

**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research**

**Amar Telidji University – Laghouat**

**Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages**

**Department of English**



# **The Positive Tradition of Melancholy from Robert Burton to John Keats**

**Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Masters in Literature and Civilization.**

**Submitted by:**

**DJEBRIT Chima**

**Board of examiners:**

- **Dr. ARIBI Brahim...../Supervisor**
- **Dr.NOUIOUA Wafaa...../Chairwoman**
- **Dr.GUELLIL Asia...../Examiner**

**Academic Year: 2017/2018**



**People's Democratic Republic of Algeria**  
**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research**  
**AmmarThelidji University of Laghouat**  
**Faculty of Letters and Languages**  
**Department of English Language**



# **The Legacy of Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy in English poetry**

Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Masters in Literature and Civilization.

**Submitted by:**

**DJEBRIT Chima**

**Board of examiners:**

- **Dr. Aribi Brahim...../ Supervisor**
- **Dr...../ Chairmen**
- **Dr...../ Examiner**

**2017-2018**

## **Acknowledgements**

*I would like to thank Mr Aribi Brahim for supervising my dissertation and his patience. Also I would like to thank Mr Gasmi Mustapha for his motivation and guiding me all the time.*

In a world without melancholy, nightingales would belch

-Emil Cioran (1911-1995)

## Table of Contents :

<b>General Introduction.....</b>	<b>01</b>
<b>Chapter One : Burton’s Anatomy of Melancholy</b>	
The influence of the Galenic theory in the early modern world.....	12
Burton’s interpretations of Melancholy : “Religious Melancholy “.....	14
<b>Chapter Two : Shakespeare’s Melancholics</b>	
A. Jaques.....	25
B. Hamlet.....	28
<b>Chapter Three : The “Prophetic strain”</b>	
A. The “Prophetic strain”.....	34
A.1. Milton’s “ Il Penseroso “.....	36
A.2. Milton’s “ L’Allegro “.....	37
B. Warton’s “ The Pleasures Of Melancholy “.....	40
C. The Romantic Melancholy.....	41
D. Wordsworth.....	45
E. Keats.....	45
General conclusion .....	52
Bibliography .....	55

## **General Introduction:**

In *The Nature of Melancholy*, Jennifer Radden states that “for most of western European history, melancholy was a central cultural idea, focusing, explaining, and organizing the way people saw the world and one another”(59). Today, however, it has become “an insignificant category ... without explanatory or organizing vitality”(59). According to Winfried Schleiner, this shift in attitude towards melancholy is explained by “its inseparable links with humoral physiology,” which situates the discourse on melancholy “in a field generally considered prescientific”(10) . Interestingly, however, a range of scholars is still interested in melancholy, as they value the condition’s potential merit. Emily Brady and Arto Haapala, in “Melancholy as an Aesthetic Tradition,” argue that melancholy is desirable because it “provides an opportunity for indulgent self-reflection” ( 9). In so doing, states Eric G. Wilson, in *Against Happiness*, it “connects us to our fundamental being” (43). By the same token, Julia Kristeva claims that she “owe a supreme, metaphysical lucidity to [her] depression”.(4)

Throughout history, the notion of melancholy has been connected to numerous meanings and ideas. As Radden points out, these meanings “seem to accumulate and coexist, creating ambiguity and resonance as the centuries go by”(16) . During the Renaissance, the term melancholy “covered many conditions from madness to genius” (Schleiner10). Furthermore, it “was used in the broad and sometimes ambiguous range between the natural or physical humor and the mental (but often somehow physically conditioned) state of a person” (Schleiner 10). Likewise, Lindemann indicates that the term was used in a much broader context than today: “today’s definition of melancholy- sadness or depression of the spirits , gloom , pensive reflection , or contemplation – by no means includes the many characteristics subsumed under the label in early modern times. Moreover, we do

not recognize it as a disease today but rather assign it to the category of moods or disposition”.(44)

Finally, Douglas Trevor argues that, when it comes to varieties of perceptions of melancholy, “a clear delineation ... is muddled from, the early seventeenth century on”(159). Indeed, it seems that, throughout the ages, every author on melancholy has employed his own set of ideas on the subject. As a result of this complexity, it is hard to approach the discussion on melancholy in a consistent and comprehensive way.

