

A USER'S GUIDE TO MELANCHOLY

A User's Guide to Melancholy takes Robert Burton's encyclopaedic masterpiece *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (first published in 1621) as a guide to one of the most perplexing, elusive, attractive, and afflicting diseases of the Renaissance. Burton's *Anatomy* is perhaps the largest, strangest, and most unwieldy self-help book ever written. Engaging with the rich cultural and literary framework of melancholy, this book traces its causes, symptoms, and cures through Burton's writing. Each chapter starts with a case study of melancholy – from the man who was afraid to urinate in case he drowned his town to the girl who purged a live eel – as a way into exploring the many facets of this mental affliction. *A User's Guide to Melancholy* presents in an accessible and illustrated format the colourful variety of Renaissance melancholy, and contributes to contemporary discussions about well-being by revealing the earlier history of mental health conditions.

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Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-83884-9 — A User's Guide to Melancholy
Mary Ann Lund
Frontmatter
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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India
79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.
It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit
of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108838849
DOI: 10.1017/9781108978996

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First published 2021

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ International Ltd, Padstow Cornwall

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

NAMES: Lund, Mary Ann, 1978–author.

TITLE: A user's guide to melancholy / Mary Ann Lund.

DESCRIPTION: Cambridge ; New York, NY : Cambridge University Press, 2021. |
Includes bibliographical references and index.

IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2020050617 | ISBN 9781108838849 (hardback) | ISBN
9781108972444 (paperback) | ISBN 9781108978996 (ebook)

SUBJECTS: MESH: Burton, Robert, 1577–1640. Anatomy of melancholy. |
Depressive Disorder | Depression | Medicine in Literature | History,
Medieval

CLASSIFICATION: LCC RC537 | NLM WM 171.5 | DDC 616.85/27–dc23
LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2020050617>

ISBN 978-1-108-83884-9 Hardback

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For Joseph and Hannah

CONTENTS

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page viii</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>xii</i>
<i>Abbreviations and Note on the Text</i>	<i>xiii</i>
Introduction	I
Part 1 Causes	
1 Sorrow and Fear	2 I
2 Body and Mind	45
3 The Supernatural	67
Part 2 Symptoms	
4 Delusions	89
5 Love and Sex	111
6 Despair	135
Part 3 Cures	
7 The Non-Naturals	155
8 Medicine and Surgery	177
9 Lifting the Spirits	201
Robert Burton, ‘The Author’s Abstract of Melancholy’	223
Conclusion: The Two Faces of Melancholy	227
<i>Endnotes</i>	235
<i>Further Reading</i>	248
<i>Index</i>	251

FIGURES

0.1	Frontispiece to <i>The Anatomy of Melancholy</i> (1628). Credit: Wellcome Collection. Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0).	page 5
0.2	<i>Democritus Laughs</i> . Anonymous, after Jan van der Bruggen (1661–1726). Credit: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.	9
0.3	Synopsis of the Second Partition of <i>The Anatomy of Melancholy</i> (1621). Credit: Folger Shakespeare Library. Attribution ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0).	14
1.1	Face of a frightened soldier (left); the human face in an animal state of fear (right). Etching by B. Picart, 1713, after Charles Le Brun (1619–90). Credit: Wellcome Collection. Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0).	25
1.2	<i>Melancholy</i> . Anonymous, after Parmigianino (1524–90). Credit: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.	33
1.3	Prometheus bound to a rock, his liver eaten by an eagle. Engraving by C. Cort (1566). Credit: Wellcome Collection. Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0).	39
1.4	<i>Niobe and her Daughter</i> . Etching by F. Perrier, 1638. Credit: Wellcome Collection. Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0).	42

List of Figures

2.1	The venous and arterial system of the human body with internal organs and detail figures of the generative system. Engraving (1568). Credit: Wellcome Collection. Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0).	44
2.2	<i>Phlegmaticus</i> . Engraving by Raphael Sadler (1583). Credit: Folger Shakespeare Library. Attribution ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0).	58
3.1	<i>Robin Good-Fellow, His Mad Prankes and Merry Jestes. Full of Honest Mirth, And Is a Fit Medicine For Melancholy</i> (1639). Credit: Folger Shakespeare Library. Attribution ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0).	75
3.2	An artist painting a woman with a hand mirror and the devil; representing the faculty of the imagination. Engraving (seventeenth century). Credit: Wellcome Collection. Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0).	66
4.1	A hooded physician examining a urine specimen, brought to him by an elderly woman. Woodcut by Jost Amman (1568). Credit: Wellcome Collection. Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0).	88
4.2	<i>A Surgery Where All Fantasy and Follies Are Purged and Good Qualities Are Prescribed</i> . Line engraving by M. Greuter (c. 1600). Credit: Wellcome Collection. Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0).	103

