asses" (408). Tristram anticipates that the critics will heap their scurrilous abuse on him for misplacing a few chapters in the final volume as "the cake-bakers of *Lerné*" did on "King *Gargantua*'s shepherds" (632)—the incident which precipitates the Picrochole War in Gargantua and Pangtagruel, Book I.

21 Sarah, First Duchess of Marlborough, quoted in The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, 3rd ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 329.

22 For a discussion of how Sterne saves the "choicest morsel" for the end of Tristram Shandy, see Wayne C. Booth, "Did Sterne Complete Tristram Shandy?" Modern Philology, 48 (1951), 172-183.

23 This is reminiscent of Mrs. Waters's "artillery of love" in that famous seduction scene of Tom Jones (Book IX, Chapter V). The images of "Love-militancy" go back at least as far as Ovid.

24 Jackson, p. 465. Jackson, however, does not mention that the following chapter (XXXIV) in which Walter Shandy gives his brother all kinds of practical advice on how to handle love resembles the tone of the entire Love-Melancholy Section in Burton's Anatomy (III, Everyman Edition, pp. 40-257). Nevertheless, this correspondence further demonstrates how Tristram Shandy is a fictionalization of Burton's ideas.

25 Richard A. Lanham, Tristram Shandy: The Games of Pleasure (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 152.

26 Addison characterized it as "*Butt*" risibility. See The Spectator, Vol. I, No. 47 (Addison), ed. Donald F. Bond (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), pp. 203-204.

27 For details of the scandal, see James Aiken Work's "Introduction" to Tristram Shandy (New York: The

Odyssey Press, 1940), pp. xxvi-xxvii.

28 See Lilian R. Furst, "The Dual Face of the Grotesque in Sterne's Tristram Shandy and Lenz's Der Waldbruder," Comparative Literature Studies, 13 (1976), 17-18: "This comic aspect of the grotesque is manifest in the narrative technique, too. Style and rhythm reflect and express the fundamental unpredictability of existence in a disjointedness that is the verbal equivalent of the grotesque."

Although the narrative line of Tristram Shandy is disjointed and therefore perhaps unnatural, disjointedness in itself does not satisfy our own criterion for the grotesque as somehow being a combination of the ludicrous and the fearful.

29 To Sterne, who is forever improvising on Lockean philosophy, the world is about equal in its stock of wit and judgment; wit leads to "satire and sarcasm" and finally to "mischief," but judgment "should make up matters, as fast as ever they went wrong" (195). This, however, is to simplify reality which, according to Suidas's "dialectic induction," never displays wit and judgment in a "regular and settled way" (193).

As a philosopher, Walter Shandy gets hobby-horsical about his opinions and "would intrench and fortify them round with as many circumvallations and breastworks, as my uncle *Toby* would a citadel" (223). Walter Shandy's philosophy is itself dialectic. In the Tristrapaedia, he writes, "[t]he whole secret of health . . . depends evidently upon the due contention betwixt the radical heat and radical moisture" (397).

Walter Shandy sees his life largely as a battle to assert his will against the powers that be. When another communication miscarries at Tristram's baptism, he wails, "heaven has thought fit to draw forth its heaviest artillery against me" (296).

## CONCLUSION

Thersites: Farewell, bastard. [Exit]

Tro. V.vii.22

It is a long way from the "five memorable strokes" in Arcadia to the "most memorable attack" on uncle Toby's bowling green, and yet so much of the ground begins to look familiar. One of the general conclusions which we can make is that a definite continuity of ideas and modes exists between the comic grotesque portrayals of war in the Renaissance and those of the eighteenth century. The only perceptible shift seems to be from rhetorical to intellectual incongruity. Rational skepticism becomes more prominent and ornate style less important.

The continuity is largely due to the dependence of comic grotesque treatments of war on literary convention. Standard epic-battle motifs going back to the Iliad and Aeneid and the learned wit of Humanists such as Erasmus form the mainstream of this convention. Already steeped in the grotesque, epic-battle motifs were pushed a little further toward the comic. Likewise, the rhetoric and ideas of the Humanists were imitated and sometimes exaggerated to

absurd lengths.

