

ROBERT BOYLE

THE SCEPTICAL CHYMIST

OR

CHYMICO-PHYSICAL  
Doubts & Paradoxes, Touching the  
SPAGYRIST'S PRINCIPLES

Commonly call'd

HYPOSTATICAL,  
As they are wont to be Propos'd and  
Defended by the Generality of

ALCHYMISTS.

Whereunto is præmis'd Part of another  
Discourse relating to the same Subject.



B I B L I O B A Z A A R

Propos. I. *It seems not absurd to conceive that at the first Production of mixt Bodies, the Universal Matter whereof they among other Parts of the Universe consisted, was actually divided into little Particles of several sizes and shapes variously mov'd.*

This (sayes *Carneades*) I suppose you will easily enough allow. For besides that which happens in the Generation, Corruption, Nutrition, and wasting of Bodies, that which we discover partly by our *Microscopes* of the extream littleness of even the scarce sensible parts of Concretes; and partly by the Chymical Resolutions of mixt Bodies, and by divers other Operations of Spagyrical Fires upon them, seems sufficiently to manifest their consisting of parts very minute and of differing Figures. And that there does also intervene a various local Motion of such small Bodies, will scarce be denied; whether we chuse to grant the Origine of Concretions assign'd by *Epicurus*, or that related by *Moses*. For the first, as you well know, supposes not only all mixt Bodies, but all others to be produc'd by the various and casual occursions of Atomes, moving themselves to and fro by an internal Principle in the Immense or rather Infinite *Vacuum*. And as for the inspir'd Historian; He, informing us that the great and Wise Author of Things did not immediately create Plants, Beasts, Birds, &c. but produc'd them out of those portions of the pre-existent, though created, Matter, that he calls Water and Earth, allows us to conceive, that the constituent Particles whereof these new Concretes were to consist, were variously moved in order to their being connected into the Bodies they were, by their various Coalitions and Textures, to compose.

But (continues *Carneades*) presuming that the first Proposition needs not be longer insisted on, I will pass on to the second, and tell you that

Propos. II. *Neither is it impossible that of these minute Particles divers of the smallest and neighbouring ones were here and there associated into minute Masses or Clusters, and did by their Coalitions constitute great store of such little primary Concretions or Masses as were not easily dissipable into such Particles as compos'd them.*

To what may be deduc'd, in favour of this Assertion, from the Nature of the Thing it self, I will add something out of Experience, which though

by some Chymists, I am now to Examine that which I Foresee will be Confidently press'd by Divers Peripateticks, who, to Prove Fire to be the true Analyzer of Bodies, will Plead, That it is the very Definition of Heat given by *Aristotle*, and Generally Received, *Congregare Homogenea, & Heterogenea Segregare*, to Assemble Things of a Resembling, and Disjoyn those of a Differing Nature. To this I answer, That this Effect is far from being so Essential to Heat, as 'tis Generally Imagin'd; for it rather Seems, that the True and Genuine Property of Heat is, to set a Moving, and thereby to Dissociate the parts of Bodies, and Subdivide them into Minute Particles, without regard to their being Homogeneous or Heterogeneous, as is apparent in the Boyling of Water, the Distillation of Quicksilver, or the Exposing of Bodies to the action of the Fire, whose Parts either Are not (at least in that Degree of Heat Appear not) Dissimilar, where all that the Fire can do, is to Divide the Body into very Minute Parts which are of the same Nature with one another, and with their *Totum*, as their Reduction by Condensation Evinces. And even when the Fire seems most so *Congregare Homogenea, & Segregare Heterogenea*, it Produces that Effect but by Accident; For the Fire does but Dissolve the Cement, or rather Shatter the Frame, or [tructure that kept the Heterogeneous Parts of Bodies together, under one Common Form; upon which Dissolution the Component Particles of the Mixt, being Freed and set at Liberty, do Naturally, and oftentimes without any Operation of the Fire, Associate themselves each with its Like, or rather do take those places which their Several Degrees of Gravity and Levity, Fixedness or Volatility (either Natural, or Adventitious from the Impression of the Fire) Assigne them. Thus in the Distillation (for Instance) of Man's Blood, the Fire do's First begin to Dissolve the *Nexus* or Cement of the Body; and then the Water, being the most Volatile, and Easy to be Extracted, is either by the Igneous Atomes, or the Agitation they are put into by the Fire, first carried up, till Forsaken by what carried it up, its Weight sinks it down into the Receiver: but all this while the other Principles of the Concrete Remain Unsever'd, and Require a stronger Degree of Heat to make a Separation of its more