FROM SIR THOMAS MORE TO ROBERT BURTON:
THE LAUGHING PHILOSOPHER
IN THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD

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The serio-comic persona of the philosopher in the early modern period was adopted by many humanist authors with enormous enthusiasm. In the ancient satiric traditions of Old Comedy, Horatian and Juvenalian satire, and Menippean and Lucianic satire, Italian and Northern European humanists found a wealth of argumentative strategies that could be deployed against rival schools of philosophy and theology, as well as against the abuses of power perpetrated by princes and popes, magistrates, councillors, scholastic theologians and lawyers. These satiric forms, adapted to contemporary circumstances, had as their fundamental purpose the censure of the guilty and the unmasking of truth. If the aim was serious, the *ludus* guaranteed the effect. But the use of such serio-comic forms of writing could be as dangerous to the humanist philosopher as to the ancient satirist despite the distancing techniques of mask – Juan Luis Vives, glossing Augustine’s *De civitate Dei* on classical Greek and Roman satire, explained both the value and dangers posed by unfettered freedom of speech to the *polis* or *respublica*, and to the satirist himself.¹ Vives was friend to Erasmus, and the English humanists Sir Thomas More and Richard Pace. In the 17th century the Anglican cleric and librarian of Christ Church College, Oxford, Robert Burton sat in the Oxford libraries reading and annotating the writings of all four; in his *Anatomy of Melancholy* he adopted the same Democritean persona or mask that Erasmus and Pace had bestowed on More, and for much the same reasons -- so that he might also “represent the city to the city” a century later without meeting the fate of others executed for allegedly treasonous words by English monarchs.²

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¹ Dedicated to Henry VIII; *Saint Augustine, of the Citie of God: with the learned comments of I.L. Vives*, (London 1520) trans. I H[ealey], 2nd ed. corrected by W. Crashawe, et al.

In this paper, then, I wish to discuss the relationship between satire, the cultivation of certain philosophical personae, the communication of philosophical insight and the potential for problematic reception. My case study follows the satiric fortunes of Richard Pace, Thomas More, Erasmus and, briefly, Robert Burton.

I.

Richard Pace was the first to call Thomas More the son of Democritus and the kin of Demonax, while Erasmus followed Pace’s characterisation of More shortly after. Erasmus adopted the mask of Moria in his Praise of Folly which shares in the heritage of Democritus. These are not the only assumed personae – all three humanists assume multiple satiric personae, themselves part of classical lineages, in order to present a composite, complex and flexible image to the world in their writings. What were they attempting to communicate about the life and office of the philosopher more generally, as exemplified by More, and the practice of the related scientiae, philosophy, rhetoric and theology? Why create this particular genealogy?

The career of Thomas More is familiar – Lord Chancellor, magistrate, councillor to Henry VIII, “divine orator, poet and philosopher” (as described by his 16th century biographer Stapleton) and Catholic controversialist. Erasmus dedicated himself to the vita contemplativa as a theologian, educator through textbooks such as De Copia and the Adagia, and detached commentator on European religious and political affairs.

Like More, the less well-known Richard Pace occupied multiple offices, many concurrently, and struggled to resolve the tension inherent in the opposition of the active life and the contemplative life. He was successively secretary to Cardinal Christopher Bainbridge in Rome, First Secretary to Henry VIII, and Dean of St. Paul’s; he was judged by European contemporaries – especially the Venetians -- to be one of England’s most valued diplomats and gifted scholars and linguists, and

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3 In his famous letter to Ulrich von Hutten composed in 1519, with, I believe, some assistance from Pace who apparently stayed with Erasmus in Antwerp in May 1519 on his way to Mainz. CWE, 7: Eps.986, 988, 999. Edward Surtz has compared the similarity of the portraits of More by Pace and Erasmus in "Richard Pace's Sketch of Thomas More", Journal of English and Germanic Philology, 57, 36-50.

4 Cf. Stephen Gaukroger on the early to mid 17th century philosopher.

5 Curtis, DNB (forthcoming 2004)
regarded as a possible successor to Wolsey as chief counsellor, if the cardinal became pope.

From the age of 14 years, Pace studied in the Universities of Padua, Bologna and Ferrara under the supervision of famous humanist scholars and translators in the fields of Latin, Greek, rhetoric, medicine, Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy and the natural sciences – such as Niccolò Leonico Tomeo of Padua, Paolo Bombace of Bologna and Leoniceno of Ferrara. Pace’s enduring intellectual friendship with Erasmus dates from these years. As a teacher of Greek language and a moralist, Leonico Tomeo was much interested in Plutarch and Lucian. Lucian was considered in the Renaissance to be an excellent medium through which to teach the Greek language—Thomas Linacre who studied with Pace cast Lucian as the purveyor of Greek without tears. The hybrid satirical forms and essays of the urbane and witty writer of the Second Sophistic could also be accommodated to comment on contemporary theological and philosophical conflicts, as Erasmus and More were to

6 The main authority on Leonico is Daniela De Bellis. See her articles "La vita e l'ambiente di Niccolò Leonico Tomeo", Quaderni per la storia dell'Università di Padova, 13 (1980), 37–75; "Niccolò Leonico Tomeo, interprete di Aristotele naturalista", Physis, 17, (1975) 71–93; and "I veicoli dell'anima nell'analisi di Niccolò Leonico Tomeo", Annali dell'Istituto di Filosofia, Università di Firenze, 3 (1981), 1–21. See also Geanokoplos, "The Career of the Little-Known Renaissance Scholar Nicholas Leonicus Tomaeus", Byzantina, 13 (1985), 355–72; and Contemporaries, II, 323–4. The most recent excellent study is by Jonathon Woolfson, Padua and the Tudors: English Students in Italy, 1485-1603, (1998) which details Leonico’s relationship with English humanists at the university. Pace, Latimer and Tunstall belonged to the second generation of Englishmen gathered around the Anglophilic Leonico (the first comprising Linacre and Grocyn). The dedication is a considerable honour, given that the dedicatees of the individual books included Janus Lascaris, Reginald Pole and Pietro Bembo. Pace’s learning and dedication to the liberal arts from his earliest days receive fulsome praise. Aristotelis Stagiritae Parva quae vocant Naturalia, Simon Colinaeum, (Paris 1530) CUL [Rel.a.533], sig. AA3v.