In general, however, it is possible to pigeonhole the notion of “melancholy” into two categories: on the one hand, it corresponds to a type of (clinical) depression, caused by different forms of misfortune; on the other hand, it connotes “tender, sentimental, or reflective sadness” (Oxford English Dictionary). Emily Brady argues that the vague boundaries between these two concepts have contributed to the depreciation of the discourse on melancholy: “The main reason for melancholy's neglect is that it has often been connected too closely or even equated with sadness or depression. Melancholy is easy to lump together with these emotions, and the emotional terms are often used synonymously. This tendency masks the distinctive nature of melancholy. It is also necessary to distinguish our analysis of melancholy from the clinical tradition: as we understand melancholy, it is not a mental disorder of any kind.

We want to progress beyond these rather narrow meanings of the concept and argue that melancholy is a more refined emotion with qualities of its own. (7)

Since this study sets out to uncover the potentially genial qualities of the melancholic state, it will try to distinguish melancholy from (clinical) depression. Therefore, it will use the term “melancholy” to describe a condition of “reflective sadness,” reserving the word “depression” to mark clinical dejection. However, as we will see, it is unviable to impose a strict line between the two, since both connotations of the word are not always distinguished in literary texts.

Another ambiguity exists in the characteristics that are connected to melancholy. As Burton famously expressed, “the Tower of Babel never yielded such confusion of tongues as this chaos of Melancholy doth variety of symptoms” (1: 395). Indeed, it seems as if every author has employed his own set of symptoms for melancholy (these include madness, anger, acedia, sleeplessness, irritability loneliness, despair etc.). This makes it puzzling to compare different ideas of melancholy. Still, there are two symptoms that resurface in almost every work on melancholy: “fear” and “sadness” (Radden 10). Therefore, this essay will consider these two symptoms as fundamentally connected to melancholy. Other potential symptoms are involved only when they appear in specific texts of the authors.

The word “melancholy” comes from the Greek words “melas” (black) and “khole” (bile). According to the Greeks, the human body contained four fluid humours: blood, phlegm, black bile and yellow bile. Variations between the amount of these four humours explained human temperament, and explained mental disorders (Radden 54). According to this principle, melancholy resulted from an imbalance in one’s humour system, caused by a disorder in the spleen, the organ that was believed to regulate black bile. Through the translations of the works of Greek physicians, humoral theory revived in Renaissance Europe. The works of Galen (A.D 2nd century) were particularly influential. By the end of the Renaissance, his works were amongst the most influential medical texts, as Jackson states: “the sixteenth century began with medicine essentially Galenic in its basic theories and its practical applications” (79). Likewise, Lindemann points out that “throughout the early modern period there existed a strong tendency to link afflictions of mind with bodily disturbances such as a perceived humoral imbalance or indigestion” (44). However, as the Renaissance came to end, alternative theories increasingly undermined Galen’s authority, which eventually led to the “slow decline and fall of Galenic Medicine” (Jackson 79). In this process, a variety of conceptions of melancholy emerged in Western thinking. Still, as Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxi conclude: “although new meanings emerged, old meanings did not give way to them ... it was a case not of decay and metamorphosis, but of parallel survival” (3). This way, the new

interpretations of melancholy coexisted with and challenged the Galenic perception of melancholy.

Most notably, the Renaissance saw a revival of the pseudo-Aristotelian perception of melancholy. *Problemata XXX, 1*, commonly believed to have been composed by one of Aristotle's students, proposes a direct connection between genius and melancholy. The author begins this text by posing the question: "why is it that all those who have become eminent in philosophy or politics or poetry or the arts are clearly of an atrabilious temperament, and some of them to such an extent as to be affected by diseases caused by black bile ... ?" (953). As Schleiner points out, this statement implies as a fact that melancholy is the "precondition of genius" (20). Further on, pseudo-Aristotle assumes that melancholics are "in many respects superior to others either in mental accomplishments or in the arts or in public life" (954). This way, as Jackson clarifies, *Problemata XXX, 1* proposes the following:

"Everyone shared the potential for "the despondency which occurs in everyday life" as they all had some black bile in them; but those of a melancholic temperament were "thoroughly penetrated" by such feelings and had "them as a permanent part of their nature." (32)

Pseudo-Aristotle, thus, institutes a catalogue of "true" melancholics, who as a result of their melancholic temperament have a natural inclination to genius. This way, the author elevates melancholics from "common" people, who are

affected by the condition only occasionally. In so doing, the Aristotelian author emphasizes the potential usefulness of melancholy, and moves away from the negative connotations that it typically reverberates. This way, concludes Babb, “Aristotle lent melancholia a philosophic glamor” (268).

