



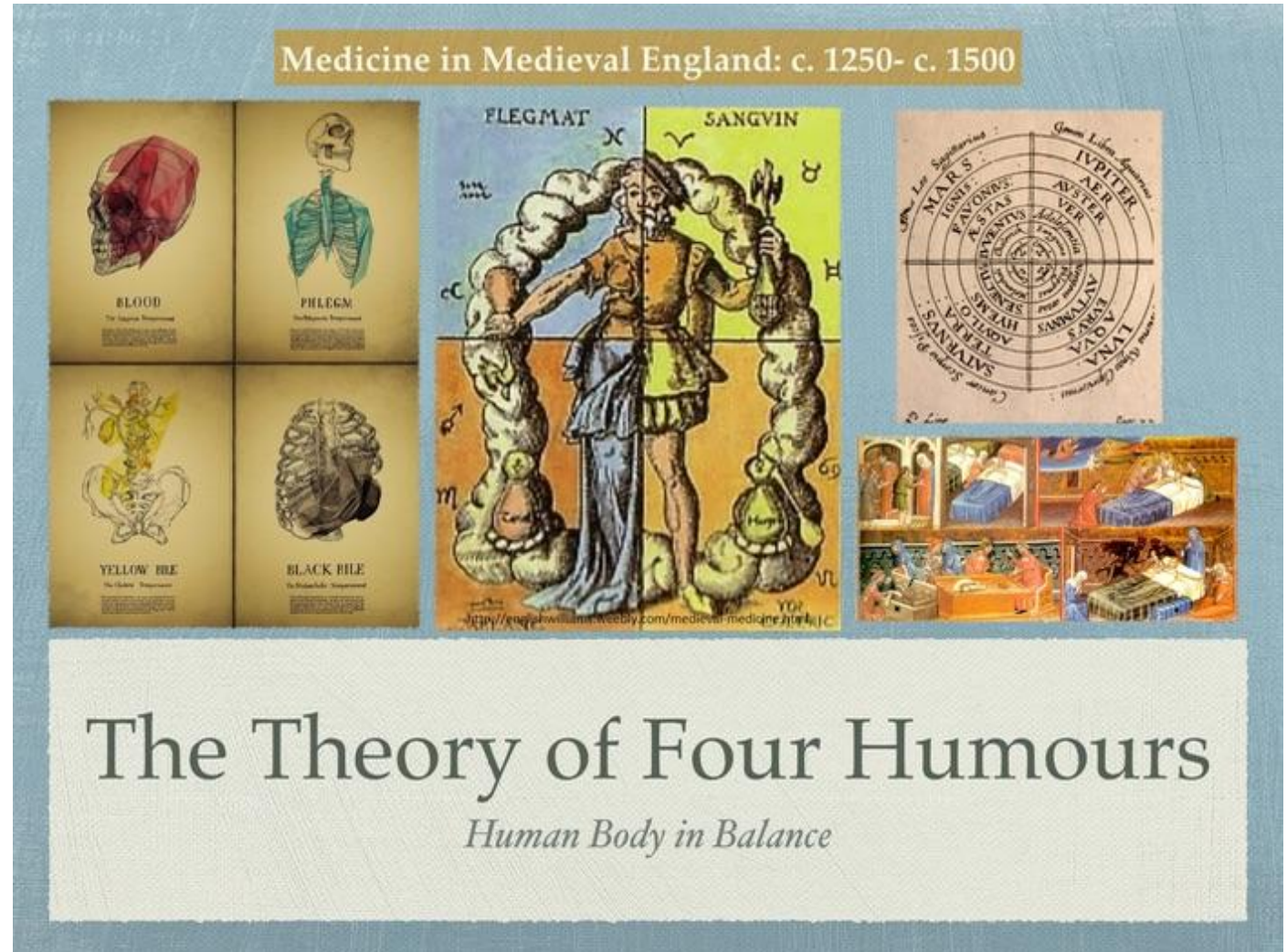
MEDIEVAL UNDERSTANDING OF MELANCHOLIA:

AIMS

- To explore society's understanding of melancholia.
- Margery Kempe's story.
- Madness in women and men
- Changing views of madness

