His exuberance of knowledge, and plentitude of

ideas, sometimes obstruct the tendency of his reasoning

and the clearness of his decisions: on whatever subject

he employed his mind, there started up immediately so

(5) many images before him, that he lost one by grasping

another. His memory supplied him with so many

illustrations, parallel or dependent notions, that he was

always starting into collateral considerations; but the

sprit and vigor of his pursuit always gives delight;

(10) and the reader follows him, without reluctance,

through his mazes, in themselves flowery and pleasing,

and ending at the point originally in view.

“To have great excellencies and great faults,

‘*mangæ virtutues nec minora vitia,’*is the poesy,” says

(15) our author, “of the best natures.” This poesy may be

properly applied to the style of Browne; it is vigorous,

but rugged; it is learned, but pedantic; it is deep, but

obscure; it strikes, but does not please; it commands,

but does not allure; his tropes are harsh, and his

(20) combinations uncouth.

He fell into an age in which our language began

To lose the stability which it had obtained in the time

of Elizabeth; and was considered by every writer as

a subject on which he might try his plastic skill, by

(25) moulding it according to his own fancy. Milton, in

Consequence of this encroaching license, began to

Introduce the Latin idiom: and Browne, though he

Gave less disturbance to our structures in phraseology,

Yet pured in a multitude of exotick words; many

(30) indeed, useful and significant, which, if rejected, must

be supplied by circumlocution, such as commensality,

for the state of many things at the same table; but many

superfluous, as a paralogical, for an unreasonable

doubt; and some so obscure, that they conceal his

(35) meaning rather than explain it, as arthritical analogies,

for parts that serve some animals in the place of joints.

His style is, indeed, a tissue of many languages;

a mixture of heterogeneous words, brought

together from distant regions, with terms originally

(40) appropriated to one art, and drawn by violence into

the service of another. He must, however, be confessed

to have augmented our philosophical diction; and, it

defense of his uncommon words and expressions, we

must consider, that he had uncommon sentiments, and

(45) was not content to express, in many words, that idea

for which any language could supply a single term.

But his innovations are sometimes pleasing, and

his temerities happy: he has many “verba ardentia”

forcible expressions, which he would never have

(50) found, but by venturing to the utmost verge of

propriety; and flights which would never have been

reached, but by one who had very little fear of the

shame of falling.

 (1756)

**1.** The reader can infer from the first paragraph that some critics have

A. chastised Browne for his inability to reason

B. lauded Browne's frequent linear explanations

C. complained about Browne's lack of clarity

D. compared Browne with Shakespeare

E. compared the author of the passage with Browne

**2.** In context, "poesy" (line 14) most nearly means

A. poetry

B. inspiration for writing

C. sentimental thoughts

D. flowery writing

E. poetic dreaming

**3.** The meaning of the phrase *magn? virtutes nec minora vitia* (lines 13-14)

A. can be ascertained only if one understands Latin

B. becomes clear at the end of the paragraph

C. is obvious

D. has been lost over the centuries

E. was known only to Browne

**4.** In the second paragraph, the author

A. is openly critical of Browne's style

B. hints that Browne's writing is pedantic

C. justifies the strength of Browne's style

D. argues in favor of a reexamination of Browne's style

E. suggests that Browne's writing is too facile

**5.** The author modifies the strict parallelism of "it is vigorous, but rugged; it is learned, but pedantick; it is deep, but obscure; it strikes, but does not please; it commands, but does not allure; his tropes are harsh, and his combinations uncouth" (lines 16-20) to

A. better define his point of view

B. keep the reader off balance

C. maintain a sense of imbalance

D. show more respect for Browne's accomplishments

E. to obfuscate his real opinions

**6.** According to the author, Browne lived at a time of significant

A. linguistic experimentation

B. literary conservatism

C. linguistic stability

D. metaphorical license

E. impoverishment of the English language

**7.** In lines 27-36 ("Browne, though he gave less disturbance … in the place of joints"), the author classifies Browne's diction in a manner that proceeds from

A. interesting, to captivating, to intriguing

B. appropriate, to inappropriate, to superfluous

C. interesting, to intriguing, to disappointing

D. useful, to unhelpful, to deleterious

E. appropriate, to inappropriate, to intriguing

**8.** The author posits that Browne's unusual diction can be tied to his desire

A. to mystify his readers

B. to develop English phraseology

C. to enrich the English language

D. to set himself apart from other authors of his time

E. to express exactly his unusual thoughts

**9.** According to the author, Browne's style is marked by

A. heteroclite diction

B. homogeneous words

C. mundane vocabulary

D. humorous phrases

E. heterogeneous tropes

**10.** Which of the following best summarizes the passage?

A. an impartial reconsideration of Browne's style

B. a scathing critique by a rival

C. a manifesto by one of Browne's colleagues

D. a comparative study of Milton and Browne

E. a virulent polemic

**11.** The author's tone in this passage is best described as

A. sarcastic and doctrinaire

B. analytical and scholarly

C. expository and harsh

D. indulgent and condescending

E. capricious and sentimental