Plantation And Thicket

Mark Leahy
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PLANTATION AND THICKET

A DOUBLE (SIGHT) READING OF SIR THOMAS BROWNE'S GARDEN OF CYRUS

MARK LEAHY

The order changes. The Trojans
Having no idea of true or false
syntax and having no recorded
language
Never knew what hit them.

Jack Spicer (1996: 233)

[H]e that more nearly considereth,
in the form of its square
Rhombus, and decussation, with
the severall commodities,
mysteries, parallelismes, and
resemblances, both in Art and
Nature, shall easily discern the
elegancy of this order.

Sir Thomas Browne (1968: 167)

Introductory remarks (on method)

*Taking as a starting point Sir Thomas
Browne's 'The Garden of Cyrus' (1658),
this essay examines two modes of organi-
zation or of understanding relations in or
among multiple or numerous entities,
and in these explores notions of order and
disorder. One mode is a clumping mass-
ing of units that is seen to hold together as
a group or lump, and this is set against a
more regular rhythmic patterned organi-
zation. Browne's discourse, which
proposes to treat of a recurring ordering or
ordered pattern in natural and human
creation, is itself irregularly structured
and carries within itself the opposite of
that which it describes. Images and*

*instances that are twofaced, that are
double, recur through the argument of
'Cyrus' and allow for a shifting within
this essay between positions, allow the
maintenance of a both/and position. 'The
Garden of Cyrus' is the point of depar-
ture, and writing from this moves off in
different directions prompted by genera-
tive associations, from words or images or
ideas in the discourse. Browne's text, the
commentary on it and the digressions or
diversions this gives rise to, circle and
intertwine through the course of the essay,
as a regular surface pattern extends with-
out edge or object, and as Browne's
discourse itself finishes without a closing
argument, coming to an end, but not a
conclusion. Darren Wershler-Henry's 'The
Tapeworm Foundry' presents an extreme
version of this alternation, of this endless
keeping in suspense as he proposes a loop-
ing sequence of writing or artistic
projects.*

... andor write in bold type on a
long sheet of paper the phrase
once upon a time there was a
story that began and then feed
this paper through your fax
machine with the two ends taped
together so as to form a seamless
belt and then enter the fax
number for john barth letting the
machine run for a day or so
andor cover every surface with it

andor paint words on stones and
then bury them underground
andor eclipse the differences
andor assign letter values to the
cells in a beehive so that you can
copy the long words expressing
all the comings and goings of the
drones andor ... (Wershler-
Henry 2000)

*In parallel to Browne's array of classi-
cal citations, the quotations from
contemporary poetic texts locate the argu-
ment of the essay in a swirl of current
practice. The essay sets beside each other
two organizational modes, two ways of
looking, as forms of knowledge, of expres-
sion, but also as states that can shift or
collapse into the other as the ranged ranks
of armies clash on the field of battle, or as
the swarm of bees settles down to the con-
struction and management of the hive.*

Two modes of organization

The first mode of organization has as
examples the swarm, the riot, the
crowd, dust, hair, rubbish and the
excreted, and may be seen as active in
rioting and social disorder, in plagues,
in epidemics, in vomiting, ejaculation,
and might be written in clumping,
spilling, collapsing texts that jumble
materials against each other and jump
and jig with expletives and the emo-
tional. In *I Don't Have Any Paper ...,*

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Bruce Andrews constructs a larger regular arithmetical framework (a sequence of 100 parts, each 600 words long), within each section of which the language of aphoristic asides, of newspaper headlines, of racism, of advertising, jostles.

Polyurethane before irony money comes to money stretch marks wish the hell I would. Phonetics of lab animal experimentation, amity exist roar of; that is *pretty terminal stuff*. First of all, atheists can roast. I was an anal virgin until last night. Crystal shudder industry financed formaldehyde vindication so relax cooking requirements for tuberculosis-infected hogs. Collect sap from large nurses in neo-Nazi groups. Fly, beards fly; pander drift. Data entity danger laze in slavery togs, ex-nun's vagina sewn up to be a dwarf in heat. My mind shall fight for me. (Andrews 1992: 210)

Examples of the second form are the regiment, the phalanx, the seated audience, the honeycomb, the plantation, the grid, the chequerboard, and can be observed as active in some musical forms, in formation dancing, in gardening and agriculture, in the repetitive gestures of printing, stamping, diecutting, moulding, in the institutions of learning or incarcera-

tion, and may be written in ordered rhyming rhythmic texts with regular beats, recurring patterned forms, and structured arguments. Miles Champion's 'Freudian Unit-Pricing' uses repetitions and dependent clauses in a text that accumulates references without necessarily gathering toward some certainty of meaning.