HUMOURAL THEORY

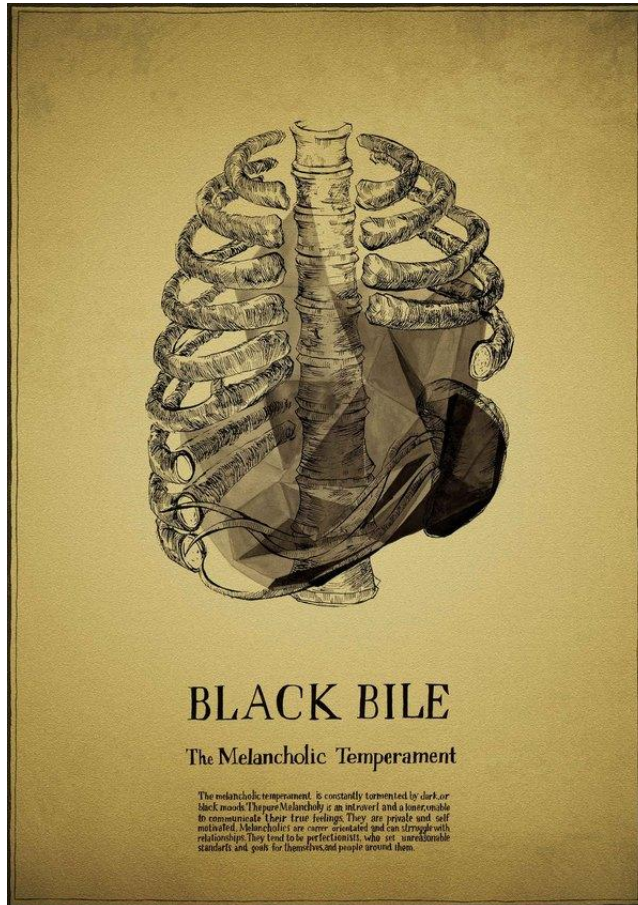
- Theory of the Four Humours
- The ideas began in Ancient Greece and were central to the works of Hippocrates and Galen
- Still being used and taught well into the 1800s.
- (Tyson et al, 2020)



MEDIEVAL MEDICINE

- Insanity: caused by an illness, injury or emotional shock.
- Acknowledgement of different mental disorders
- Mental wellness =
Balanced humoral system.