Aristotle’s immediate descendants discarded the thesis of *Problemata XXX, 1*. Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxi state that “ancient writers” read the text “with either a certain remote astonishment or else with frank irony” (42). For the Stoics, pseudo-Aristotle’s thesis was false, because it contested their view that “a wise man can never be overtaken by madness because the notions of wisdom and madness were mutually exclusive (43). Consequently, for the Stoics, “the notion of melancholy reverted to that of pure illness, and a very severe one at that” (Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxi 43). However, the idea of melancholy as a stimulating condition revived in the early modern period. Schleiner even argues that *Problemata XXX, 1* became so influential that “all Renaissance thinking on the subject of melancholy can be considered an attempt to make sense of this stimulating text” (22). As this study seeks to demonstrate, the Aristotelian outlook increasingly challenged the traditional “negative” melancholy that dominates the works of literary thinkers until the Renaissance.

Another alternative perception of melancholy was formed around astrological theories. As Radden points out, “most writers of the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance accepted that melancholy in each of its forms stood in

some special relationship to Saturn, and that astrological movements played a causal role” (9). Clark Lawlor explains that “Saturn was thought to be cold and dry, like melancholy, and its slow revolutions seemed to suit the melancholic temperament” (59). For this reason, it was commonly believed that people who were born under the sign of Saturn had an innate tendency to melancholy. As Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxi explain, this notion played an important part in the institution of melancholy as a token of genius:

Saturn ... was discovered in a new and personal sense by the intellectual élite, who was indeed beginning to consider their melancholy a jealously guarded privilege, as they became aware both of the sublimity of Saturn’s intellectual gifts and the dangers of his ambivalence. (251)

This way, the planet Saturn has played a central role in the constitution of a more positive notion of the melancholic condition.

An important contribution to the discourse on melancholy is found in the works of Marsilio Ficino (1433 – 1499), who is seen as the first to “[counter] the prevailing negative views of melancholy” (Wilson 73) and “revive the Aristotelian link between brilliance and melancholy” (Radden 87). This way, he “gave shape to the idea of the melancholy man of genius and revealed it to the rest of Europe ...” (Klibansky 255). In his influential *The Book of Life*, Ficino builds on both humoral and Saturnal theories. Ficino argues that all learned people suffer from “contemplation,” which “by a continual recollection and

compression, as it where, brings on a nature similar to black bile” (Ficino qtd. Radden 90). This way, Ficino relies on the Galenic tradition to explain melancholy. At the same time, Ficino argues that all learned people are born under the planet Saturn, which he identifies as “the highest of planets” (Ficino qtd. Radden 90). In doing so, states Radden, Ficino “[tied] melancholy to more glamorous attributes” (15). By the same token, Trevor states that “before Ficino, it would be unusual – if not impossible – to uncover a scholar who viewed his melancholy in positive, secular terms.” (Trevor 10) This way, Ficino embodies a turning point in the discourse on melancholy.

This study seeks to reengage with the tradition of melancholy and lay bare the potential vitality of melancholy in (early) modern literature. It will explore key texts on the subject, and see how the perception of melancholy has evolved. As the first chapter will demonstrate, Burton wrote his influential *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) under the impression that melancholy was an ailment that individuals must “oppose them selfe unto” (Burton 1:138). Accordingly, his advice was to expel it “by a thousand antidotes and consolatory treatises” (Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxi (232-3). At the same time, as I will demonstrate, Burton’s *Anatomy* anticipates the more positive notion of melancholy that was to awaken in the works of his followers. Chapter two will present a reading of Shakespeare’s *As You Like It* (written around 1599) and *Hamlet* (written between 1599 and 1602). Here, I will validate that

