

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to provide a close reading and a philosophical and anthropological interpretation of Burton's understanding of the concept of melancholy (as well as the concept of the human being and the world) as it is presented in his work *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. The primary objective will be gradually to respond to the following questions: How did Burton perceive the concept of melancholy? How did he make use of it within his notion of *the melancholic world*? Based on this, his vision of a remedy to the melancholic disease afflicting the whole world, together with the form of this treatment presented in *The Anatomy of Melancholy* will be thereafter shown and explained. This task will be preceded by an analysis situated on the edge between the history of ideas and intellectual history, cultural history, and philosophical anthropology with a small overlap with the history of mentalities. This analysis will firstly reveal the diversity and rich history of the concept of melancholy and, subsequently, open up the intellectual milieu and ideas which form the basis of Burton's notion of the problem of *the melancholic world* and its treatment. This thesis, especially in its final part, will rely on a contextual reading of *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. In order to acquire an overall understanding of the examined matter, it will be necessary to provide a short literary analysis aiming to expose the intention of the author, his viewpoint and his relation to his readership. As the conclusion will demonstrate, Burton's work is not only a study and a treatment of melancholy, but, primarily, an analysis of the problems of humanity and a search for their remedy.