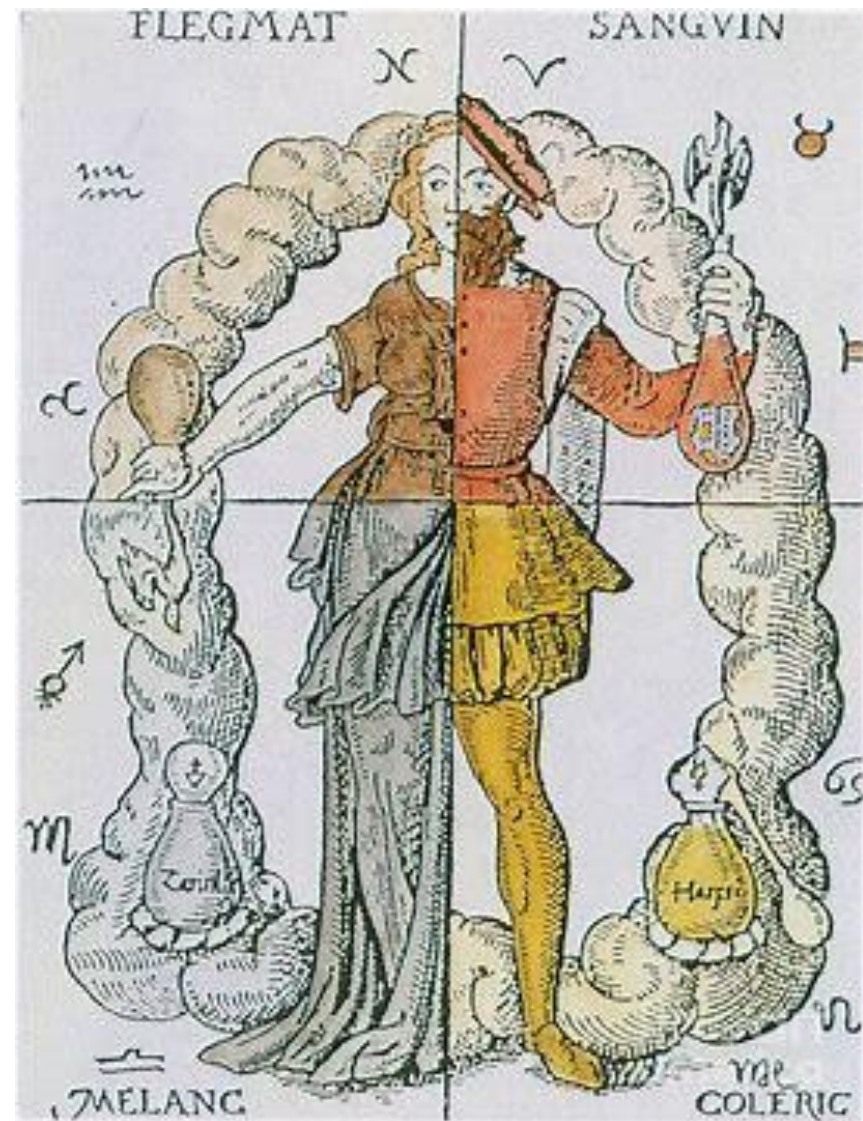
BLACK BILE

- Greek meaning: black (melan) bile (chole).
- Property: Cold – Dry
- Symptoms: Melancholia, loss of appetite, irritability, restlessness
- Hot Bile – Cheerfulness in extreme cases Mania
- Cold Bile – Withdrawal and fearlessness
- Treatment: Inducing vomiting and diarrhea
- Bloodletting
- Keeping patient warm – hot baths
- Non dry and hot food – soups, moist meat and fish
- (Tyson et al, 2020)

PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF MELANCHOLY

- Thoughtful, considerate, organised, independent and creative in poetry and art.
- Negative effects: Deeply affected by tragedy, gloomy, obsessive and pessimistic





YELLOW BILE

- Property: Hot – Dry
- Symptoms: High temperature, agitated, easily angered, confrontational
- When yellow bile travels to brain causing it to overheat – anxiety, fear and terrors
- Treatment: Bleeding, Purging
- Counteract hot and dryness – cold baths
- Cold wet food – lettuce, water lilies, poppy seeds, beer in moderation (Tyson et al, 2020)