Shakespeare's notion of melancholy is comparable to Burton's; both authors composed their works in an age that contested the melancholic condition. Thereafter, as we will see in chapter three, Milton transformed the literary tradition of melancholy. In his "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" (written between 1629 and 1631) melancholy is not "an alien or condemnable ailment" (Trevor 150). Rather, it functions as the instigator of divine truth, allowing Milton's speaker to see "all heaven before mine eyes" (166). This interpretation of melancholy is recognized by Milton's literary predecessors. Thomas Warton's "The Pleasures of Melancholy," a representative work of the eighteenth-century Graveyard poets, reproduces Milton's positive conception of melancholy. At the same time, his work foreshadows the Romantic notion of melancholy that aroused the following century. Finally, we will explore the notion of melancholy in the works of Wordsworth and Keats. Here, I will demonstrate that the notion of melancholy as a positive condition arrived at its culmination in the works of the early nineteenth century romantics.

The literary text that are included in this study are all recognized as influential treatises of melancholy. Consequently, the notions of melancholy in these works have been explored extensively in other studies. This thesis will attempt to contribute to the discussion by approaching the literary tradition of melancholy as what Radden identifies as "a kind of conversation, or dialogue,

conducted across centuries” (177). In this “conversation,” states Radden, different authors interpret and respond to preceding discussions of melancholy:

“ Each author reads, and variously understands, ... Galen and Aristotle. Later, in the Renaissance period, Robert Burton reads Ficino ... and in turn read by every thinker who follows him, through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.” (65)

This study will draw attention to the interdependency of the authors that have contributed to the literary tradition of melancholy. It will explore the discussion on melancholy as it has evolved from the Renaissance until the Romantic era. In so doing, this study seeks to unravel a tendency towards an Aristotelian outlook, in which melancholy is increasingly interpreted as what Wilson calls “an almost miraculous invitation to transcend the banal status quo and imagine the untapped possibilities for existence” (145).

Chapter One:  
Burton's Anatomy of  
Melancholy

During the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, the debate about the melancholic condition magnified. In this transitional period, the Galenic theory began to lose its unreserved authority and made room for new frameworks. This conversion caused disturbance in the general perception of melancholy.

### **The influence of the Galenic theory in the early modern world:**

In this transitional period the very strength of the emotional pressure made Melancholia a merciless reality, before whom men trembled as before a “cruel plague” or a “melancholy demon”, and whom they tried in vain to banish by a thousand antidotes and consolatory treatises. (Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxi 232-3)

Here, Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxi identify the mental suspicion that was connected with the melancholy condition. Even though medical science began to move away from the Galenic tradition that viewed the condition as a disease, melancholy was still considered a malady that needed to be oppressed like a “cruel plague.” At the same time, however, “questions regarding the condition's [melancholy's] links to inspiration, frustration, and greatness abounded” (Sullivan 885). Scholarly literature increasingly highlighted the positive aspects of melancholy, reviving the Aristotelian link with the condition. As Lawrence Babb points out, this new outlook provoked a complex discussion about true nature of melancholy:

“The Renaissance ... held simultaneously two conceptions of melancholia. According to the Galenic tradition, melancholia is a most ignominious and miserable condition of the mind; according to the Aristotelian tradition, it is a most admirable and enviable condition of mind. These two conceptions are hopelessly intertwined in Renaissance thought and literature. Sometimes they seem at least partially reconciled through the nice distinctions of the psychologists; sometimes they seem very much at war with each other”. (267)

The complex interplay between the two “hopelessly intertwined” traditions stimulated a widespread discussion about the potential benefits of melancholy. For this reason, states Sullivan, “many scholars have characterised the Renaissance as the ‘golden age of melancholy’”(885).

In *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), one of the most influential books of the age, Robert Burton “acknowledge[s] the wide array of variations among his predecessors” (Jackson 96). Burton interprets melancholy from a Galenic viewpoint, as he tries to construe his notion of the disease in a humoral framework. However, at the same time, his work anticipates the more positive conception that was to awaken in his literary successors. This way, *The Anatomy* is exemplar of the observation that the emergence of new meanings of melancholy was “a case not of decay and metamorphosis, but of parallel survival” (Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxi 3). As this chapter will demonstrate,

The Anatomy of Melancholy can be seen as the embodiment of the extensive discussion that developed in the Renaissance.