9 Curtis, “Richard Pace on Pedagogy, Counsel and satire”, PhD dissertation, Univ. of Cambridge (1996), Chap.1. It is not possible to construct a precise narrative of Pace’s movements between universities; Langton’s will describes him as a scholar of Bologna. He was definitely in Ferrara sometime before the end of 1508, when Erasmus was the guest of Pace. Jervis Wegg, Richard Pace: A Tudor Diplomatist, (New York and London 1932) , 9.

explain in regard to their own desire to translate Lucian’s comic dialogues as we shall see.¹¹

Pace reflected the interests of Leonico in Plutarch and Lucian as excellent means through which to teach Greek, ethics and the **ars eloquentiae** in his own published collections of translations.¹² One of those translations was of Lucian’s **Demonax**. In Lucian’s treatise, Demonax the philosopher is presented as free from self-seriousness, and continually laughing and jesting, while he challenges established authorities (religious sages, sophists, prophets, magicians and philosophers) and exposes the foolishness of the **alazoneia**. Gentler than misanthropic Cynic preaching, much of the satiric humour is based on self-deprecating ironia as revealed in puns and wordplay.¹³

Leonico Tomeo also drew on the psychological and atomistic theories of Democritus in, for example, his discussions of the senses and the causes of premonitions in the *Parva naturalia*. This famous Aristotelian translation and commentary is dedicated to Pace, who presented it to the Venetian senate for publication in 1523. From classical sources Democritus, the Lawmaker and Recorder of Abdera (?460–357 B.C.), was known to the Renaissance as the ‘laughing philosopher’. The most extensive development of the story of Democritus is found in the spurious *Letters* of Hippocrates, an epistolary novel in which the physician goes to Abdera to cure the laughing philosopher, whom he declares more sane than other men.¹⁴ His treatise *On Cheerfulness* defined the moral ideal and psychology of moderation. In the constant combat between reason and passion, moderation is the

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¹² The first published 1514 or 1515 is dedicated to Cardinal Bainbridge and addressed to students, and is only the third book by an Englishmen ever to be printed at Rome (by Jacopo Mazzochi); it consists of Plutarch’s *Quomodo poterit quis ab inimicis aliquid commodi reportare* and De modo audiendi, Lucian’s *Demonax* and Apollonius of Tyrana’s *Epistola consolatio*. The translations were reprinted in editions of 1522 in Venice, with additional translations of Plutarch’s *De avaritia* and *De garrulitate*. De Bellis, “La vita”, 53.


only rational course since desires are permanent and recurrent, and the corresponding pleasures fleeting. Democritus was characteristically praised for his keen powers of observation, excellent wit, and learning in philosophy, theology, astronomy, ethics, physics, and mathematics. Horace and Juvenal imagined him alive again, witnessing and laughing at contemporary follies. Lucian represented Zeus as putting Democritus and the pendant figure the weeping Heraclitus up for sale as examples of the philosophic creeds of smiles and tears, emphasising the Stoic affinities of the latter.

Pace applied this anecdotal framework of Democritus/Demonax to More in his *De fructu qui ex doctrina percipitur*, published within months of *Utopia* in early 1518 and sharing the same editors and printer, John Froben. It was part of the Erasmian campaign to promote the study of Greek and the liberal arts and sciences in Northern Europe, and in particular England. More is cast as the philosopher of the serio-comic type descended from Socrates, who deflates the pretensions of critics and auditors with his sharp and self-deprecating wit.

Before examining the persona in more detail, the context of Pace’s conception of *scientia* in early 16th century Europe needs fleshing out – it is intimately tied to the ethical and pedagogical values of satire, and accords well with views of More and Erasmus (although Erasmus was less an advocate of Aristotelian and natural philosophy). Composed as a Stoic consolation during a most difficult diplomatic mission trying to raise mercenaries amongst the Swiss, *De fructu* was dedicated to John Colet and his students at the newly established St. Paul’s School, as well as to pedagogues and students more generally.

With its comic and sometimes indecorous declamations by each the seven liberal arts, and by its miscellaneous character, the *De fructu* reflects current Italian fashions for employing satiric and encyclopaedic forms in teaching Greek and Latin language and literature, and introducing the liberal arts and sciences. The text is a blend of didascalic Menippean satire derived from Martianus Capella and Fulgentius, and the pedagogical miscellany. The personification of the seven liberal arts is clearly taken from Capella's compendium, the *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*; and Pace adheres to the conception of the liberal arts and sciences as bound together in the encyclopaedia of knowledge in common with Chalcondyles, Barbaro, Poliziano, Giorgio Valla, Leonico and many other Italian humanists. Pace's hierarchy of the *scientiae* follows that of such humanists, partly inherited from the medieval categories
of the arts curriculum. Theology is the highest *scientia*, and connected with sacred law. Philosophy, the contemplation of the human and divine, comes next, and encompasses both ethics and metaphysics. In ancient times, the reader is told, philosophy was considered the most perfect branch of learning which embraced all knowledge. The companions of philosophy are the branches of mathematics. It is medicine, however, that is the most beautiful and useful science. Dialectic is the third part of philosophy, although modern dialectic is given short shift. The three philosophies employ the training of the *quadrivium* and *trivium*. The *De fructu* concentrates on the imperfect language arts of rhetoric, grammar and dialectic which are more elementary, but foundational, to the higher sciences.

Aristotle is said to encompass a world of learning. Pace repeatedly insists on the connection between the theory of the mathematical disciplines and practical tasks, regarding them as integral to the range of knowledge extending from physics, and the visual and musical arts, to ethics and theology. Philosophy has many companions, all the branches of mathematics. Of the noble *scientiae*, geometry is the first, followed by arithmetic, then astrology and astronomy. The mathematical arts, "Astrology", "Astronomy" and "Geometry", all have arguments to make against the false and damnable arts of alchemy, necromancy, soothsaying, extrology and extronomy (amongst others).

After explaining their origins, ancient practitioners and benefits, the arts expose the impostures, citing Cicero, Tacitus, Democritus, Aristotle, Themistius, Artemidorus, Demosthenes, Plato, Ecclesiastes and Daniel. *Experientia* and sacred precept warn against this *insania*; the only fruits of these false arts is infamy, penury

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16 *DF*, 36, 37.

17 *DF*, 88, 89.


19 Pace calls for a reform of English common law, arguing for the benefits of the model of Roman law based on the certainty of geometric principles. Cf. David Saunders, Hale’s criticism of Hobbes.
and extreme misery.\textsuperscript{20} What is the difference between true and false \textit{scientia}? True \textit{scientia} yields certain knowledge and is provided only by the mathematical sciences and the revelation of God.\textsuperscript{21} False \textit{scientia}, or \textit{coniectura}, relies on probabilism or guesswork to predict future events, and is a danger to civil life. It may stumble on the truth occasionally through guesswork or accident, but has nothing in common with any liberal art. Impostures, usually those who hope for some change in affairs, employ spies at court to learn the secrets of princes and then predict that what is more probable will happen in the future.\textsuperscript{22} The two errors they fall into are to indulge in conjecture rather than pursue \textit{scientia}, and to be credulous in new things rather than exercising their reason.\textsuperscript{23}

Let us now turn to the development of Pace’s arguments for the unity of theology, philosophy and rhetoric in sixteenth century Europe. The \textit{De fructu} responds to the Chaucerian paradox that "the more learned you are, the less wise you become", with the desire to prove that learning is superior to all other human goods.\textsuperscript{24} Cato had said that "the root of all virtue is bitter, but the fruit is sweet", and the prudent Isocrates had applied this notion to learning itself, "and thought that all virtues originate in learning as if it were the mother of them all."\textsuperscript{25} Gaining an

\textsuperscript{20} On a satirical attack on the specious recourse to divination and the false arts, especially by the church, and the perversion of the knowledge provided by the liberal arts and sciences by those who would exploit the incredulity of others, see Cornelius Agrippa's paradoxical \textit{De incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum atque artium declamatio} (Antwerp 1530). Like Pace, Agrippa was concerned to stress the gap between human knowledge and the Word of God. For the friendship of Agrippa and Pace, and Agrippa’s appreciation of the \textit{Julius}, see “Pace”, Chapter 5, 194–5.