My wildebeest whose Bren guns are haunted by the giggles of dew-moistened Rottweilers

Whose Benthamism is a fang unfolded in the superstructure

Is a giant Tamil

My wildebeest with the bagel of a bisexual in vertical flock
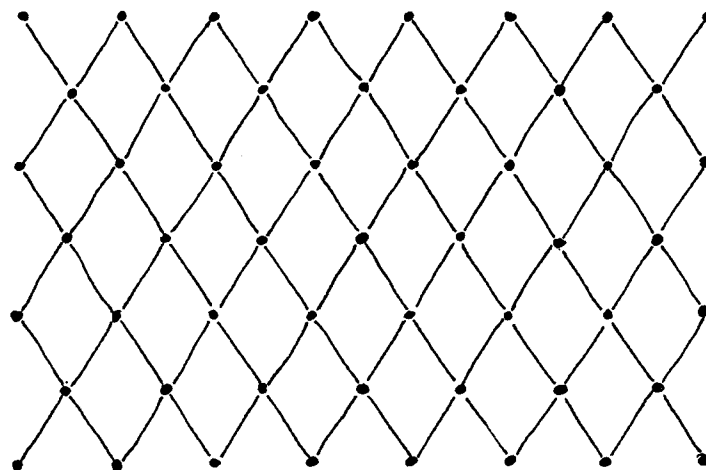
With a bagel of quietus

And bright limits

My wildebeest whose napkin is of smooth worn stork and wet chamber music
(Champion 1998: 445)

Browne's quincunx reads as a model of this organizational mode. In the following passage, he sets out one of his first examples of the quincunx. The planting of trees in a regular formation, in a repetition of the Greek letter *chi*, which allows room and light and view on all sides, and this is proposed as a rational or human ordering that benefits the plants so organized,

and thus, the farmer growing them.

That is the rows and orders so handsomly disposed; or five trees so set together, that a regular angularity, and through prospect, was left on every side. Owing this name not only to the Quintuple number of Trees, but the figure declaring that number; which being doubled at the angle, makes up the Letter χ, that is the Emphaticall decussation, or fundamentall figure.
(Browne 1968: 165)

The mode of setting the trees in the plantation, of organizing them, is linked closely to sight, to seeing or observing them in this arrangement, as Browne mentions that they are 'handsomly disposed', that there is a 'through prospect'. This sense of observing or seeing the different organizational modes from some vantage point outside them that allows them to be apprehended, to be assessed, to be judged against one another, recurs through Browne's discourse. The quincunx in the plantation can be seen only from above, it is clearest in the bird's-eye view, the viewpoint of the author (gardener, planner, architect, cartographer, God). Within the plantation, among the trees, the view down the *allées* is available, as is the view through the trunks, the radiating lines are visible but not the network.

QUINCUNX

One syntactic template or prism through which the distinction between the two forms or modes might be observed is a distinction between the paratactic and the hypotactic. Parataxis etymologically originates in Greek battle troop formations. Soldiers in ordered groups were set one beside another in regulated rows. In grammar, parataxis refers to a sequence of discrete grammatical units linked one to the next by the use of 'and' and 'and', to read '... and ... and ...'. The hypotactic operates grammatically through a system of subordination as phrases and clauses are ordered in a hierarchy by the use of conjunctions that indicate dependence and relations of qualification or amplification. Thus, the paratactic relates to the orderly, to the regularly patterned form by reason of equivalent units being set one by another, while the hypotactic might be imagined to relate to the disorderly or the irregular as it has a variety of parts, parts of different value or of different shape, that depend on or hang from each other. In opposition to this, the elements of the paratactic by each retaining their autonomy to some extent, by remaining as individual elements in equal relation to each other, are closer to the elements of the crowd or the swarm. The hypotactic, with its quite rigid hierarchy and formal set of clear dependencies and differential relations, relates to the structure of the hive, with clear roles for the various members, and to surface patterns that depend on a formal relation between figure and ground. Kathleen Fraser uses a 'matrix' structure to write through material in her poem 'La La at the Cirque Fernando, Paris' (1988), quoting a definition of matrix as 'any rectangular mathematical arrangement of columns and rows' (1997: 167). Working with parts of words from earlier sections of the poem she constructs two paratactic distributions of points with textual emplacements. Section 11 reads:
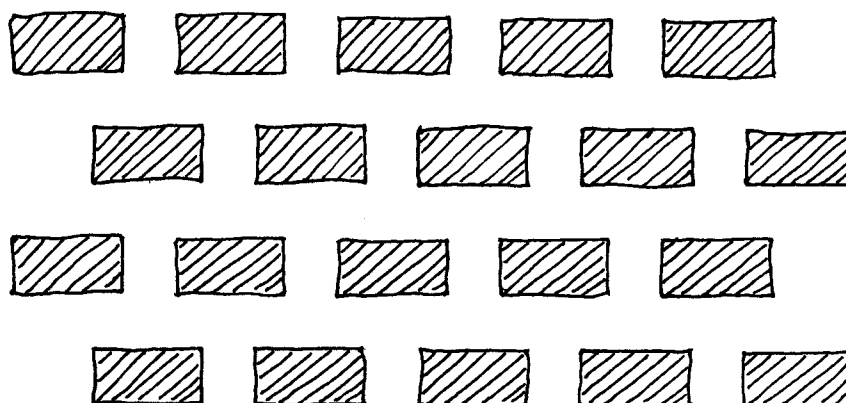
a1 Do	b1 Ace	c1 Rave	d1 Try
a2 Ring	b2 Calmed	c2 Edge	d2 Door
a3 One's	b3 Sure	c3 Low	d3 Rise

(1997: 167)

This range of word elements harvested from a longer text is organized in a regular pattern, but does not suggest a given order of reading or a fixed hierarchy of dependence. The reader can choose to follow a line or a column, or, as each entry on the grid is equivalent, to make any reading route she chooses.