### **Burton's interpretations of Melancholy : "Religious Melancholy ":**

Burton's "sense of the potential variability of melancholia" (Gardiner 383) becomes most obvious in the opening poem of The Anatomy, which is titled "The Author's Abstract of Melancholy." In this poem, Burton's speaker reflects on his own melancholy existence. On the one hand, he maintains that his melancholy moods enable him to dwell in pleasant reveries:

When I build Castles in the aire, Void of sorrow  
and voide of feare, Pleasing my selfe with  
phantasms sweet, Me thinks the time runnes very  
fleet. All my joyes to this are folly ,Naught so  
sweet as melancholy.( 3 – 8)

Here, the speaker describes his melancholy musing as an appealing state of mind. It is "sweet" and "void of sorrow and ... fear." Paradoxically, this assertion contradicts the definition of melancholy that Burton gives in a later passage, where "feare, and sadnesse" are the condition's "ordinary companions" (1: 162). Likewise, the poem's speaker contrast his positive view on melancholy in the stanzas that follow:

My paines past cure, another Hell, I may not in  
this torment dwell, Now desperate I hate my

life, Lend me an halter or a knifell my griefes to  
this are jolly, Naught so damn'd as Melancholy  
(15-20)

In this stanza, which ends the poem, the speaker compares his melancholy to hell, and stresses that none of his burdens are “so damn’d as Melancholy.” Moreover, he implies that he is about to commit suicide (with “an halter or a knife”) because of the condition. This way, Burton’s poem urges the reader to repress melancholy, while, at the same time, it attempts to idealize the condition. Still, since the poem ends with a stanza that is critical of melancholy, the overall impression that it leaves is one of dissent.

Burton’s rejection of melancholy can be retraced to his main influence: Galen. This is not surprising, since Galen was the medical authority in the early modern world. Most scholars believe Galen’s humoral principle influenced Western thinkers until the seventeenth century. Trevor, for example, states that “students at Cambridge and Oxford were still being taught humoral theory well into the late seventeenth century” (24). Others, such as Mary Lindemann, even mark the influence of humoral theory “well into the eighteenth century” (13). Jackson, too, points out that the Galenic tradition was of fundamental importance in the medical writing of the early modern period. Compared to the Middle Ages, Jackson states: “medical writings on the subject were essentially more elaborated versions of the same, reflecting their ultimate indebtedness to

... Galen” (79). Burton, too, heavily relies on the Galen’s medical principle, citing the Greek physician almost 150 times.

The Galenic philosophy equated health with humoral stability, as Jackson clarifies: “an optimal mixture (eucrasia) of the humors constituted a state of health; there was a balance or equilibrium. Disease was a disturbance of this equilibrium (dycrasia) of the humors” (31). Thus, according to this principle, perfect health was a perfect balance in one’s humour system; contrarily, a disproportion in one’s humoral system was seen as the cause for disease. According to Lindemann, the Galenic principle was somewhat problematic, because it “postulated a continuum between health and illness and located each individual somewhere on that band.” (13). Seamless health, in this “continuum,” proved to be “an unattainable ideal.” In fact, most people hung “forever suspended between health and illness” (Hildebrandt qtd.in Lindemann 13).

In the Galenic viewpoint, melancholy, too, was caused by humoral imbalance. Hence, like any other disease, it was considered an ailment that was never completely absent in an individual. Still, it was believed that melancholy could be repressed if one followed the right therapeutic prescriptions. This way, the condition was seen as “a vile disease that should be treated like the gout or fever, regardless of the pain of cure” (Wilson 72). Nonetheless, as with any other humoral instability, a perfect balance of black bile was an “unattainable

ideal” (Hildebrandt qtd.in Lindemann 13). In the general perception of the age, everyone was liable to melancholy, even though some might be more sensitive to the condition than others.

Thereafter, of course, modern science has invented convincing alternatives to explain the complexity of human health. For that reason, in our age, it is hard to appreciate the classical humours as a satisfactory method. Especially the existence of the melancholy humour (black bile) is unconceivable, because, as Jackson points out: “in contrast to yellow bile, phlegm and blood, it is difficult to reconcile the black bile with any known substance today” (8). Still, it is important to consider that the early modern individual “regarded [humoral theory] as empirically supported” (Radden 62) and employed it to analyse all varieties of ailments.