It was originally stated that the ludicrous-fearful duality was at the center of the grotesque, and that literature which somehow dealt with war in a ludicrous way could be designated as "comic grotesque." The form (treatment) is ludicrous, but the content (mass death and destruction) remains fearful. Yet even this distinction is not so clear-cut. There is a ludicrous side to war and a frightening primitiveness in the fascination with it. Ultimately, the tension between the ludicrous and fearful elements cannot be explained away. Their interaction generates the life of the grotesque.

While the ludicrous-fearful duality constitutes the essential feature of the grotesque, we may also recognize many others: the playful attitude, exaggeration and deformity, and a delight in paradox. Furthermore, war is marked by the same features. What one ultimately has is an organic link between content and form. Hence war lends itself to a comic grotesque treatment because there is much in war that is grotesque. Treaty obligations and alliances, the petty disputes of those in power, or the health of the nation—all these can easily be seen as ludicrous causes for such horrible conflicts. Leadership and strategy invite parallels with the play-structure of a game. Raising mass armies and wielding war machines magnify animosity to absurd proportions. A recurrent theme all

through this study is the paradoxical relationship between love and war. If one does not go to war to earn a living or out of sheer stupidity, then in all likelihood it is for love. This love is usually of some abstract ideal such as country, liberty, justice—the favorite words of uncle Toby, at once so intangible and irrefutable.

On the other side of the form-content issue, one could say that the comic grotesque attacks universal folly or the glorious institution of war. Descriptions of mass slaughter, when they seem to reveal the author's self-indulgence in "delightful imitation," strike one as cruel. The same is true for rhetorical exaggeration. Instead of profound pronouncements on needless bloodshed, the comic grotesque writer of the Renaissance and eighteenth century is often intentionally excessive in describing what becomes gore galore. Absurd or extravagant similes, used with Rabelaisian vitality, jolt the reader by being wonderfully facetious; they are so graphic and yet so disturbing. Moreover, Thersitical satire may be a scurrilous attack made from a deformed or perverted perspective, but the voice of Shakespeare's Thersites also represents the human conscience insofar as his indictment of war is justified. The ambiguity of the comic grotesque constitutes its aesthetic richness. And as Walter Shandy's last harangue on war and mankind remains unanswered, so the ambiguity remains unresolved.

It could be argued that the selections studied above are Renaissance and eighteenth-century equivalents of the current black humor novels which deal with war. The absurd situations in Catch-22 follow *ad infinitum* and this exuberance contributes to the overall impression of madness. Kurt Vonnegut's haunting line in Slaughter-House Five, "So it goes,"<sup>1</sup> touches the same stoic chord that Burton sounds in the Second Partition of The Anatomy. While a lot of attention has been paid these American black humorists, more could be given to their British counterparts. Anthony Burgess's Napoleon Symphony contains the same low-festive language in its battle descriptions as one finds in The Unfortunate Traveller. Some of Evelyn Waugh's fiction, including the war trilogy—Sword of Honour—may also be understood according to the comic grotesque. Of course the most important modern novel for outlining a grand comic myth is Finnegans Wake, in which there are at least two central war motifs: the Shem-Shaun fraternal conflict, and the Wellingdone (Wellington) - Lipoleum (Napoleon) contest.

The nineteenth century too has its version of the comic grotesque and war. Mark Twain's A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court concludes with an holocaust battle that points to the catastrophic consequences of employing modern technology in war. Atomic weaponry may



make man's situation seem more precarious, but the horror of how human reason is in the service of fear was poignantly presented—as we have seen—in Gulliver's Travels. The idea of the war engine as a fiendish device is, of course, much older.<sup>2</sup> William Thackeray's Barry Lyndon continues the pattern of the picaresque hero who goes to war to earn a living. And in Chapter V of Book I of A History of New York, Washington Irving repeats Swift's ironic attack on aggressive colonization or conquest by the "RIGHT OF EXTERMINATION."<sup>3</sup> The seemingly perennial appearance of literature which treats war humorously—be it through satiric irony or festive language—attests to the suitability of using a comic grotesque mode to address the subject.