The setting of the paratactic and the hypotactic in opposition may be mapped onto distinctions, outlined by Saussure, between the synchronic and the diachronic (1983: 121ff). The synchronic with its relationship to the linearly organized present, an ongoing continuing present that sets part of language to part of language as each part performs its role within a sentence or an argument, operates as a sequence of elements with clear functions that are ranged in time and may be substituted with other elements that perform the same grammatical function without disrupting the larger synchronic order. The diachronic with its shifting around in time, past, present and future, with its branching into strings or bunches or hovering flocks of possible equivalences each one of which would change the semantic or meaning shape of the grammatical or language incident, operates as a set of possibilities in suspense, each of which remains in the same moment in the structure and yet none of which is in that moment excluded. These also map onto Saussure's distinction between paradigmatic and syntagmatic, two relational or ordering systems that might be distinguished by their distinct points of view. The paradigmatic with its vertical relations among members of the same set, may map onto the equivalence of the paratactic and be modelled as viewing in close up. The syntagmatic with its horizontal relations, its sense of larger syntactic structures, may be modelled as the long shot or birds's-eye view. Models of sight and viewing will be returned to, but first the essay takes an excursion through images of heaps and stacks.

PARATAXIS

Piling up examples: multiplicities in/of writing

['T]is hard to find a subject proper for you; and if you have met with a Sheet upon this, we have missed our intention. In this multiplicity of writing, bye and barren Themes are best fitted for invention; ... such Discourses allow excursions, and venially admit of collateral truths, though at some distance from their principals. (Browne 1968: 159-60)

In his dedication of the discourse, Browne acknowledges that this piece of writing, this 'Sheet' is one of a multitude, one of a swarm of equivalent sheets competing for the attention of a learned reader. His essay must find a means to distinguish itself from the mass, to become particular. One means is to choose an overlooked or marginal subject, and through drawing together a variety of digressions and deviations, develop a discourse worthy of the notice of the intended audience. In striving to emerge from the swarm of other writings, Browne proposes his own swirling throng within which his 'proper' topic may be discovered.

That we conjoin these parts of different Subjects, or that this should succeed the other; Your judgement will admit without impute of incongruity; Since the delightfull World comes after death, and Paradise succeeds the Grave. (1968: 160-61)

Browne admits that he has put a miscellany of parts in an untidy arrangement, in a nonconsequential relationship. His discourse gathers disjunctive elements, and he excuses the incongruous nature of this by citing the fact that as heaven or paradise follows death, contrasting or differing elements may succeed each other. Browne cites numerous authorities, writers both ancient and modern, who have commented on or entered into

the field of his subject. This crowded field seems neither 'barren' nor 'bye', and Browne finds himself caught up in a paradox, he wants an untreated or novel subject, and at the same time needs to cite many precursors. Savagery and barbarism, wildness and dirtiness are linked to excessive growth and unproductive 'teeming' life, to weeds (Ross 1988: 109). These characteristics are linked to the disorganized and uncultivated in opposition to Browne's ordered plantation, yet it is such a teeming, weedy, bye area that he plans to explore and in which he intends to develop his argument. Lisa Robertson, in *XEclogue*, deploys the language and references of the classical tradition, of the pastoral, of the Virgilian narration of the landscape to develop a revision of the place of the female in that landscape. The feminine as the untamed or the unmanageable is aligned with weeds that generate a pattern of masses and clusters, an alternative to Browne's plantation order.

Wind preens or lustres the elegant weeds; obligation splices cold and keeps darkening and brooding. The weedy ruffling of Nancy's sheathed hips absorbs a thought quicker than the lagging wind. Everything patterns a differing lag – the flanked and massy sky turns decorative as it clusters or nearly punctuates her torpor. ... (Robinson 1999)

Browne, in making contiguous diverse or disjunctive elements, groups things in a clumping or massing fashion. His organizing of the various, uses a paratactic model as items listed in inventories of examples are juxtaposed in his disjunctive paragraphs. Brought into some order by the form of the essay, the items in the gathering read as logically linked, and so are put into some hypotaxis, by the mode of rhetorical organization. Browne may propose the disjunctive paratactic diachronic model in the accidental or

unnecessary contiguities of his essay, while he is in fact developing an encompassing hypotactic synchronic ordering to support his underlying argument. Browne presents a heap of citations and things, of categories, listed in a nonordered fashion, with an expectation that the reader looking over this display will not focus on the individual details, but will step back to observe the deeper connecting lattice.

Browne's writing performs a repetition of words, images and examples, the repetition possibly making each repeat redundant. When there are sequences of the same image, these multiply the contexts and connections between the instances; with repetitions of the same word, the words' impact as physical entities is multiplied, and in the same gesture their impact as referring signifiers is lessened. The direction of reference turns from something external to the text to the internal operations of the text. Robert Smithson's drawing 'A Heap of Language' (1966) piles up material, distributes words as matter. Barrett Watten's comments on 'A Heap of Language' suggest a possible reading of this.