\textsuperscript{22} \textit{DF}, 52, 53.

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{DF}, 52: "non scientia, sed coniectura...non humana ratio, sed credulitas rerum novarum." cf. \textit{De divinatione per somnum}, 186.

\textsuperscript{24} \textit{DF}, 14, 15. Pace catered to Colet’s tastes in his identification of the proverb as Chaucerian in his Prefatory letter to Colet’s students. See Lupton, \textit{John Colet}, on Colet as a student of Chaucer, 186. The proverb originates in Aesop's \textit{Tale of the Wolf and the Mare}; Aesop was a favoured pedagogical text at the time and More was to draw upon it often in \textit{The Dialogue of Comfort}. Richard Harvey glosses this section of the \textit{De fructu} as deriving from Chaucer's Miller: "Of whom the Proverb is understood but Chaucer uses it to tell, that great clerks are soon deceived." In the \textit{Reeve’s Tale} is found: "The gretteste clerkes ben noght wisest men." A 4054.

\textsuperscript{25} \textit{DF}, 14, 15. This \textit{sententia} of Isocrates was set as an exercise in the \textit{chreia} or anecdote in the \textit{Progymnasmata} of Aphithonius and Pace here provides a model chreia. R.F. Hock, \textit{The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric}, Vol. I: \textit{The Progymnasmata}, (Georgia 1986) Chreia 43, 227–8: "Isocrates said that education's root/ is bitter, its fruit sweet." Cato's formulation is usually cited as "Litterarum radices
education may not always be without difficulties, but as a boy matures he will realise that this "is compensated for by an increase in virtue and that it's completely transformed into inward happiness."  

Pace sets out to survey the various sciences useful and pertinent to the organisation of human life. Men cannot attain the three things on which all action is based—justice, honesty and utility—without learning. "I speak of the utility which the Stoics regard as part of honour and which Christians cannot easily distinguish from it, unless they want to praise the utility of fraud, deceit, greed, and innumerable evil arts." In the course of the De fructu, as in these opening remarks, Pace repeatedly connects the fruits of learning to the qualities of the beautiful (pulcher), the right (rectum), the laudable (laudabile), the honourable (honestum) and the expedient (utile).

While admitting that it is difficult to refute the case that prudentia without learning is preferable to learning without prudentia (Quintilian's position on the question), Pace argues that although the man characterised by the former is capable of managing his business and domestic affairs well, it is only when the two are joined that he is able to consider the higher matters of nature and God, in whose image he is made.  

But a "prudent" world judges as foolish both learning for use in the temporal sphere and, particularly, theology—the highest of the sciences. Ridicule is reserved for those whose learning and preaching originate in Christ, spurning the Epicurean vita voluptuosa and directing all their energies to attain eternity. As the much cited

amaras esse, fructus iucundiores." As George Kennedy explains, students were assigned a chreia to work out under the headings of "praise of the chreia; paraphrase; statement of the cause; example of the meaning; contrast and comparison; testimony of others; epilogue." Greek Rhetoric Under Christian Emperors, (Princeton, NJ 1983) 61.

26 DF, 122, 123. In suggesting compositional exercises in poetry, Pace includes a model quatrains on the theme "learning increases innate virtue". 138, 139.

27 DF, 26. 27: "De illa autem utilitate loquor, quam ab honestate Stoici non separat, nec Christiani commode separare possunt, nisi volunt illam laudare utilitatem, quam fraud, dolus, avaritia, & aliae innumerabiles mala artes comparant." Cicero later mitigated this strict Stoic formula. cf. Rhet. I.v.9; VII.xxx; Ad Her. II.xi.16; De inv. II.i.155–168; I.O. II.iv.37; III.viii.26. Recognising the complexity of the issue, the Ecclesiastes inquires whether honestum, which includes what is right, beautiful and decorous, can be separated from utile. ASD V–4 312–6. Hoffman, Rhetoric and Theology, 205–8.


29 DF, 16, 17. I.O. VI.v.11.

30 Card and dice playing, the reading of pernicious romances, drinking and hunting are frivolous and damaging pastimes. cf. Erasmus on the perils of reading medieval chivalric romances. Tracy, The
hornblower of the *De fructu* counters to Pace, overhearing guests at a banquet praising the benefits of education, the learned are all beggars, and the most illustrious of them, Erasmus, is married to Lady Poverty, as Erasmus himself writes in one of his letters.\(^{31}\) Pace's own situation has its paradoxes and tensions. "I am free by nature but not by choice", for his education has rendered him of great service to Henry VIII as the servant of Cardinal Wolsey. Yet "to serve one's country exceeds all liberty (*libertas*)".\(^{32}\) Learning is his great consolation in adversity.\(^{33}\)

Refuting an imaginary opponent *in utramque partem* in his prefatory letter to Colet's students, Pace declares that he would nevertheless prefer to be the pagan Cynic Diogenes who sowed good rules and clear examples than a false Christian who engenders hatred, deception, enmity, discord and war.\(^{34}\) With his customary freedom of speech, Diogenes had condemned what he saw was reprehensible and lauded and held up for imitation what was done well, and the students are informed that the κυρίας δόξας of the Cynics or select *sententiae* originated in this practice.\(^{35}\) In contrast the imaginary adversary is said to perpetually flatter, assent and adulate, praising to the heavens that which should excite the most vituperation.\(^{36}\) This false and self-interested Christian who perverts the sacred religion of Christ and early Christianity, neglects sacred theology, and pursues wealth and sensual pleasures, is

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\(^{32}\) *DF*, 12: "Liber sum, natura quidam, sed non voluntate...patriae etiam seruire omnem superat libertatem." The *De copia* recommended the invention of the student's own *sententiae* to suit the matter at hand, as well as the appropriation of those of authors. *CWE*, 24: 626–7.

\(^{33}\) *DF*, 124, 125.

\(^{34}\) *DF*, 16, 17. In the *Sileni alcibiades*, Erasmus saw Diogenes as a philosopher worthy to be placed besides Epictetus, the first century Stoic sage so honoured by the Christians for his resistance to Nero, and Socrates—not as rival philosophical schools but collectively as Sileni, prefiguring the hidden wisdom of Christ. M.A. Screech, *Ecstasy and the Praise of Folly*, (London 1980) 217. In a letter to Prince Charles in 1516, Erasmus describes Diogenes as having a lofty and unshakeable mind, superior to all mortal things, able to bear immense burdens. *CWE*, 3: Ep.393, 249.