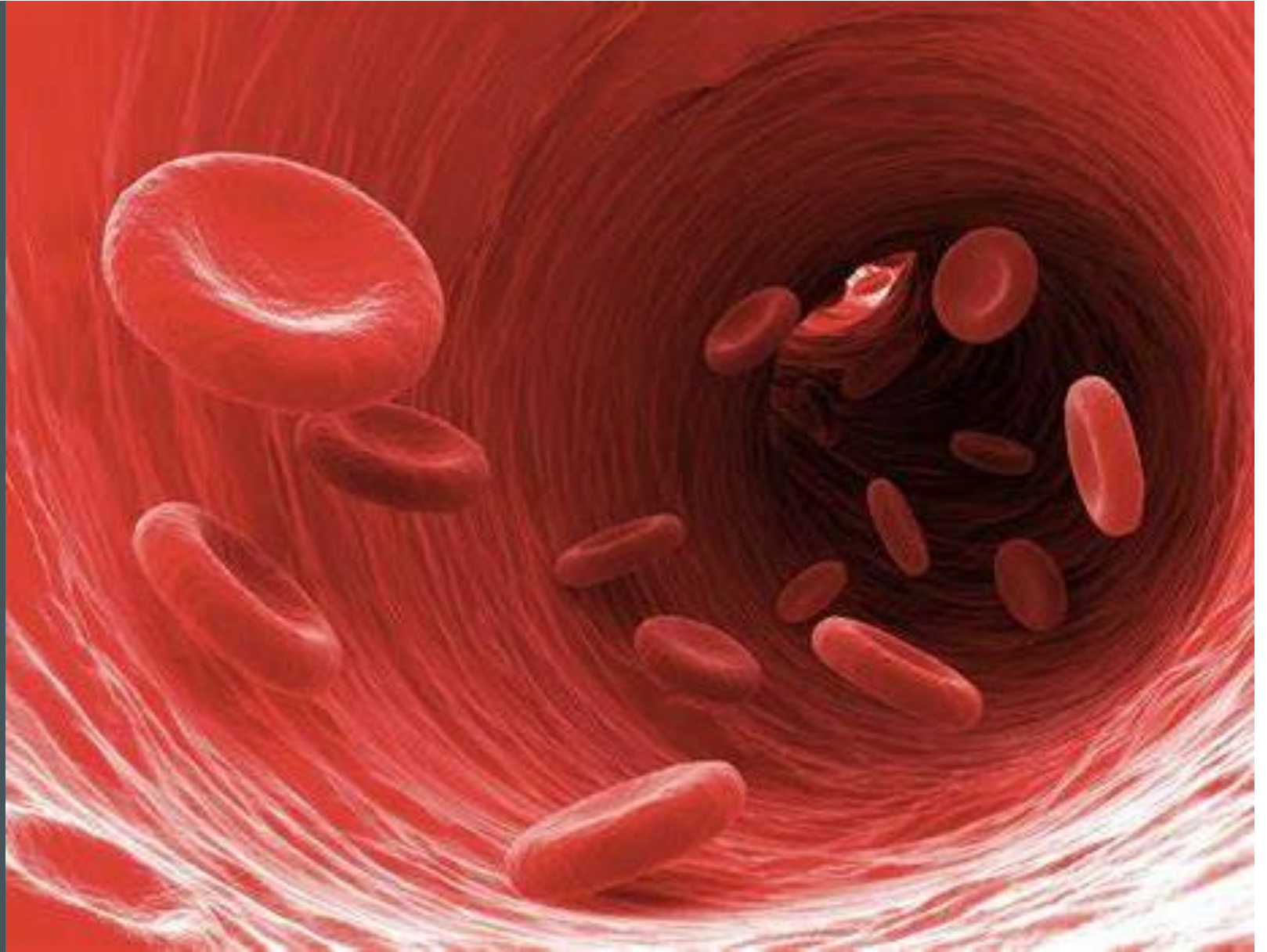
PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF THE CHOLERIC HUMOUR

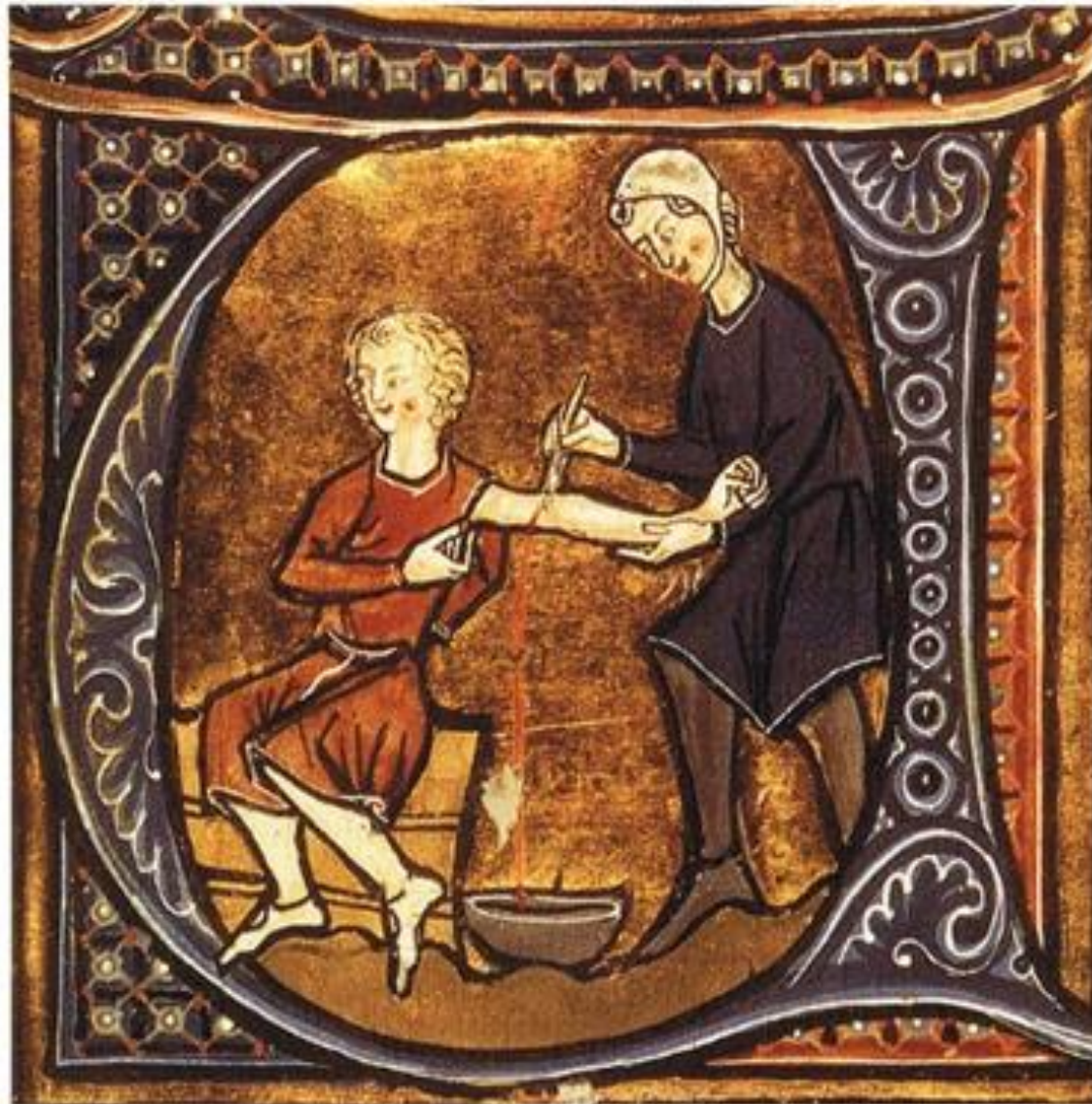
- Passionate,
practical, efficient
and confident
- Negative effects:
Aggressive,
domineering, short-
tempered, violent