An equivalency principle is at work here – words become metaphors for a deconstructed referent that is endlessly repeated. In the same way that all images 'say' the same thing ... language consists of an infinite number of replicas of itself, each of which say [sic] 'language'. In this language a temporal syntax could only be repetition, accreting in the image Smithson gives of a heap. The heap of language can only be added to in time by the production of more language. (Watten 1985: 73)

Smithson's drawing of language is of a physical heap, but the potential for indefinite increase is cut off by the fact that legible words organized in conventional rows do not pile up like coal

or sand or rocks. The word pile was added to at the bottom in sequential (writing) time, while a pile of physical material would be poured onto from the top.(1) Johanna Drucker points out these different heaping or additive modes in her commentary on Smithson's drawing. She sees the equivalency principle as a 'device for foregrounding the distinct differences among the terms' while at the same time turning 'each into a bricklike component, an element of, real, sheer, actual, literal material' with which Smithson builds the drawing on the page (Drucker 1998: 70).

> In precise inverse of the building process, the 'heap' is made from the top down, its crowning stone 'Language' having been the first to be put in place, while the base support extends in a suggestion of an ever widening support, contradicting all logic of real structure through the artifices of written form. (1998: 70)

The extending base in one sense reflects the broadening use of a term, the manner in which associated terms and synonyms and metaphoric uses are generated from a word. Smithson presents a diachronic swarm of examples marshalled into a pyramidal heap with a clear order of presentation, making a work that in its double aspect reflects Browne's project.(2) Browne's complex sentences, his syntactic convolutions, his language, which for a modern reader resists reading, balance on a line between being the exposition of an argument and being experienced as printed matter, as literal material, between being read with the required objective distance and being seen up close as letters and words.

Near and far: proximities of writing

> But not to look so high as Heaven or the single Quincunx of the *Hyades* upon the head of *Taurus*, ... observable rudiments there are hereof in subterraneous concretions, and bodies in the Earth; in the *Gypsum* or *Talcum Rhomboides*, in the Favaginites or honey-comb-stone, ... The Spongy leaves of some Sea-wracks, Fucus, Oaks, in their several kindes, found about the shoar, with ejectments of the Sea, are overwrought with Net-work elegantly containing this order, which plainly declareth the naturality of this texture; And how the needle of nature delighteth to work, even in low and doubtful vegetations.
> (Browne 1968: 177)

Browne moves from the gigantic or very large to the minute and finds the same networked regular pattern there; in a parallel shift he moves from the very distant, the stars in the heavens, to the subterranean, declaring this to be evidence of the 'naturality' of the structure, of this ordering. He ends the sentence with a reference to a hierarchy of forms or products within the natural world. The pattern he is following can be found in even the most lowly, the 'doubtful', those 'vegetations' whose place within the scheme of things, in the model of the natural hierarchy, is uncertain.

> For all things are seen Quincuncially; For at the eye the Pyramidal rayes from the object, receive a decussation, and so strike a second base upon the *Retina* or hinder coat, the proper organ of Vision; wherein the pictures from objects are represented, answerable to the paper, or wall in the dark chamber; after the decussation of the rayes at the hole of the hornycoat ... (Browne 1968: 203)

An equivalency princip le is at work here. Wor ds become metaphors f or a deconstructed ref erent that is endless ly repeated. In the sa me way that all images say the same thing la nguage consists of an infinite number of repl icas of itself, each of which say 'language'. I n this language a tempo ral syntax could only be repetition, accreti ng in the image Smith's on gives of a heap. Th e heap of language can only be added to in tim e by the production of more language.

In an extension of his detailed observations, Browne maps the pattern of the quincunx onto the operation of seeing, of sight itself. In this move, he lifts the figure of quincuncial pattern out of the condition of being observed and into the condition of observation or the means by which the pattern is seen. He proposes a double-cone model of sight (as demonstrated in the camera obscura) and of sound (as heard in echoes) as another repetition of the X or the crossing five-pointed form of the quincunx.

Following Browne's analysis of sight as quincuncial and his observations of the tiny and the huge, the far and near, another mapping of the two modes of ordering may be made in relation to proximity and distance, to the close up and the long shot. In the long shot, perspective is possible, and it carries notions of objectivity, of the ability to perceive or observe the wider pattern, and so notice a system of relations and hierarchies among elements, see the larger ordering structures.

Writing in close up might draw on the scientific language that attempts to describe what is seen though a microscope, that might propose to capture and name the minute, that might reach for a language of the miniature, of the detail below or beneath quotidian notice, the fraction so tiny, that in seeking to name or label it, it is swamped by language and sinks into the mass of details from which it momentarily emerged.

'Perspective picturers, in their Base, Horison, and lines of distances, cannot escape these Rhomboidall decussations' (Browne 1968: 172). In the long shot the viewer sees the elements of a structure as types, as counters, as no detail is evident and complex solid figures are reduced to silhouettes. The opening of Denise Riley's 'Pastoral' posits a landscape that is organized in perspective, a perspective that categorizes and excludes.

> Gents in a landscape hang above their lands.
>
> Their long keen shadows trace peninsulas on fields.
>
> Englishness, Welshness, flow blankly out around them.
>
> Hawks in good jackets lean into the wind, shriek 'lonely I:
>
> This sight is mine, but I can't think I am ...' (Riley 2000: 64)

In Classical and Romantic landscape paintings, those of Poussin or of Constable for example, small figures are painted labouring in the fields or coming along a path from a forest. Set among natural features these persons are types, farmers or hermits; they people the landscape and give it interest. For the viewer they indicate a wider social structure, where such figures might be dependent on the power legal, economic or religious of the owner of the painting, and so might be observed by him as they fulfil their roles. These figures serve as parts of a wider pattern, a pattern reflected in their seasonal labour, a pattern within which the painter himself is operational in support of the structure of power relations. The long shot is the hypotactic view in that it depends on a sense of an overall perception of a larger structure with a variety of levels or roles.