\(^{35}\) *DF*, 16, 17. A Cynic collection would contain a number of brief characterisations of the "wise man" and "the fool". It has been suggested that the sayings attributed to Democritus were part of a common store of maxims preserved by the Cynics and probably adapted for more convenient use. Stewart, "Democritus and the Cynics", 184–5. Pace's own collection of notable sayings probably contained some of these. In Erasmus's *De recta pronuntiatione* the interlocutor "Lion" states that ethics is taught by aphorisms, especially those which refer to the Christian religion and one's duties towards society. *CWE*, 26: 387.

\(^{36}\) *DF*, 16, 17.
likened to those later Cynics who did not imitate the good example of Diogenes but
corrupted the sect.\textsuperscript{37} It becomes clear that Pace refers more specifically to the clergy
here. Even so, the false Christian cannot fail to be attracted to the wise teaching of the
good and upright preacher who addresses the \textit{vulgus}.\textsuperscript{38} Pace insists, therefore, that the
opponent changes his proverb and judge that no one is wise unless learned. This
discussion is an exemplary exercise in \textit{contentio demonstrativa}, in which a contrast is
constructed which praises or blames someone by opposing him to another.\textsuperscript{39}

Diogenes then is one model for Renaissance preachers and counsellors to
imitate in his uncompromising and courageous Cynic \textit{laudes} and \textit{vituperationes} which
taught virtue from vice.\textsuperscript{40} Pace turns also to the classical Greek and Roman orators to
provide a comprehensive method of advising, preaching, teaching and exegesis—a
substitute for the \textit{ars praedicandi}, the highly systematic manuals for thematic
sermons.\textsuperscript{41} Paraphrasing Isocrates and Cicero in her declamation, "Rhetoric" describes
\textit{eloquentia} as both the civilising force in human life, transforming beast into rational
man, and the liberal \textit{scientia} which is indispensable to all others because it
communicates knowledge. As certain prudent men have written, Cicero amongst
them, savage men left their rustic ways and became civilised through the agency of
elocution and a trained voice alone. "They came together in groups called \textit{civitates}
only when led by strong and forceful persuasion. They agreed upon just laws and
obeyed them only when they were moved to it by strong and valid arguments."\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{37} In his preface to his Latin translation of Plutarch's \textit{De avaritia} dedicated to the Cardinal
Campeggio, Pace again cited Diogenes who spoke against the vice of avarice, and whose attitude was

\textsuperscript{38} DF, 16, 17.

\textsuperscript{39} Under the heading of comparisons in epideictic oratory. \textit{De copia}, CWE, 24: 624–5. Erasmus
suggests that the praise of Julius II may be made by comparison with Julius Caesar, in which a
comparison of the benefits each has conferred is made; if one wished to attack Julius II, one could
compare their crimes.

\textsuperscript{40} On Menippus as a follower of Diogenes, see Relihan, \textit{Ancient Menippean Satire}, 42–4.
Diogenes often appears as a character in Menippean satire; for example, Lucian’s \textit{Sale of Diogenes}.

\textsuperscript{41} Chomarat, \textit{Grammaire}, II, 1072ff.

\textsuperscript{42} DF, 90, 91: "Nam ut prudentissimi uiri scribunt, non aliter quam eloquentia & erudita uoce
effectum est, ut illi primi incredibiliter rude & agrestes homines, illis rusticis exuitis moribus, indiuerent
ciiliores. non aliter, ut in coetus quae ciuitates uocantur, coirent, quam quum uehementi ducerentur
persuasione. non alter, ut aeausas leges abmitterent, iesque parerent, quam quum magnis ualidisque
rationibus mouerunt." \textit{De inv.} I.i.2–3; \textit{De or.} I.xiii. \textit{De legibus}, XXIII.61: \textit{Lex} for Cicero derived
from the reason of prudent men because they had trained their judgement sufficiently to distinguish
Eloquence not only established cities and laws, but allowed for the invention of the arts, "for just as the ancients taught that wisdom (sapientia) is the most important part of happiness (felicitas), I think that learning is the most important part of wisdom." Hence learning, like prudence and eloquence, is a necessary part of the wider sapientia. It is the way not only to all other knowledge, but to salvation.43

In De fructu, Pace applied the anecdotal framework based on the chreia in Lucian’s Demonax in his characterisation of More as a second Demonax/Democritus in his confrontation with two scholastic theologians.44 Challenging the two Scotists, More utters the words of Demonax in response to their ridiculous questions and irreligious answers: "When one of you milks a billygoat, the other stands by and catches it in a sieve. When he saw that they didn't understand what he said, he went away smiling to himself and laughing at them."45 More/Demonax approves in part of all philosophical schools and appreciates that which is excellent in them, but favours that of Democritus who laughed at all human affairs. More imitated him and even surpassed him by one syllable. Just as Democritus thought everything that pertained to man was laughable (ridenda), More thought it was worthy of ridicule (deridenda).46 "That's why Richard Pace as a joke calls his dear friend More the son or successor to Democritus." When occasion gives cause, however, More imitates good cooks and pours vinegar over everything. "And finally, More declared all-out war on those who don't tell the truth, of things resembling the truth, but things foreign to their own nature."47

right from wrong. Eloquence persuades men to accept what the prudential man discovers as law.


44 Pace compares the Scotists to those who attacked Colet for his statement in a sermon that an unjust peace was preferable to the most just of wars. Richard Fitzjames, Edmund Birkhead and Henry Standish are the satiric targets.

45 DF, 106, 107. cf. Demonax, LCL, 8 vols., (London 1913, repr. 1961) vol.1, trans. A.M. Harmon, XXVIII. The game of interpretation that Pace plays with his readers in such passages and colloquies is comparable in intention to that offered in Utopia. In the festivus dialogus at Morton’s table, for example, readers are invited to decipher the earnest jests of the parasite, the court satirist, and so to distinguish the serious matter from the ridiculous and trivial. The development of such skills in interpretation are crucial in political life — argument and counsel advanced through humour may be more effective in many circumstances.

46 DF, 104, 105.

47 The pun on nasus employed by Pace refers to More's sarcasm, wit and derision and has an equivalent use in More's prefatory letter to Peter Giles in Utopia, 44, 45.
Another inner dialogue in *De fructu* is constructed as a defence of Erasmus's *Novem instrumentum*. Pace’s conception of the relationship between God’s Word, Christ’s eloquence, theology and preaching is remarkably similar to that of Erasmus, as expressed in the Paraphrases on the New Testament and other theological writings. Assuming a self-deprecating profession of ignorance for derisive purpose against a Scotist, the disingenuous Ambassador Pace claims to be no theologian or philosopher, and not even learned in fact, admitting only that he knows nothing. Under the aspect of socratic humility, both sincerely and ironically used, Pace presents himself not as a theologian in the sense of one interested in speculative, dogmatic and systematic theology, but rather as interested in philology and the establishing of an authentic text and paraphrase of the New Testament. Erasmus is defended as adhering closely to the Gospel, "that is Christ Himself and the church fathers" and even includes them in his *Adagia*. Ensnared by the cunning interlocutor, the enraged Scotist finally insists that "words don't matter", to which Pace replies that since the Bible is the Word of God, and God Himself the Word, "if you neglect these, you are the heretic and not Erasmus. For he deals in nothing but words."