BLOOD

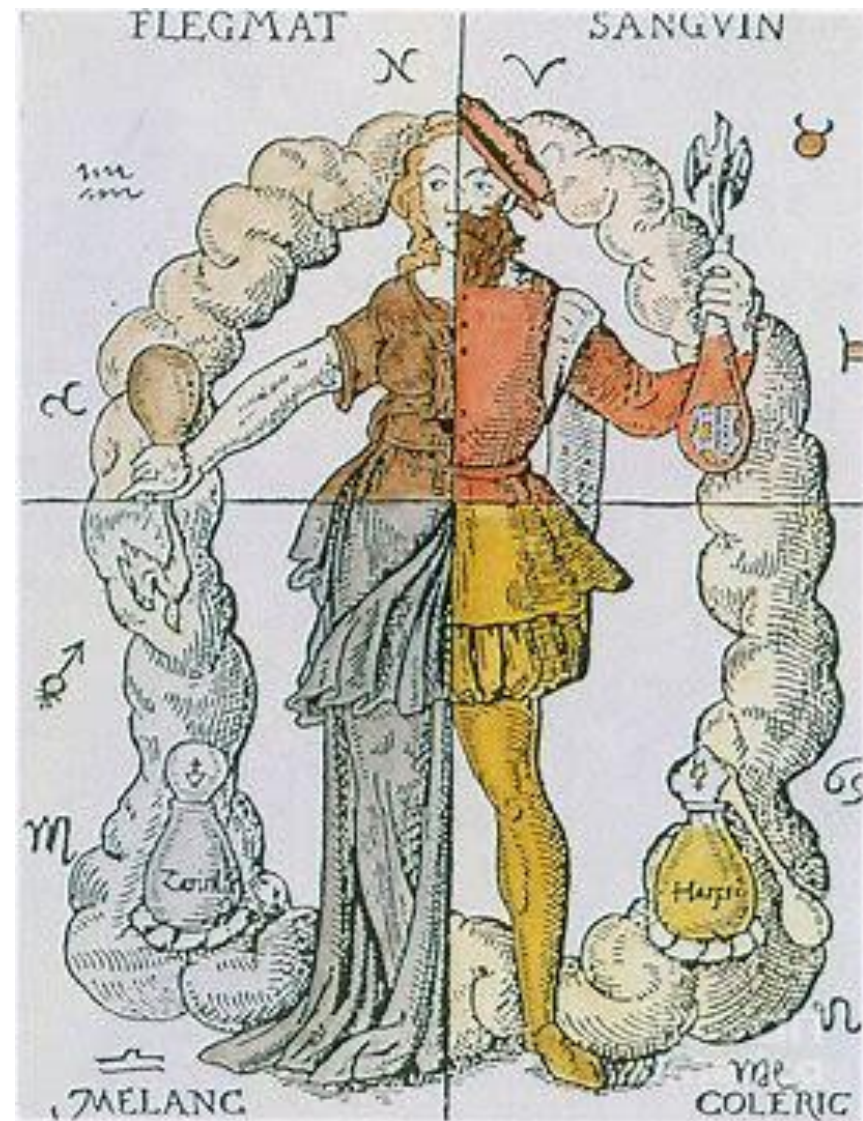
- Property: Hot – Wet
- Symptoms: Optimism, cheerfulness and generosity
- Treatment: When these traits were lacking, levels could be enhanced by ingesting hot moist food such as lightly cooked goat meat and hot baths
- (Tyson et al, 2020)





PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF BLOOD

- Promotes feelings of:
Joy, Happiness, Laughter, Positivity
and Enthusiasm
- Negative Effects:
- Manic behaviour, forgetful, impulsive,
braggart, loud and shamleness



PHLEGM

- Property: Cold– Wet
- Symptoms: Quiet, do not cry or make a noise -Excess phlegm causes placid form of madness – opposite to the raging madness caused by yellow bile
- Treatment: Warm environment. Warm dry food such as bread, salted fish and juniper berries
- (Tyson et al, 2020)

PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF PHLEGMATIC HUMOUR

- Relaxed, kind, rational, accepting and diplomatic.
- Negative effects:
- Epilepsy/Sacred disease, too much phlegm blocking the system, undisciplined, stubborn,



TREATMENTS TO CREATE BALANCE



- Change of diet
- Exercise
- Herbal medicine
- Purging (laxatives and emetics)
- Blistering
- Bloodletting



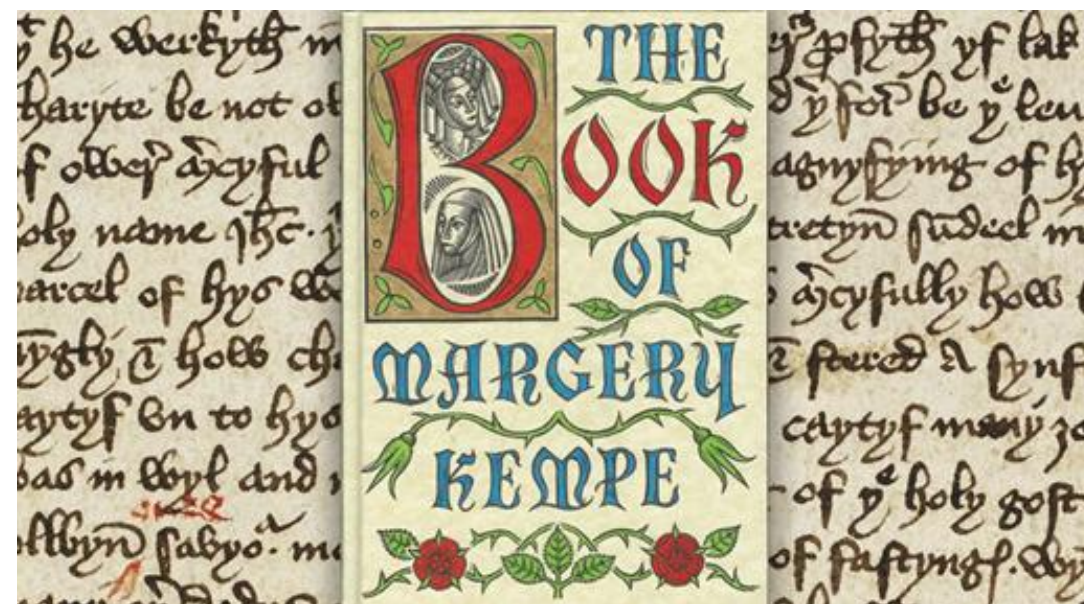
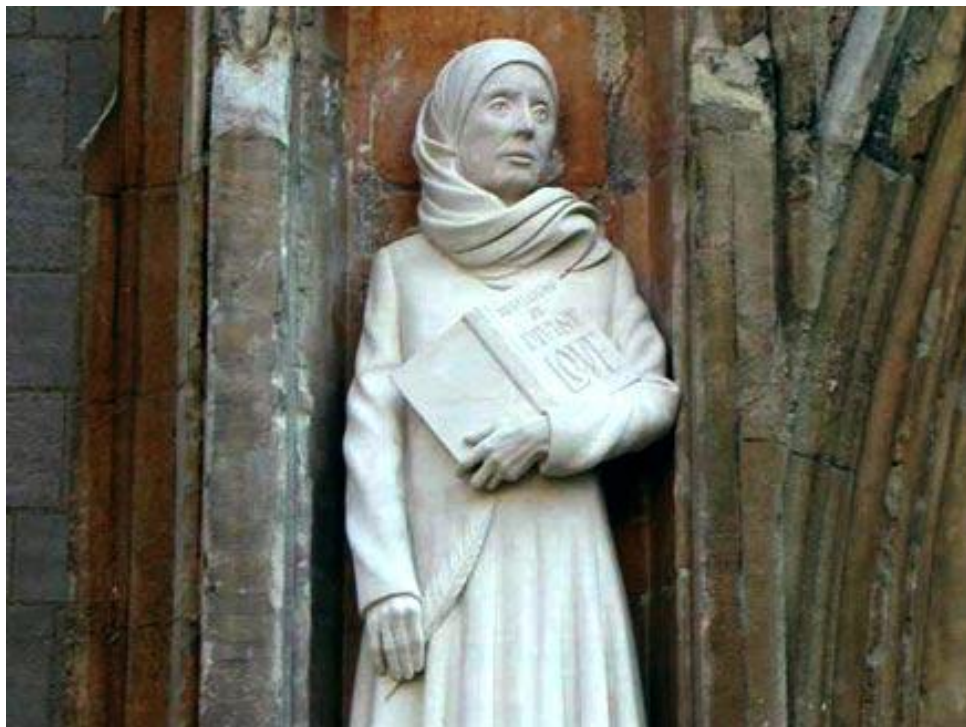
MEDICINAL EQUIPMENT
(IMAGES: SCIENCE MUSEUM, LONDON)



CURES AND TREATMENTS

- Melancholia hard to cure, a long illness and resisted treatment.
- Suggestions were to pay attention to diet, exercise, fresh air and a healthy environment.
- Traditional treatments could include bleeding, cupping, vomits and purges
- In the same period however, melancholia also became a fashionable illness. Those who were scholars or men of genius were particularly prone to the melancholic disease.





MYSTICISM AND MADNESS OF MARGERY KEMPE (1373 – 1438)

MARGERY KEMPE

- An English Christian mystic
- Respectfully Married, with 14 children.
- She resisted domestic and religious roles and instead sought to develop a spiritual, mystic role within the community.
- She heard voices, she conversed with Christ and went on many pilgrimages across Europe



MARGERY KEMPE

- She was both hated and adored, with the Steward of the Court of Leicester stating, "Either you are a right good woman, or else a right wicked woman".
- She was charged with heresy on many occasions and brought to court, where she was often threatened with being burned at the stake.
- She was a contentious figure and remains so to this day.



MARGERY KEMPE

- What makes her story contentious?
- Academics who study her autobiography question whether she was a medieval mystic or whether it is an early recording of an individual with psychosis?
- Could there be indicators of Schizophrenia and Psychosis?

WOMEN AND MADNESS

- Generally, more women are diagnosed with mental illness than men.
- These earliest stories of madness in women continue to evoke questions.
- Discuss

WITCHCRAFT IN THE MIDDLE AGES



EARLY MODERN ERA (LATE 15TH TO THE DAWN OF THE 16TH CENTURY)

- This was a time of great change
- Feudal system was falling apart
- The rise of the nation state – extension of trade and markets in Europe
- Circumnavigation of the globe





TIME OF CHANGE

- Manifestations of protestant reformation and the Catholic Church losing power in places across Europe.
- Renaissance
- Classical learning
- Print Culture (pamphlets etc)
- Creativity within architecture, music, art, drama
- Birth of the scientific revolution

WITCH HUNTS

- Witch-hunts across Europe
- Trials, tortures, executions
- Agonizing deaths





WITCH HUNTS ACROSS EUROPE

- Intense and long-lasting
- Both Catholics and Protestants were engaged in the seeking and torturing of witches and engaged in shocking and gruesome brutality.