The close up does not allow objective distance, it resists the ordering of perspective, as in cinematic close up persons are seen pressed up against the lens, filling the screen, spilling out of the field of vision so as to be without edges, having no silhouette and so no shape, and what edge or shape there is is fuzzy. In extreme close up, the viewer observes grotesque detail, she experiences other persons as dramatically and radically physical, beings of smell, taste, touch, sound as well as vision; hairs on the skin, wrinkles, stubble, dirt under nails, secretions and excretions are brought into awareness, while the sense of the body as a unit, as one thing, is lost. In extreme close up, the body becomes a swarming clotting clumping mass of physical material detail. This body is no longer the defined measurable body with typical associations and a social position, that can be named or labelled and in being labelled be used up, be completed. To attempt to describe the body in extreme proximity is to always have a leftover, to be unable to encompass it, to be able to begin but not exhaust it. The body of the sexual partner is experienced in close up, in the sexual act the possibility of distance can be lost, the sense of self as separate, of the other as other is eroded and the mass of swarming particularities, a flood of specifics blurs the boundary between one and two, between this and that. In Kenneth Goldsmith's *Fidget*, the extreme close up of the narration of everyday actions, of the movements of the writer's body, of each gesture or action, causes the connections to break down, the larger frame to disintegrate.

> Tongue probes chancre sore on lower-left side of mouth below gums. Hand reaches into mouth and probes molar. Hand touches chancre. Hand leaves mouth. Clasp legs. Chancre throbs. Right thumb and forefinger scratch lower right earlobe in counterclockwise motion. Fingers grasp earlobe. Twists away from body. Tongue extends. Probes chancre. (2000: 41)

Kristin Ross describes how for Rimbaud 'nits', 'fleas', 'flocks of birds', 'flies' and other swarming or multiple images are sometimes erotic, sometimes grotesque. She writes that 'the sensation of being covered with enormous swarms of tiny insects, of losing oneself in a hyperindividuated or cellular tingle' brings the individual into a situation of overstimulation (1988: 109). In this experience of extreme microscopic or molecular perception, there is a link between the crowd, the swarm, and the sensation of the body as composed of a vast number of individual cells each growing independently, each an element (separate) of a greater whole which is experienced dizzyingly as made of this mass of tiny particular bits. The close up reads as paratactic as it results in a radical disintegration into equivalent unorganizable units, The close up produces a sensation of radically individualized bits, of a mass of entities each so particular as to be incomprehensible. The viewer knows these things intimately, but knows so much as to be overwhelmed.

As for the *Favago* found commonly on the sea shoar, though named from an honey-comb, it but rudely makes out the resemblance, and better agrees with the round Cels of humble Bees. He that would exactly discern the shop of a Bees mouth, needs observing eyes, and good augmenting glasses; wherein is discoverable one of the neatest peeces in nature; and must have a more piercing eye than mine, who findes out the shape of Buls heads in the guts of Drones pressed out behinde, according to the experiment of *Gomesius*, wherein notwithstanding there seemeth somewhat which might incline a pliant fancy to credulity of similitude. (Browne 1968: 186–87)

Browne extends the visual analogies and equivalents, describing how one thing may be named for its resemblance to another, and how observers may declare a likeness between distinct and diverse entities. He declares that in order to clearly describe or discover these resemblances the observer will need a good magnifying glass, but at the same time, he acknowledges that observers may see what they want or expect to see by giving in to credulous belief in resemblance. Browne may here be guarding himself against a similar accusation of credulity or of stretching to breaking point the analogies he is discovering; he thus builds in a counter argument to his own thesis as he presents in a disorganized or unpatterned manner his discourse on order. The image of peering at the squeezed-out entrails of a bee, of searching in them for some imagined or proverbial likeness to a bull's head, is grotesque. Here, the man of science becomes ridiculous in his peering after analogies, in his search for pattern. Browne is aware of this danger,

where the too close involvement with his subject may lead him to the breakdown of all order.

In writing from the long view, notions of objectivity, of scientific detachment seem to operate, as does a sense of ordering information and structuring arguments according to syllogistic sequences of dependencies. The long shot allows for the syntactic ordering of relations, of clauses in hierarchical structure. Writing in close up might draw on the scientific language that attempts to describe what is seen though a microscope, that might propose to capture and name the minute, that might reach for a language of the miniature, of the detail below or beneath quotidian notice, the fraction so tiny, that in seeking to name or label it, it is swamped by language and sinks into the mass of details from which it momentarily emerged. Peter Seaton's 'Texte' might read as writing in close up, where there is a sense of the text expanding to fill the allotted space, of writing as physical material experienced in intimate proximity.

> Skillful use of lead, this now now mountain, the girl and boy blur only is as always: compressed sections of the country with the rest of the country to fill fill fill b as in beauty, w as in word, m as in music v as in vibration m as in man d as in drill d as in drift n as in none t as in t l as in link j as in Jaws 2 z as in zeal s as in zeal g as in George, ... I was asked is under three feet and about forty pounds the same as the number of lines, because there are more than three lines on one tier or sphere even during the day in quiet places. (1980: 68)

The closeup language is also the language of parataxis, where the relationships are from one unit or element to the next, without a sense of a larger ordering pattern, and each detail, each fragment, each point, is attached for or

in the moment to the preceding and the following, but more extensive connections are difficult to sustain.