In yet another internal colloquy, a certain Italian archbishop is characterised as the Lucianic theologus gloriosus, too cowardly to face Erasmus directly with his tabulation of so called errors but wishing to call Erasmus before a general council as a heretic. Ironically addressed as o bone vir, the interlocutor Pace replies to the

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49 J. Chomarat, *Grammaire et Rhétorique chez Erasme*, (Paris 1981) 2 Vols., vol.1, 18–19, n27. In his Letter to Dorp, Erasmus had made the distinction between the real theologians and the moderni (a term Pace uses) who are so preoccupied with the science of theology and battles of words that they are ignorant of sound learning and have no time to read the evangelists, prophets and apostles. *CWE*, 71: 17.

50 *DF*, 118, 119.

51 *DF*, 120, 121. These are precisely the sentiments of Erasmus. Manfred Hoffman, *Rhetoric and Theology: The Hermeneutic of Erasmus*, (Toronto 1994), 5 explains that for Erasmus the "authorship of God and the real presence of Christ endow the sacred text with the highest authority and the supreme power of persuasion and transformation." The bible, contaminated by errors, gives rise to misinterpretations and heresies.

52 In a letter to Paola Bombace in March 1518, Erasmus speaks of mischievous divines in Italy who condemn what they have not read, yet it is mostly for their benefit that he has laboured. *CWE*, 5: Ep.800, 349. I have not discovered the identity of the Archbishop. More had warned Erasmus in October 1516 that the English Franciscans had divided Erasmus's work systematically between them to comb through it for errors.
archbishop (whose *verba* he despises) that he had done some reading of Erasmus as well as in theology and can find no errors of the nature he suggests. But as the archbishop is a professor of theology, Pace will piously follow his teaching if he can offer something better than Erasmus. "And (to use your own words) 'incited by true zeal,' we'll damn Erasmus too, as friends not of Plato, nor of Socrates, but of truth." It transpires that the Italian Scotist has never heard of the *Adagia* of Erasmus: "Adagijs, inquit, quid est hoc?" But he now plans to buy a copy so as to tabulate more Erasmian heresies. As Pace demonstrates in his satirical textbook, the use of adages and related forms (epigrams, maxims and apophthegms) enlivens teaching and by implication sermons as well. Erasmus held that adages could also be deployed as proofs in argument, having more persuasive value as ancient or common testimony than the syllogisms of the scholastics, so far removed from the *vox populi*. Pace of the colloquy justifies his *contentio* with one so ignorant to his friend Bombace by arguing that the weapon of laughter was the most appropriate means of engagement. Cicero had stated that the *stultitia* of the opponent or witness often justifies witty attacks. The humanist liberal and didactic jest disarms the bitter, often personal and intemperate attacks of the slanderer. In the *De fructu*, as in Erasmus's *Colloquies*, the friars and scholastic theologians revert to infantile or animalistic speech, cursing, muttering, blathering incoherently and retreating in anger to the *risus* and *derisus* of the common people who witness their encounters with unidentified jurists and humanists such as More and Erasmus.

The internal colloquies of the *De fructu* (as in Erasmus's *Colloquies*) are then not only exercises in a living Latin language for students to imitate, but also place

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53 *DF*, 116, 117. The frequent parenthetical asides in this passage, feigned ignorance of the ineptness of his interlocutor's speech and the associated mock flattery are all characteristics of Renaissance socratic *ironia*—defined as Socrates ironic self-deprecation or his profession of ignorance—designed to expose sophists and charlatans to ridicule. The Scotist becomes the latter day sophist. Such techniques also afforded the writer a cover for his/her real opinions. Dilwyn Knox, *Ironia: Medieval and Renaissance Ideas on Irony*, (New York 1989) 28, 47, 110–125.

54 Pace uses here, for example, the adages I.iii.53 and I.ii.20. Erasmus in turn uses an adage which Pace had taken from Lucian's *Demonax*, 28. Erasmus employed the adage to express his suspicion of those who call themselves "theologians". *CWE*, 71: 49.

55 See Erasmus's dedication to the 1500 Collectanea, *CWE*, 1: Ep. 127, 258. cf. *CWE*, 71: 68, on the usefulness of rhetorical commonplaces compared to Scotist hair-splitting which does nothing to arouse the emotions of a wider audience beyond the schools. Peter, the first of all the apostles to proclaim Christ to the ordinary people, used no philosophical concepts in his speeches. 76.

56 *De or.* II.229
theological and philosophical matters in the context of the variety of everyday life rather than in strictly institutional settings. Theologians must acquire a persuasive rhetoric which is carried to the pulpets, taverns, and secular and ecclesiastical courts from Rome to northern Europe.\footnote{M. O'Rourke Boyle, \textit{Erasmus on Language and Method in Theology}, (Toronto 1977) 73, 108. C. Curtis, \textquotedblleft Pace\textquotedblright, Chapter 5, VI, concerning Pace's exegesis as applied to Henry VIII's divorce and his linguistic skill in ancient languages. See Richard Rex, \textit{The Theology of John Fisher}, (Cambridge 1991) 149ff for Pace's study of the Septuagint, his \textit{Praefatio} and his disagreement with Fisher over its status as directly inspired by God. \textquoteleft The authoritative status of the Septuagint was central to sixteenth–century debate over the humanist approach to the sacred text, a debate sparked off by Erasmus's \textit{Novum Instrumentum}.\textquoteright 152.} But rather than imitating the persuasiveness and learnedness of Christ's discourse, or even that of the human orators who had drawn people together into communities, the language of many present day theologians, friars and grammarians is inarticulate, contentious and divisive. The \textit{fructus studiorum} of scholasticism is a poverty of persuasive, copious and extemporaneous speech. In the mouths of the scholastics, all learning is debased and they cling tenaciously to their errors and medieval grammars.\footnote{DF, 92, 93.} Opposed to the dissension of the scholastics and religious orders and their inattention to teaching and preaching effectively to the people of the church is the exemplary friendship, \textit{amicitia}, of the humanists who are themselves preachers and educators, committed to theology, the acquisition of the classical languages and scriptural exegesis, and eloquent counsellors to kings and popes. The example of Erasmus, Linacre, Latimer, Tunstall, Leonico, Bombace, Budé, Ammonio and of the author himself is described in \textit{De fructu} and designed to inspire Colet's students to emulation.\footnote{\textit{CWE}, 26: 489.}

\textit{De fructu} proved to be a highly contentious work. Erasmus suppressed the potential for any further editions and censured Pace for irresponsibility in his portrayal of Erasmus's clashes with the theologians. Under the cover of the Socratic mask, Pace aimed oblique but recognizable criticism at the papacies of Julius II and Leo X, endorsed a conciliarist constitution for the church, attacked clerical abuses, and painted Wolsey as \textit{alter rex} in an ambivalent encomium as a warning to Henry VIII. Wolsey would not forget, and Pace's final collapse into bipolar illness was hastened by his trial in Star Chamber and imprisonment in the Tower before he was released after the cardinal's fall from power. Surviving editions reveal close study,
however, by students of theology, medicine, law, rhetoric and the natural sciences. Copies were owned by Thomas Cranmer, Beatus Rhenanus and Martin Bucer, and the satire favourably received by the French humanist Guillaume Budé.  