Although this study takes a generic approach, it has not completely avoided the question of influence. Robert Murray Davis says that "one of the advantages of generic discussion is that it allows us to avoid the more tedious shortcomings of influence study."<sup>4</sup> Tedious shortcomings may be avoided, but pertinent influences should be recognized by any critic. This split, in critical approach, between direct influence and pure genre can be unhealthy. For the writer, external influence and internal form are often indistinguishably confused. Burton, in his tirade against war, was obviously influenced by Erasmus, but designating every point of

similarity a conscious imitation may be assuming too much. As we have seen, a satiric consideration of war tends to yield a basic pool of ideas. Furthermore, rhetorical devices or epic-battle motifs may lie dormant and be unconsciously recalled.

Interest in the battle of Marignano and the War of Jenkins's Ear has long since been diminished by the subsequent occurrence of many more spectacular conflicts. According to Quincy Wright, 147 wars have taken place from 1763 to 1941,<sup>5</sup> and no doubt we could count many more since—all the more cause for Democritus to laugh harder now than he would have for Burton.<sup>6</sup> But if one gives way to laughter, it need not be completely derisive. In the tradition of Rabelais and Sterne, we should remind ourselves that laughter is also therapeutic. The contemporary social scientist, Konrad Lorenz, even manages to end his study On Aggression with an avowal of optimism because he has "confidence in the great and beneficial force of humour."<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, if one is seduced into complacency by this desperately needed and suspect optimism, then there is always Swift who reminds us of how little confidence we should have in the applications of science.

## NOTES TO CONCLUSION

<sup>1</sup> Kurt Vonnegut Jr., Slaughter-House Five (1968; rpt. New York: Dell, 1977). The line first appears on p. 2 and is repeated throughout the novel.

<sup>2</sup> See Paradise Lost VI.469-663, The Faerie Queen I.VII.xiii, and Orlando Furioso IX.91.

In Paradise Lost, the war in heaven becomes somewhat exaggerated and ludicrous with its mountain tossing:

Whence in perpetual fight they needs must last  
Endless, and no solution will be found:  
War wearied hath perform'd what War can do,  
And to disorder'd rage let loose the reins,  
With Mountains as with Weapons arm'd, which makes  
Wild work in Heav'n, and dangrous to the main.

VI.693-698

<sup>3</sup> Washington Irving, A History of New York and The Sketch Book (New York: Book League of America, 1900), p. 32.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Murray Davis, "Defining Genre in Fiction," Genre, 2, No. 4 (1969), 350. Davis also says that "[p]erhaps the most fruitful means of making generic classifications, at least in discussing fiction, would be to explore the area in which private vision and form—both derived and achieved—overlap and condition each other," p. 343. This study considers the link between "form" and a particular subject of which the author has a "private vision."

<sup>5</sup> Quincy Wright, The Study of War, Vol. I (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1942), pp. 644-646. The tables of war statistics (casualties, etc.), which cover these and other pages of Wright's appendices, may well produce a grotesque impression on the reader.

<sup>6</sup> The current proliferation of works in the arts which use the comic grotesque or black humor to address the

subject of war suggests that 'Democritus' is laughing hard.

<sup>7</sup> Konrad Lorenz, On Aggression, trans. Majorie Kerr Wilson (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966), p. 293.

Another modern theorist, who tries to be optimistic about man's future, bases his argument on the old love-war paradox. Franco Fornari claims that, considering the destructive power of today's technology, men will no longer be able to go to war for love because all—including the love object—must necessarily perish. See his book The Psychoanalysis of War, trans. Alenka Pleifer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), p. 167. The theory makes sense, but there is a catch. Anyone who goes to war for love has to be mad in the first place.

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