Rank and file: social structures

> The same [use of such an order] seems confirmed in *Greece* from a singular expression in *Aristotle* concerning the order of Vines, delivered by a military term representing the order of Souldiers, which also confirmeth the antiquity of this form yet used in vineall plantations. (Browne 1968: 167)(3)

> Heralds have not omitted this order or imitation thereof, whiles they Symbollically adorn their Scuchions with Mascles Fusils and Saltyrs, and while they disposed the figures of Ermins and vaired coats in this Quincuncial method. ... Perspective picturers, in their Base, Horison, and lines of distances, cannot escape these Rhomboidall decussations. Sculptors in their strongest shadows, after this order do draw their double Hatches. (Browne 1968: 172)

Browne can find examples of the quincunx in every field in which he looks, with a range of modes in which human work or human manufacture use the form. Beginning with a long view, into the distant past, to 'antiquity', the examples move forward in time from ancient Greece to the Middle Ages to Browne's present. From the sunny panorama of Grecian vineyards to the darkest detail of crosshatching in engravings, Browne's focus shifts from light to dark, from past to present, from remote to close at hand. Across this range the pattern is maintained, it recurs in all contexts and on all scales as it organizes or orders human society. Distinctions between the two organizational modes may be related to broader political models, or ways of conceiving of society or social

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...use of lead, this
now now mountain, th
a girl and boy blur o
nly is as always: com
pressed sections of
the country with the
rest of the country t
a fill fill fill b as in
beauty w as in word
m as in music v as in
vibration m as in ma
n d as in drill d as i
n drift n as in none t
as in ti l as in link i
as in jaws 2 z as in
zeal s as in zeal a a
s in George. ... I was
asked is under thre
e feet and about fort
y pounds the same as
the numb
er of lines, because
there are more than
three lines on one ti
er or sphere even du
ring the day in quiet
places. (1980: 68)

structures, as suggested by Aristotle's democracy and aristocracy. The clumping disorder of the formless mass relates in a social context to an organization of persons in a community, country or urbis where each social unit has a relation of equivalence to the others who share this social space. Each person in this model is particular and cannot be reduced to any other, as no structure or system of dependence organizes them. Each person within this model is an autonomous entity and is at the same time capable of joint effort, where this does not rely on rigid hierarchies but might use the different abilities or contingent presence of one individual in a place or time. The crowd or the mass (with the mind of the swarm) heuristically act utilizing what is to hand to achieve the ends necessary in and of the moment.(4) Opposed to this, the ordered socius relies on each individual member of a community performing their role or their function in their allotted slot. The particular person is of no interest or consequence in this model as her or his particularity is of no purpose to the continuance of the pattern or the maintenance of the order. In the manner of a Fordist production line, any individual in the ordered structure has a particular niche in the overall social model, a specific function, and performs their role by doing that task. Fulfilling their duty in keeping the system going, each person only performs this task as a peg in a hole, a cog on a wheel, not as her or himself, but as that function. In this they may be related to the functions and actants of structuralist narrative analysis.(5) Each functionary might be replaced by any other functionary with similar abilities (or needs) and the system would be kept running, the factory would operate and the status quo would survive.

The sexangular Cels in the Honeycombs of Bees are disposed after this order. Much

there is not of wonder in the confused Houses of Pismires, though much in their busie life and actions; more in the edificial Palaces of Bees and Monarchical spirits; who make their combs six-corner'd, declining a circle, whereof many stand not close together, and completely fill the area of the place; But rather affecting a six-sided figure, whereby every cell affords a common side unto six more, and also a fit receptacle for the Bee it self. ... (Browne 1968: 186)

In the context of this discourse, bees rather than ants are of more interest to him. Browne considers each cell of the comb to be the home of an individual bee, so proposing a model of a social organization that is made up of isolated, ordered units, each one equivalent.(6) Focusing on the bees in their comb-building, ordered state, Browne does not consider the swarming stage. In the swarm all work is forgotten as the bees wheel and swoop in a clumping business of reforming their society. In a parallel consideration of human social structures, Nietzsche uses the term 'swarm'. He sets work and labour in opposition to motion, the individual in opposition to the swarm, and atomization in opposition to collectivity. Industrial labour atomizes social structures and keeps individual persons harnessed to the means of attaining their desires. Thus workers are kept focused, kept occupied in ordered series, temporal and spatial. The alternative social model of the swarm hides or masks the desire of the individual in the collective desire, and freed from the harness of labour, the swarm remains in constant motion. (see Ross 1988: 101)

Aristotle's model of urban planning, which is named for a mode of planting vines, echoes formally and in its etymology military tactics of troop deployment. It presupposes some commander or director who, as does the

farmer, makes decisions for the group. The proposals for social and cultural reform in the writings of Charles Fourier imagine a human society where specific roles or functions within the community are chosen by individuals through attraction, and the smooth running of the whole is thus assured. As Browne finds the quincunx in all sorts of places, so Fourier finds the form of the phalanx to be a repeating pattern.