II.

One of the most perplexing and imitated works of English philosophy, More’s *Utopia* owes much of its conception, generic form and satiric force to Lucian's Menippean and non-Menippean dialogues and essays, such as *Verae historiae*, *Nigrinus* and *Necromantia*. The conventions of Menippean satire (such as the fantastic journey to Hades or to mythological universes) provide a vehicle for a philosophical comedy which questions notions of the ideal standard and encourages the capacity to discriminate between the true and false. More employs the form to raise insight into the humanist preoccupation with the best state of the commonwealth and the exercise of constructing imaginary republics, of the problem of counsel and *vera nobilitas*.

Erasmus and More jointly published their early efforts to translate Lucian in 1506. In his dedicatory epistle to Ruthall, More indicated that he had read many of the works of Lucian but chose three dialogues to translate, the *Cynicus*, the *Necromantia* (also known as *Menippus*) and *Philopsuedes*, and the declamation on tyrannicide. The basis of More's admiration is outlined, and we see that the bug-bears of Menippean satire (which absorbed aspects of Old Comedy and Cynicism) are his own targets. Lucian censures with such honest, clever and entertaining wit that the prick is sharply felt but no resentment follows. Lucian's *Philopsuedes* uses Socratic irony to reprove the propensity to lie and to believe lies, teaching that no trust should be placed in magic and that superstition which masquerades everywhere under the


63 *CWM*, 3, Part I, 3.
guise of religion should be eschewed. The *Necromantia* rebukes the trickery of magicians, ridiculous fictions of poets and the fruitless contentions of philosophers, and *Cynicus* is endorsed as having the approval of St. John Chrysostom—the Christian man should be delighted with this dialogue that criticises enervating luxury while commending the severe life of the Cynics and thus the Christian values of simplicity, temperance and frugality.

This particular satiric form employs marginal figures, such as the Cynic philosophers Menippus and Diogenes, who exercise *parrhesia* in exposing the hypocrisy, self-delusion and fallacious argument of philosophers and religious figures. Both More and Erasmus showed a predilection for dialogues involving Menippus. More identified with him in his *Epigrammata*, while Erasmus wrote in *Adagia* I.viii.89 that this Cynic preacher pretended that he had returned from the lower world in order to have more freedom to criticise the way men live.

Erasmus defended his translations of Lucian in similar terms to those of More, but with different emphases. The preface to the translation of *Gallus* of 1506, which appeared in the *Luciani Opuscula*, justifies the value of the incomparable Lucian who delights as he teaches, and who exposes fraud and hypocrisy through oblique and subtle attack: "Recalling the outspokenness of Old Comedy, but lacking its acerbity, he satirises everything with inexpressible skill and grace, ridicules everything, and submits everything to the chastisement of his superb wit." Philosophers are a particular butt, including the Pythagoreans, the Platonists and the Stoics—for what is more intolerable than rascality which publicly masquerades as virtue? "It is for this reason that men have labelled him slanderer...but of course it was those sore spots he had touched who did so." Lucian's power lies in his ability to bring before the eyes,

64 *CWM*, 3, Part I, 6.
66 Erasmus explains how particular works of Lucian are valuable, and are to be read. Lucian "censures Pythagoras as an impostor and charlatan and laughs at the pomposity and sage's beard affected by the Stoics; he explains how subject to anxieties are the lives of rich men and kings, and conversely how carefree are those of the cheerful and contented poor." *CWE*, 2: Ep.193, 116–7. The preface to *De mercede conductis* points to the drawbacks of life at court, while that of the *Pseudomantis* enthuses that the work is most useful for the detection and refutation of the impostures of those who cheat the populace into believing in miracles and feigned indulgences. The black wit of Momus, the archfrank, is combined with the fair wit of Mercury, the god of profit. *CWE*, 2: Ep.199.
"as if with a painter's vivid brush", "the manners, emotions, and pursuits of men". His dialogues cannot be bettered by any works of comedy or satire.⁶⁸

Lucian's satires were not without their bite: in Lucian's Bis accusatus the character of Socratic Dialogue complains that Lucianic dialogue has stripped philosophical discourse of its former dignity and respectable tragic mask, replacing it with that of Menippus, Jest, Satire, Cynicism, Eupolis and Aristophanes, and placing it on the level of the common herd. In the preface to his translation of Lucian's Convivium of 1517, Erasmus drew analogies between the time of Lucian and his own, insisting on the need to subject intellectual and theological schools to scrutiny. Others, however, have thought such satire ought to be suppressed, "because it tears to pieces philosophies of every kind with such freedom and in such a spirit of carnival." He considers it more proper to be indignant with present-day schools of philosophers and theologians who squabble childishly and fight a no less internecine war than Lucian depicted in his banquet.⁶⁹

Erasmus's dedicatory letter to More prefacing the editio princeps of the Moriae encomium of 1511 claimed that the satire was composed on his return to England and that More's surname was the first inspiration. More is cast as playing the part of Democritus in human life and Erasmus believed that he would appreciate such trifles.⁷⁰ He suspects that some wrangling critics will loudly accuse him of imitating Old Comedy or some kind of Lucianic satire, and of attacking the whole world with his teeth which does not befit the pen of a theologian.⁷¹ But such festivitas is more

⁶⁹ CWE, 4: Ep.550, 282. EE, II, 503, II.5–9. More and Erasmus both underplay Lucian's sceptical tendencies in their prefaces for apologetic reasons. Many of Lucian's works, especially those which are Menippean, do in fact question whether there is any possibility of ideal standards, and cynic irony is directed against those who take any philosophy, religion or intellectual school too seriously, and with sole devotion, in a world governed by Fortune. More, imprisoned in the Tower, was to be taunted by John Frith as another Lucian who regarded neither God nor man. The epithet 'Lucianist' indeed came to be a term of abuse in the history of controversy. CWM, 8: xxiv.
⁷¹ CWE, 2: Ep.193, 116. The epistolary exchange between Erasmus and Budé in 1516 to 1517 reflects on the strategy of satiric indirection as a means of offering criticism, or counsel, to public figures, and the constraints of professional decorum. Erasmus informs Budé that he is fully aware of their differences in approach, marvelling at his truly French outspokenness, a kind of unbridled Gallic wit which might be thought very close to insolence, which does not spare the pope himself. But Budé has two advantages in his De asse and Annotationes on the Pandects: it is less dangerous to attack the dead; and few appreciate the force of the attack, as it is directed beyond the grasp of the common audience. Erasmus continues that the De asse is so dense, deliberately elliptical and metaphorical that it
requires a well-informed reader with an open mind to interpret it. Erasmus considered that as a theologian he is allowed less liberty than Budé, although he writes with great freedom at times and had suffered for it. *CWE*, 4: Eps. 480, 531.