Witches Apprehended,
tried and Executed, for notable
villanies by them committed both by
Land and Water.
*With a strange and most true triall how to know
whether a woman be a Witch
or not.*



Printed at London for Edward Marchant, and are
to be sold at his shop over against the Crosse in Pauls
Church-yard 1633.



-
- So many of the people who were persecuted were older women who were perhaps traditional healers or midwives.
 - Why do you think society chose to persecute these women in particular?





MELANCHOLY WAS AN ACCEPTED ILLNESS

- Cult of Melancholy.
- In the 16th century it was fashionable for men to be sad and thoughtful.
- In England it came to be known as “the English malady” or the “Elizabethan Malady”.
- This image is thought to be of Robert Devereux.

MALE MELANCHOLY

- Male poets write of their feelings of being lonely or rejected in love.
- John Dowland frequently refers to his grief and “being locked in a dark prison of his dejection”.
- For a while at least melancholy became a romantic male characteristic, and men were often drawn as pale and withdrawn looking off into the distance.





MELANCHOLICS AS OBSESSIVES

- Melancholics were often described as exhibiting obsessive behaviours, particularly towards their object of love.
- Artistic creations would describe the men as sighing in gardens or beside streams and deep within forests.
- Clothing would be unkempt or distracted, adding to the sense of desperation and loneliness.
- Artwork by Nicholas Hilliard particularly demonstrates the male melancholic.

USEFULNESS OF MELANCHOLY

- Being a melancholic also demonstrated other qualities, such as intellect, seriousness and nobility.
- Robert Burton notes there “is no greater cause of melancholy than idleness”. This means that effectively you were one of the rich who were able to demonstrate an air of detached, moneyed leisure, able to hold a sad, withdrawn, pale character.





RICHARD NAPIER

- Napier's casebooks 1597- 1634
- He studied astrology, alchemy, magic and theology. His combination of astrology and medicine enabled Napier to build up a very popular practice.
- Those wishing to be treated came from all walks of life and social ranks.



MARCO POLO and COLUMBUS

- In his book 'The Travels of Marco Polo' (1270) Introduces Europeans to Central Asia and China,
- Silk Road
- The Voyages of Columbus (1492)
- In search of the fabulous East, instead ended up in America.
- His voyage marked the end of the medieval age and the birth of the modern era.



THE CHANGING AWARENESS OF INSANITY

- Middle ages moved into the Renaissance – insanity becomes more visible.
- French King Charles VI
- English King Henry VI



ROGER BACON

- Father of modern science
Study of nature through empirical methods.
- All things must be verified
- The importance of testing and testing again.

RENAISSANCE (14TH & 15TH CENTURY)

- Period of 'Rebirth'
- Individual thinking.
- Reaction to the authoritarianism of the church
- Expression through art and the classics.



LATE 16TH AND EARLY 17TH CENTURY

- Public becoming more concerned about the prevalence of insanity, gloom and suicide.
- More visibility of violent acts committed by insane
- Peter Berchet 1573



- William Shakespeare
- Madness presents itself in at least 20 of his 38 plays.
- King Lear
- As you like it



‘ENLIGHTENMENT ERA’ (17TH & 18TH CENTURY)

- ❖ ‘Enlightenment’ -Age of Reason -
- ❖ Autonomous rational self
- ❖ (Liberal Humanism)
- ❖ In his essay "What Is Enlightenment?" (1784),
- ❖ The German philosopher Immanuel Kant summed up the era's motto in the following terms: "Dare to know! Have courage to use your own reason!"



READING

Scull, A. 2016. *Madness in Civilization: A cultural history of insanity from the Bible to Freud, from the madhouse to modern medicine*. London: Thames and Hudson. Chapters 3 & 4

Tyson, P., Khanam Davies, S., & Torn, A.(2020) *Madness: History, Concepts and Controversies*. Oxon: Routledge