List of Figures

5.1	Jacques Ferrand, <i>Erotomania</i> (1640). Credit: Folger Shakespeare Library. Attribution ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0).	110
5.2	<i>The Foure Complexions: Melancholy</i> . Engraving attrib. William Marshall (1662). Credit: Folger Shakespeare Library. Attribution ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0).	113
5.3	<i>Melancholy</i> . Johannes Wierix, after Albrecht Dürer (1602). Credit: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.	115
6.1	Fresco in the National Museum of Naples, depicting the sacrifice of Iphigenia. Alinari (c. 1875 – c. 1900). Credit: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.	134
6.2	<i>Melancholic Temperament</i> . Harmen Jansz Muller, after Maarten van Heemskerck (1566). Credit: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.	137
7.1	<i>Hare</i> (<i>Lepus europaeus</i>). Anselmus Boëtius de Boodt (1596–1610). Credit: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.	161
7.2	Interior of the Bodleian Library in Oxford. David Loggan (1675). Credit: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.	173
8.1	A Christmas rose (<i>Helleborus niger</i>), a poppy (Papaver species), and borage (<i>Borago officinalis</i>): flowering stems. Etching by N. Robert (c. 1660), after himself. Credit: Wellcome Collection. Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0).	185
8.2	<i>Hortus Botanicus of the University of Leiden</i> . Willem Isaacs. van Swanenburg, after Jan Cornelisz. van 't Woudt (1610). Credit: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.	190

List of Figures

8.3	A surgeon instructing a younger surgeon how to bleed a male patient's foot; a woman is comforting the patient. Engraving (1586). Credit: Wellcome Collection. Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0).	195
9.1	<i>Democritus Lost in Meditation</i> . Salvator Rosa (1662). Credit: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.	204
9.2	<i>David Plays His Harp before King Saul</i> . Adriaen Collaert, after Jan van der Straet, 1587–91. Credit: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.	212
10.1	Graeme Rose, Gerard Bell, Craig Stephens, and Rochi Rampal in <i>The Anatomy of Melancholy</i> , dir. James Yarker (Stan's Cafe, 2013). Credit: Graeme Braidwood.	228

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Emily Hockley at Cambridge University Press for encouraging me to write this book and for being a warm and supportive editor; Rachel Blaifeder, Emma Goff-Leggett, Bethany Johnson, Aloysias Saint Thomas and their teams for their hard work to bring this book to life; Damian Love for his excellent copy-editing; Bethlem Museum of the Mind and the UK Defence Academy in Shrivenham for inviting me to speak about melancholy, and the audiences for enthusiastic and stimulating discussions afterwards; James Yarker and Stan's Cafe for performing the *Anatomy* and helping me to think about it in new ways; Victoria Shepherd for inspiring radio programmes about delusions; my colleagues and students at the University of Leicester; friends and neighbours; my family, especially my parents, Clare and John; and most of all, Gareth, Joseph, and Hannah, with love and gratitude for mirth and merry company.

ABBREVIATIONS AND NOTE ON THE TEXT

Unless otherwise stated, all quotations from the *Anatomy* are taken from Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Holbrook Jackson (New York Review Books, 2001). This one-volume edition starts the page numbering again with each 'Partition', of which there are three (the first one also includes Burton's long preface, 'Democritus Junior to the Reader'). My references take the form of the Partition number in roman numerals followed by the page number, e.g. 'ii.200' is Partition 2, p. 200. I use the abbreviation 'Burton, *Anatomy*' where necessary.

Burton conventionally uses Latinised names when referring to his sources, e.g. 'Montanus'. I refer to them by their vernacular names, e.g. 'Giambattista da Monte', and give the Latin name (if it is significantly different) and, where known, dates in parentheses. These details are taken from the 'Biobibliographical Index' found in vol. vi of *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Thomas C. Faulkner, Nicolas K. Kiessling, and Rhonda L. Blair; commentary by J. B. Bamborough with Martin Dodsworth, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989–2000). This edition is referred to throughout as *Anatomy*, ed. Faulkner *et al.*

Bible quotations are taken from the King James Version (unless otherwise stated) and are taken from *The Bible in English Database* (Chadwick-Healey, 1996).

I have modernised the spelling and lightly modernised punctuation of all quotations from Renaissance texts.