72 Horace, *Satire* I.10. Humour is often more effective than sharpness in cutting knots.


74 Certainly in Juvenal, Horace, Lucian, Seneca and Capella, displays of fallibility are common in untrustworthy or self-defeating spokesmen who frequently lapse into the very faults they attack. This is a means of enhancing the didactic effect, as people are more willing to learn from a flawed man. James S. Tillman, "The Satirist Satirized: Burton's Democritus Junior", *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 10, (1977) 89–96. 89.

75 Burton cites the *Moria* as a precedent for The Anatomy of Melancholy and paraphrases Erasmus’s response to Dorp on this very question — if any one is displeased, let him not attack the author but be angry with himself "that so betrayed and opened his owne faults in applying it to himselfe: If he be guilty and deserve it, let him amend who ever he is, and not be angry. He that hateth correction is a foole, Prov. 12.1." Pt. I, 111. E. McCutcheon, “Burton and More”, *Moreana*, 35, 135-6, 57-74.
employing more licence than Erasmus, sometimes even mentioning names. But why say all this to More, asks Erasmus, a lawyer of such brilliance?\textsuperscript{76}

In More's \textit{Utopia}, Hythloday is cast as a European latter-day Menippus, caped and bearded, returned from nowhere, and insisting on unhampered liberty of speech without any concession to time, place or person. The persona of More is the other exemplary type found in Menippean dialogue, pragmatic and bound to his offices of lawyer and counsellor, who advocates the indirect way (\textit{obliquo ductu}) of advancing advice. Their exchanges are based on the confrontation of conflicting sets of political perspectives and achieve no resolution or reconciliation. The historical More has, of course, chosen the indirection of satire in \textit{Utopia} to proffer counsel to kings, princes, popes and the clergy—and its fictionality affords protection against potential charges of defamation. More ironically claims that he had only to rehearse what Hythloday declared \textit{ex tempore}, merely gathering and arranging his material. The complex and unstable elision of author, author-persona and narrator allow More the author not only scope in the rhetorical exercise of \textit{prosopopoeia}, but legal defence against any attempt to charge More with treasonous slander and sedition. The characterisations of the interlocutors and their relative positions are fluid. At times the historical More seems to coincide with the author/persona and the character More. It has been suggested, however, that More and Hythloday are two sides of the author, arguing \textit{in utramque partem} on some issues such as the treatment of thieves and the problem of counsel.\textsuperscript{77}

Furthermore, the contributors to the parerga simultaneously and playfully create and undermine More's persona as the ideal statesman, the \textit{vir bonus dicendi peritus}, casting doubt on his motives: has More perpetrated a fraud on his incredulous audience in the fashion of the classical historians and poets whom Lucian attacked in his \textit{Verae historia}? Did he steal the story from Hythloday, or has the author-persona been deceived by a lying Hythloday? This articulates the dilemma recognised by Socrates and Erasmus alike and which has always bedevilled defenders of the integrity of rhetoric: the best teller of the truth is also the best teller of lies. This,

\textsuperscript{76} CWE, 2: Ep. 222, 164.

coupled with a pervasive *ironia*, engendered even at the syntactical level by the figure of *litotes*, confounds attempts to pin down the author's opinions.\(^{78}\)

As for Pace, the model of Lucianic stock types of philosophers and religious frauds and pedants ensures that More need name no names in a derogatory manner. The council scene at the French court, which exposes corruption and war-mongering amongst monarchs and counsellors, is constructed as hypothetical, although the details are clearly taken from current French and papal policy. The politico-ecclesiastical Pisan Council is never mentioned as part of Louis XII's strategy, but readers would have supplied the context of conciliarist argument; Hythloday is absent from Europe precisely during the period 1510-15. The abuses of royal prerogative by past English kings to fill the treasury casts a negative light on Henry VIII, but offers no direct comparison. The *cena* at Cardinal Morton's table lambasts a stereotypical friar and lawyer (kin to Pace's characters in the *De fructu*) and is cast at a safe distance in a previous reign. In *Utopia*, as in Erasmus's *Colloquies* and the *De fructu*, it is the opponents of the humanists who are depicted in internal dialogues as engaging in angry, slanderous attacks, but who are publicly reduced to laughing-stocks before their enemies. The humanist interlocutor cunningly allows the ignorant friar, lawyer, or theologian to damn himself.

The paradoxical *encomium* which is one of the generic forms commonly found in Menippean satire, and which constitutes Book II of *Utopia*, renders the determination of the intention of the author a complex task, and encourages the reader to an open-ended appreciation of knotty philosophical and constitutional problems. If *Utopia* is indeed Menippean satire, the praise of the island, its people and customs is paradoxical—the defence of the unexpected. This perspective explains the troubling flaws in paradise, the Utopian's morally questionable war practices, tolerance of slavery, and restrictions on the freedom of speech and travel. It also frustrates attempts to locate More's voice behind the satire itself. Agrippa understood this well in his *Apologia adversus calumnias*, declaring that the declamation (the genre of his *De vanitate*) puts forward propositions alternately in a jocular or a serious form, in a deceptive or a straightforward way. In this undogmatic form, his opinions are

sometimes expressed, as well as those of others; ideas and arguments are brought forward for dispute on both sides of the question.\textsuperscript{79}

Like Socrates, More enjoyed an ambivalent reputation during the sixteenth century both as a witty and charming corrector of folly, arrogance and ignorance, and a deceitful mocker who prostituted his learning to the Catholic cause.\textsuperscript{80} Wooden has examined what he regards as the two facets of More's reputation which persist in Elizabethan literature. One is extension of the early controversialists’ image of More as Papal lackey, found in the portraits of Hall, Holinshed, and Foxe. The other presents More as wit, ironist and ornament of English letters, as had the earlier recusant biographies of Harpsfield and Stapleton. The chroniclers, however, inverted the second tradition by amassing humorous anecdotes and examples of More's "mocks" in an attempt to discredit him as a serious figure. Furthermore, Protestant readers dismiss the “feigned” image of Utopia as specious poetry with no truth value. Tyndale dismisses More’s false wit and false logic as being one; More tries to “cavil Cristis clere wordis with sophistical sophisms, and to tryful out the trouthe with tauntis and mockis.” Tyndale well understood, and resented, the force of More’s mocking laughter.

III.