Burton, too, recurrently relies on Galenic theory when he tries to spell out the exact cause of melancholy. He repeatedly argues that melancholy is produced by an excessive amount of black bile. According to Burton, this disproportion produces a “diversity of effects” (1: 168). When the surplus is too cold, it causes “fatuity and sottishness” (1: 167). When it is too hot, “madness follows with violent actions” (1: 167). To avoid these states, Burton argues that it is important to maintain humoral balance. Still, like other successors of Galen, he believes that the perfect balance cannot be achieved. Therefore, it is impossible to completely eliminate melancholy. This is why, in the introduction,

he poses the question: “who is free from melancholy? Who is not touched more or lesse in habit or disposition?” (1:25). Melancholy, Burton continues further on, is “an inbred malady in every one of us” (1:32). For this reason, Bridget Gellert, concludes that “for [Burton] melancholy is the universal disease from which nobody escapes, ... while every efforts must be made to keep it in check. (qtd.in Schleiner 142). This way, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* echoes the Galenic notion of melancholy.

However, by stating that everyone is marked by a certain degree of melancholy, Burton indicates that melancholy cannot be entirely malevolent. If that was the case, no living person would be capable of thriving. For this reason, Burton begins his book with a clear take on melancholy as a humoral disease, but increasingly touches on alternative interpretations as his treatise develops. By the end of his anthology, it becomes clear that he “has found in Galenism neither a cure nor a concrete diagnosis for his own particular ailment but rather a means by which to describe and connect this ailment endlessly to other entities: human and cultural alike” (Trevor 119). One example of this shift in perception can be found in the following excerpt, in which Burton attempts to rationalize melancholy from a metaphysical perspective:

We are not here as those angels, celestial powers and bodies, sun and moon, to finish our course without all offence, with such constancy, to continue for so many ages: but subject to infirmities, miseries, interrupted, tossed and

tumbled up and down, carries about with every small blast, often molested and disquieted upon each slender occasion, uncertain, brittle, and so is all that we trust unto. And he that knows not this is not armed to endure it, is not fit to live in this world. (1: 137-8)

Here, Burton avoids to relate melancholy to humoral theory. Rather, he poses that melancholy is caused by the fact that humans are ephemeral and unable to control their own fate. Humankind is forever “subject to” forces that are beyond his own control. Here, the limited state of humanity is the source of melancholy. Along these lines, Burton does not look for the cure for melancholy from a humoral perspective. Rather, he exists that a remedy can be obtained by acknowledging that we are only negligible particles in a colossal universe. Another example of a non-Galenic outlook on melancholy is found in the following passage:

No man living is free, no stoic, none so wise, none so happy, none so patient, so generous, so godly, so divine, that can vindicate himself; so well composed, but more or less, some time or other he feels the smart of it. Melancholy in this sense is the character of mortality. (1: 136)

Again, Burton argues that melancholy is caused by humankind’s limitations. According to him, melancholy is the “character of mortality,” because none is able to transcend the limits of earthly existence. This way, Burton looks for a cure that lies beyond the Galenic notion, and “anticipates the

fast-approaching demise of humoral theory (Trevor 118). In doing so, he makes way for more tolerant notions of melancholy.

At the same time, Burton intermittently recognizes the potential positive side to melancholy, as he clearly romanticises the melancholic mind state.

“Most pleasant it is at first, to such as are Melancholy given, to lie in bed whole daies, and keepe their chambers, to walk alone in some solitary grove, betwixt wood and water, by a brooke side, to meditate upon some delightsome and pleasant subject, which shall affect them most ... A most incomparable delight it is so to melancholize, and build castles in theyre, to goe smiling to themselves, acting an infinite variety of parts, which they suppose, and strongly imagine they represent, or that they see acted or done.” (1: 243)

Here, like in the opening poem of *The Anatomy*, Burton acknowledges that it can be an “incomparable delight” to “melancholize, and build castles in the ayre.” According to Burton, his melancholy moods allow him to “meditate upon some delightsome and pleasant subject.” This way, he acknowledges the potential positive facts of melancholy.

