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The Anatomy of Melancholy

THE BOOK

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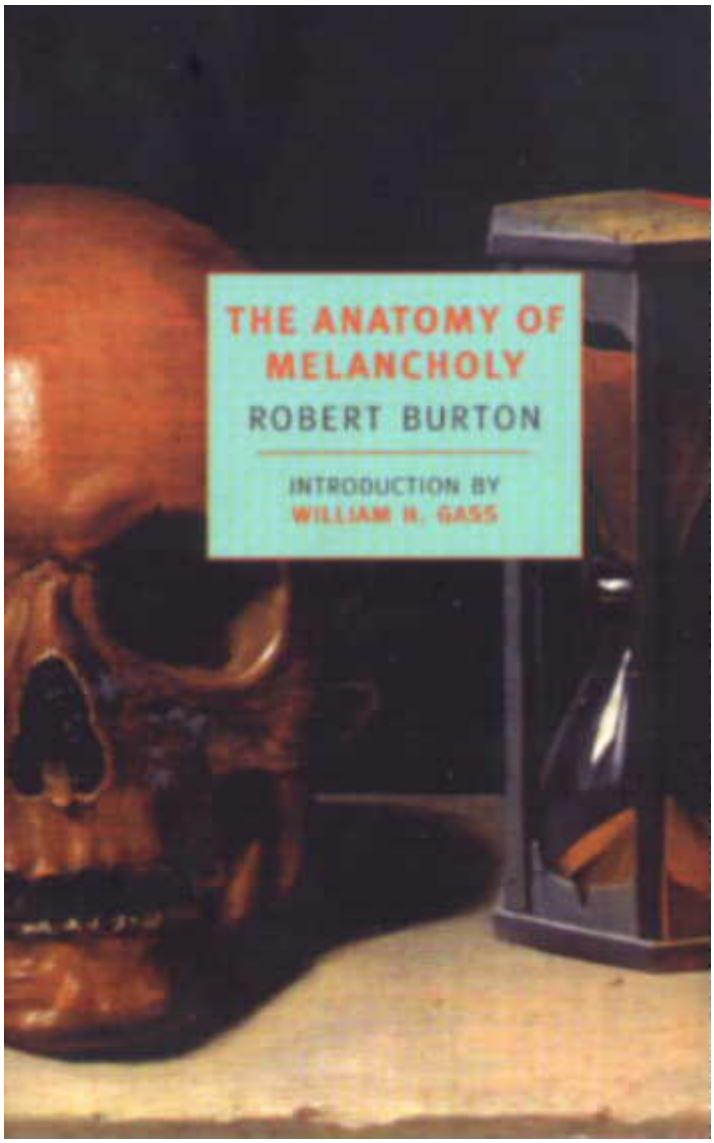
Email Mr. Dam, the reviewer by clicking here

> *...AN IMMORTAL CLASSIC ...The universal appeal of Anatomy lies in the fact that everyone has been melancholic at some point of time for whatever cause. If you are looking for parallels, for insights, for erudition, for analysis, for amusement, or just for the pleasure of pure good reading, Anatomy is the one that would keep one engaged and amused for days. It is an amazing phantasmagoria of human evolution, thoughts and philosophical allegories all entwined through the common link of melancholy...*

The Anatomy of Melancholy *by* Robert Burton, paperback, 8 x 5 x 2.3".
New York Review Books, 1755 Broadway, New York, NY 10019, , , Email - nyrb@nybooks.com: xxxii + 524 + 312 + 547 Pages: Publication Date: April 30, 2001: ISBN-10: 0940322668, ISBN-13: 978-0940322660: Price $24.95.

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This book is one of those immortal classics of human endeavors that time cannot forget nor can distance fade its immense impact on our modern interpretations of *melancholy.* Often heaped with superlative adorations by eminent literary figures since its appearance in early seventeenth century, *Anatomy of Melancholy* has inspired generations of philosophers, literary critics, writers and medical practitioners and continues to stand as a major literary work without parallel over the past four centuries.

The book is precisely what it proclaims through its title. Melancholy is not only a state of mind but is also an ailment of the mind that can be a permanent affliction to the mind and body as well. Almost anything in life, good or bad can lead to melancholy and each and every possible cause for a melancholic experience has been analyzed and discussed in details, often leading to lengthy discourses that could be little distracting and dampening to a reader suffering from melancholy and seeking some solutions from the book. This book must be read for enlightenment and amusement first, for a deep insight into the complexities of the mind next, and for succor from melancholy last. The author wrote his life's work to relive his own melancholic disposition from which he suffered all his life. It was an effort not for soul cleansing but for getting the perspectives of his own mind and body in a more manageable and palpable order.

> *...The book is precisely what it proclaims through its title. Melancholy is not only a state of mind but is also an ailment of the mind that can be a permanent affliction to the mind and body as well. Almost anything in life, good or bad can lead to melancholy and each and every possible cause for a melancholic experience has been analyzed and discussed in details, often leading to lengthy discourses that could be little distracting and dampening to a reader suffering from melancholy and seeking some solutions from the book...*

It is claimed by critics that the author did not experience most of the issues he has elaborated upon but he gleaned the life-like authenticity by observing others and by reading books in great volume and depth. Robert Burton was a scholar by his own rights and had a mammoth collection of books. He lived and breathed books and more books. He was also a keen observer of life and he was born in an era of great change that hailed one of the most critical and crucial junctures of human evolution. All over Europe , radical thoughts were springing up shedding old beliefs, leading to mass scale misery, pathos and melancholy. It was an age of discarding the old, adopting the new and as with any change, it also ushered in grief and confusion. To write a book of this stature was quite apt and it was only natural that someone should address the general psyche of an entire continent. In retrospect we can safely argue that there was none better qualified or endowed than Robert Burton to do the honors. His own experience, voice, interpretations and musings became that of the masses and the book was an instant bestseller running into several expeditions in quick succession.

The universal appeal of *Anatomy* lies in the fact that everyone has been melancholic at some point of time for whatever cause. If you are looking for parallels, for insights, for erudition, for analysis, for amusement, or just for the pleasure of pure good reading, *Anatomy* is the one that would keep one engaged and amused for days. It is an amazing phantasmagoria of human evolution, thoughts and philosophical allegories all entwined through the common link of melancholy.



-Satyabrata Dam
Satya is an editor with Anil Aggrawal's Internet Journal of Book Reviews. More information about him can be had by clicking here.

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-Editor-in-Chief