And what of Erasmus and his \textit{Praise of Folly}? Despite Erasmus's attempts to fend off potential criticism in his preface, the \textit{Moriae} received a mixed reception, and Erasmus was forced to articulate more fully his position. The 1514 edition contained anti-scholastic satire in its additions. Despite Erasmus's Lucianic indirection which eschewed identifying individuals but rather treated of types (and despite the appreciation of Leo X and some eminent theologians)\textsuperscript{81} Erasmus brought upon his head the fury of the theologians in Paris, Louvain, and England who considered it irresponsible in its depiction of the folly of monks and theologians, and their ignorance of theology. This necessitated the enlargement of the preface of the 1514


\textsuperscript{81} \textit{CWE}, 5: Ep.673.
edition, and the addition of a commentary to the 1515 Basel edition, ostensibly written by Listrius but in which Erasmus had a large part. The revised preface listed more examples of Greek and Latin predecessors in the paradoxical encomium, such as Seneca's *Ludus* and Lucian's *Parasitica*. The commentary, very frequently printed with the satire until the nineteenth century, establishes the autonomy of Moria's dramatic characterisation, pointing to the irony of the declamation which parodies itself and provides a mask from behind which Erasmus could make acerbic comments. It argues that Erasmus touches upon nothing offensive, but only mentions some ridiculous foibles, his intention being to sport with lively wit, and he is careful not to mention the names of those he has satirised. Notes on particularly provocative sections seek to ameliorate their stridency and also to defend Erasmus from charges of heresy or blasphemy.

Erasmus's attitude to efficacious satire accord well with the values of moderation in temperament and behaviour associated with Democritus. Laughter should be tolerant rather than sarcastic, in contrast to the personalised abuse of Aristophanes and Old Comedy or the *indignatio* of Juvenal or Persius. Erasmus prefers Menander, Lucian, Horace and the New Comedians, Terence and Plautus. In Erasmus's meditation on the diseases of the unbridled tongue in the *Lingua*, he held that the abuse of Old Comedy was brought under the control of the law when its jesting humour turned into savagery; the Cynic satirists were compared to dogs because although they rightly condemned vices, they paid no respect to propriety of persons, occasions or circumstances. Erasmus approximates rather to the sentiments of Horace in Satire I.4, in which the persona of the satirist refutes charges of malice by making the points that the Greek comic writers and the Roman satirist Lucilius

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83 The 1515 Froben edition was to include, along with the commentary, Plutarch's *Gryllus*, Lucian's *Muscae laudatio* and *Parasitica*, and the adages *Sileni Alcibiades* and *Scarabeus*. *CWE*, 3: Ep.328, 81. Instead, it was printed with Rhenanus's commentary on the *Ludus* and Listrius's commentary. See Jardine, *Erasmus*, 182–3.

84 See notes on the commentary by Clarence H. Miller in *ASD*, IV–5.

85 *Anatomy*, 1, 110.


87 *CWE*, 29, 295.
branded criminals, that he himself does not seek publicity or give public recitals, nor intend his poems to be sold. Further, the innocent have nothing to fear since he is good-natured, his writings are amusement to pass the time, and his observations are for his own improvement as well.\(^8^8\) Emphasis is placed by Erasmus on the qualities of *facetus* rather than *dicax*, that is, on the pervasive and habitual wit and irony which excites laughter and is good-natured, rather than on the often bitter and personal attack of the type of witticism which draws admiration but not amusement.\(^8^9\) And certainly, Erasmus did not identify his satiric targets in the *Moriae encomium*, *Ciceronianus* or *Colloquies*, although circumstantial evidence suggested real persons on occasions.\(^9^0\) As the Protestant reformation increased in pace, Erasmus would increasingly urge his humanists friends to desist from satire which only inflamed passions further.

IV.

Like Erasmus, More and Pace – and indeed Matthew Hale and Hobbes – Robert Burton (1577-1640) was concerned with peace. The *Anatomy of Melancholy* was first published in 1521 and he continued to work on it for the rest of his life. New edition appeared in 1624, 1628, 1632, 1638 and posthumously, 1651. Robert Burton's annotations to his copy of the *Moriae encomium* reveal his close attention to the preface, with a note on More playing Democritus; a note is similarly to be found at the relevant section in Burton's copy of the *De fructu*. In *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, a Menippean satire that chronicles the history of the genre, Burton assumes the name of Democritus Junior, or Democritus Christianus, so that he is allowed a little more liberty and freedom of speech; he refers explicitly to the issues raised by the Erasmus/Dorp dispute. “Sometimes I did sometimes laugh and scoff with Lucian, and satirically tax with Menippus, lament with Heraclitus, sometimes again I was bitterly mirthful, and then again burning with rage: I was so much moved to see that abuse


\(^{8^9}\) Mary A. Grant, *Ancient Theories of the Laughable*, in Univ. of Wisconsin Studies in Language and Literature, 21 (Madison Wis. 1924) 116–8.

\(^{9^0}\) Such as the papal orator Inghirami in the *Ciceronianus*. Edward Lee was aggravated by the colloquy, "The Godly Feast".
which I could not amend. In which passion howsoever I shroud myself under his name, but either in an unknown habit, to assume a little more liberty of speech.” The following remarks of Burton's authorial voice reflect on the early-modern satirists' assumption of a complex and fluid persona in order to avoid charges of vindictive malice and defamation, and of offending the decorum of office: "If I have overshot myselfe in this which hath beene hitherto said, or that it is, which I am sure some will object, too phantasticall, too light and Comicall for a divine, too Satyricall for one of my profession, I will presume to answere with Erasmus, in like case. 'tis not I but Democritius, Democritus dixit: you must consider what it is to speake in ones owne or anothers person, an assumed habit or name; a difference betwixt him that affects or acts a Princes, a Philosophers, a Magistrates, a Fooles part, and him that is so indeed; and what liberty those old Satyrists have had, it is a Cento collected from others, not I, but they that say it." Burton goes on to claim that he castigates vices, and never individuals.

And without naming names, Burton encyclopaedic Menippean satire meditates on the melancholic early modern world riven by futile religious, philosophical and secular contention – the Wars of Religion and the conditions which would give rise to the British Civil Wars. If man’s fallen nature and the need for sweeping institutional change to secular and ecclesiastical realms was the preoccupation of the early 16th century humanists, conditions are certainly not improved, and may even be worse, in the 17th century. Indeed, the Anatomy reaches its climax with its discussion of “Religious Melancholy”. The persona of Burton/Democritus Junior looks despairing to every writer from Plato and Aristotle to Bodin, Justus Lipsius, and Botero to no avail, before declaring that he will make his own Utopia. He argues from behind the mask of the detached observer Democritus that the only value to adhere to is Christian moderation – of the passions, and so too in debate and language. Unlike Pace, Erasmus and More, Burton does not appear to have excited criticism. In many ways, he is not too distant from Hobbes in his analysis of the causes of instability. Laughter may be the best remedy after all for the maladies of melancholic world and an indispensable method in reducing adversaries to size.

91 “Satyrical Preface of Democritus to the Reader” is the long entry to the Anatomy.