> The phalanstery, for Fourier, was a veritable hallucination. He saw it everywhere, both in civilization and in nature. Never was he lacking for a military parade; the drilling of soldiers was for him a representation of the all-powerful play of the group and of the series inverted for a work of destruction. (Ferrari 1999)

Fourier identifies his pattern, his obsession, in all contexts, at all levels, and finds confirmation of his theory 'everywhere'. Browne also uses military models.

> The *Macedonian Phalanx* (a long time thought invincible) consisted of a long square. For though they might be sixteen in Rank and file, yet when they shut close, so that the sixt pike advanced before the first ranck, though the number might be square, the figure was oblong, answerable unto the Quincunciall quadrate of *Curtius*. According to this square, *Thucydides* delivers, the *Athenians* disposed their battle against the *Lacedemonians* brickwise, and by the same word the Learned *Guellius* expoundeth the quadrate of *Virgil*, after the form of a brick or tile. (1968: 174)

These citations introduce the phalanx as a mode of social organization and repeat the notion of building in bricks that Drucker used in reference to Smithson's drawing. Parataxis,

named for a military deployment, is similarly composed of bricklike components aligned to each other and distinct from each other. The image of bricks conveys a sense of overlapping individual elements but also a sense of those elements being deployed by an author, a bricklayer, a general. Fourier, by contrast, proposed to order or dispose his phalanx based on attraction rather than obedience to a commander's orders. Fourier's sense of attraction suggests the pull of clumps of iron filings to a magnet, of elements drawn without will towards the appropriate pole or point within the system.

> andor pen a treatise for andre breton and philippe soupault in which you discuss the magnetic fields emitted by each vowel when it attracts the surrounding consonants like iron filings and then note that sometimes the letter y emanates a magnetism of its own andor. (Wershler-Henry 2000)(7)

Fourier uses the notion of attraction to describe modes of working, an engagement in activities and labours that attract the worker rather than repel him or her, and to which workers are drawn by some magnetism. This attraction gathers the members of the phalanstery into clumps, into small crowds organized momentarily around a particular action, that then disperse when another action attracts them. The phalanstery as a structure is organized in two distinct modes at once: the plan of the buildings, the numbers of people, the economic input are set up in an ordered hypotactic fashion, while the ideas of passion and attraction seem to depend on paratactic and diachronic clumping. Browne uses both modes to develop his argument, mixing both a bricklike building of examples and instances, and complex sentences of multiple dependent clauses, which refer to ancient and scriptural authorities.(8)

Closing

> Darknesse and light hold interchangeable dominions, and alternately rule the seminal state of things. Light unto *Pluto* is darknesse unto *Jupiter*. Legions of seminall *Idea's* lye in their second Chaos and *Orcus* of *Hipocrates*; till putting on the habits of their forms, they shew themselves upon the stage of the world, and open dominion of Jove. (Browne 1968: 202)

Browne uses an image of balancing, of opposites as somehow contained one within the other, or as complementary. This discussion of darkness and light comes at the end of a passage on plants, water and colour, and points towards the coming of night that closes the essay. The comments reflect the bringing to light or sight of ideas in the discourse Browne has put together, as the 'seminall' is brought into the 'open'. The balancing of contradictories, of both in each, of both as aspects of the other or the inverse of the other, repeats the model of the discourse itself, as both order and disorder, parataxis and hypotaxis, are 'interchangeable'.

> Night which Pagan Theology could make the daughter of *Chaos*, affords no advantage to the description of order: Although no lower than that Masse can we derive its genealogy. All things began in order, so shall they end, and so shall they begin again; according to the ordainer of order and mysticall Mathematicks of the City of Heaven. (Browne 1968: 210)

Coming to the close of his discourse, Browne returns to his core opposition between 'Chaos' and 'order', between that which can be described or defined, and that 'Masse' which can only be named, and named

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only in citation. The mass of examples which Browne has presented in the discourse are intended to demonstrate that order which has been put in place by God, the 'ordainer of order', and whose plan or design is evident in all areas of natural, social, and cultural life.(9) The texts of this essay, of Browne's and of the poets' cited here, present a mixed mode of ordering information, of representing knowledge, a paratactic heaping up of citations and references, in a wild rich variety, tempered by an organizing hypotactic principle that accepts some underlying structure. Faith in an underlying principle of divine order allows Browne to present a chaotic reading surface, knowing the mass or swarm of detail and information is held in check by an ideological net. Without the idea of a military commander or a divine maker, the contemporary writings might be felt to have no order by which the reader might apprehend them, to exist in a state of chaos. It might be felt that any reader comes to them as at night, without a guide, to find her own way through the weedy thickets, through the undergrowth of text. 'Coda', the final section of Kathleen Fraser's "La La at the Cirque Fernando, Paris", sets out another matrix, another quincuncial distribution of text. Visually, at the material level of ink on paper, it presents an ordered face, but any reading order is open to whomever picks up the book.

dear	arc	angel
have	broken	code
now	need	speech

(Fraser 1997: 168)

A possibility of a hierarchy, with angels and arc/angels, a hierarchy recognizable to Thomas Browne, operates within these letter groups. The links, though, are unstable. The code has been cracked, or the possibility of communication is cut off. There is a need in the present, but the mode of

address to an absent one means a delay. As each of the entities on this grid attracts a swarm of semantic variations, each is in a fixed spatial distribution and may be considered in isolation. The opposition of the organizational modes proposed at the outset of the essay is similarly unstable. Shifting points of view adjust the focus and the rigid grid slumps into a tangled net, the grittiness of sand in the eye smoothes into the slope of the seen beach.

Notes

[1] Smithson's 'Asphalt Rundown' (1969) is organized in this manner. In this sculpture or action, Smithson poured a truckload of asphalt down a quarry slope outside Rome.

[2] The physical form and organization of written text determines the sloping sides of the 'heap' in Smithson's 'A Heap of Language'. The writer can decide where to begin a line, where to position the first letter, thus lefthand slope is a smooth diagonal line, but the right slope is less smooth as words (unlike bricks) are of uneven lengths. Smithson has chosen to use only whole words in each line, rather than using it simply as filling. In this, there is a resistance to using language as 'printed matter'. Smithson does not fill letters or words into a shape, into containers, as he did with soil and stones for his series of 'NonSite' works (1968). In 'An American Primer' (1979), Peter Seaton's 'printed matter', his language heap, similar to Smithson's 'A Heap of Language', is partly organized by reading conventions. The mechanics of the typewriter relate to Smithson's gridruled paper, as words and lines flow from left to right and from the top of the page down. However, the logic of the physical construction of a typed passage means that it might be extended indefinitely, and nothing in its form requires that it end at any particular point.

[3] The term in Aristotle's Politics, sustadaz ampelwn, that Browne refers to is translated as 'clumps' by Jowett (the term is translated as 'quincunxes' by Welldon), indicating that the vines may have been planted not singly but in small bunches or groups, like groups of soldiers on the field of battle. The image thus combines elements of the evenly distributed isolated units of the paratactic model and the clumping or massing of the hypotactic.

> As to strongholds, what is suitable to different forms of government varies: thus an acropolis is suited to an

oligarchy or a monarchy, but a plain to a democracy; neither to an aristocracy, but rather a number of strong places. The arrangement of private houses is considered to be more agreeable and generally more convenient, if the streets are regularly laid out after the modern fashion which Hippodamus introduced, but for security in war the antiquated mode of building, which made it difficult for strangers to get out of a town and for assailants to find their way in, is preferable. A city should therefore adopt both plans of building: it is possible to arrange the houses irregularly, as husbandmen plant their vines in what are called 'clumps'. The whole town should not be laid out in straight lines, but only certain quarters and regions; thus security and beauty will be combined. (Book 7, Chapter 11)

The model of townplanning Aristotle uses attempts some double ordering of homes and buildings. He proposes the best design as one which combines paratactic individually distributed houses of the democratic model and the clumping clustering houses in the monarchical hypotactic model.

[4] The crowd or swarm acts in some manner like the *bricoleur* of Lévi-Strauss, using the 'to hand' to solve immediate problems and having an ability to respond to alterations in circumstance unlike the less flexible hierarchical model (Lévi-Strauss 1966: 17).

[5] See for example, A. J. Greimas's *actants* (Jameson, 126), and Vladimir Propp, *The Morphology of the Folktale* where a rigid order of events or actions occurs, performed by a fixed cast of personae whose functions are always subordinate to the overall narrative (Propp 1975: 19–24).

[6] Each cell of the honeycomb is home to an individual egg and then larva, or is used to store honey or pollen. Adult bees enter the cells in the course of their work but do not occupy them as Browne implies. Browne's representation of the anthill and the beehive as models of human social organization is developed more fully in Bernard de Mandeville's *The Fable of the Bees* (1714). In a later example, the main building at Brook Farm, the mid-nineteenth century Fourierist community outside Boston, was named 'The Hive' (see Van der Zee Sears, Chapter 4, 'A Bad Beginning').

[7] Wershler-Henry here yokes the Surrealist experiments of Breton and Soupault to mapping of brainwave activity in the analysis of the hearing and understanding of language, performing a gesture parallel to Browne's juxtapositions and conjunctions.

8 Benjamin in his Arcades project included a section 'Convolute W' devoted to Fourier (1999: 620-50). The Arcades in their mix of organizing headings or groupings with a proposed grand organizing plan, and a higgledypiggledy mix of citations, quotations, scraps, notes and other loosely organized elements, repeat in another form the double character of Browne's discourse, Fourier's phalanx and Aristotle's city. The list of 'Materials' for the Arcades (1999: 919-25) echoes Rimbaud's celebratory chaotic (or democratic) heap of equivalents in 'Alchimie du verbe':

> J'aimais les peintures idiotes, dessus des portes, décors, toiles de saltimbanques, enseignes, enluminures populaires; la littérature démodée, latin d'eglise, livres érotiques sans orthographe, romans de nos aïeules, contes de fées, petits livres d'enfance, opéras vieux, refrains niais, rhythmes naïfs. (Rimbaud 1995: 32)

Rimbaud is also included in the Arcades, mainly for his participation in the Paris Commune, so aligning him with the crowd or mob or mass.

9 The plan or design of God is evident in the form of the human body, the interior of the physical person, and it analogically performs the 'expression of scripture'.

> This Reticulate or Net-work was also considerable in the inward parts of man ... Emphatically extending that Elegant expression of scripture: Thou hast curiously embroydered me, thou hast wrought me up after the finest way of texture, and as it were with a Needle. (Browne 1968: 188)

This is a reference to Psalm 139, a song by King David acknowledging the power of God.

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