By the same token, Burton recognizes the Aristotelian glorification of the condition, as becomes clear in the following passage: “Why melancholy men are witty, which Aristotle has long since maintained in his Problems: and that all learned men, famous Philosophers, and Law-givers ... have still beene Melancholy; is a Probleme much controverted.” (1: 421)

Here, Burton confesses that he does not know the final solution to the Aristotelian problem. However, in a following passage, he draws on humoral theory in an attempt to figure it out: according to Burton, the melancholy humour can produce good wit, but only if it is available in the right temperature (“neither too hot nor too cold”) (1: 421), and has the right balance between wet and dry: “temperate heat and drynesse, are the chiefe causes of a good wit” (1: 422). Therefore, in some cases, it “advanceth mens conceipts, more then any humour whatsoever, improves their meditations more then any strong drinke, or sacke. (1: 391). Still, Burton seems to be of the same opinion as Lord Henry Howard, whose *A defensive against the poison of supposed prophecies* (1620) Burton uses as a source: “The melancholy fit is more often holden by the learned, for a veyle to shadow, then a lantern to discover ... and sooner shall a man find out a pure virgin in Sodom, then a true prophet is the cave of melancholy.” (Howard qtd.in Faulkner, Kiessling and Blair 5: 42)

By the same token, Burton argues that the probability of finding genuine prophetic melancholy is small; the condition can be profitable only if the humoral circumstances are exactly right.

Burton’s sense of positive melancholy is further explicated in the chapter called “Religious Melancholy”. Its object God; what his beauty is; how it allureth. The parts and parties affected.” In this chapter, Burton presents two kinds of religious melancholy. One is negative and produced by religious

fallacies, such as: “idle ceremonies, false doctrines, superstitious fopperies” (3: 354-5). This kind of religious melancholy exists in those who mistrust God’s grace. They are “still fearing, suspecting, vexing themselves with auguries, prodigies, false tales, dreames, idle, vaine works, unprofitable labours” (3: 339). The other kind of religious melancholy, however, exists in those who, through extensive contemplation on God, “have the eyes of [their] hearts and understanding opened” (3: 333) and see the universe through “spirituall eyes of understanding” (3: 333). In quoting Ficino, Burton suggests that it is through this melancholy awareness that humankind is able to see a glimpse of God’s beauty: “If we desire to see him, we must lay aside all vaine objects, which detaine us and dazell our eyes, and as Ficinus adviseth us, get us solar eyes spectacles as they that looke on the Sunne, to see his divine beauty, lay aside all material objects, all sense, & then thou shalt see him as he is.” (3: 335-6)

Here, Burton argues that the melancholic condition allows one to renounce trivialities “vaine objects” and envision God’s “divine beauty.” Similarly, in a following passage, Burton argues that it is through “sobriety and contemplation” (3: 361) that humankind is able to experience a state of ecstasy, which provides a vision of the divine: “Extasis is taste of future happinesse, by which we are united unto God, a divine melancholy, a spirituall wing ... to lift us up to heaven” (3: 361). This way, Burton indicates that religious melancholy “is to be associated with the contemplation of beauty” and “leads to the contemplation of God. (Grace 582).

Significantly, however, Burton immediately distrusts the opportunities that this type of ecstasy can provide. In quoting the Italian scholar Polydore Vergil (1470 – 1555), Burton declares that “those prophesies ... which they suppose come from God, doe proceed wholly ... by the Devills meanes” (3: 361). Burton indicates that, when “it is abused,” the ecstasy produces “a mere dotage, madnesse” (3: 361) rather than a vision of “divine beauty” (3:336). This way, Burton questions the potential outcome of “religious melancholy.” As we will see in chapter three of this thesis, Milton, too, examines the notion of melancholy as the appreciation of the divine. However, as I will demonstrate, Milton’s judgement of the outcome of melancholic ecstasies is more optimistic.

In conclusion, it can be said that Burton’s view on melancholy is not restricted to a single theory. Rather, as Gardiner points out, “the creative and dysfunctional exist together with possibilities for growth and drastic regression” (383). This way, Burton’s notions of melancholy are “hopelessly intertwined” (Babb 267) with each other. Still, as I have demonstrated, the potential for “drastic regression” outweighs the “possibility for growth.” Every time that Burton proposes a more positive interpretation of melancholy, he immediately presents a counterargument. Therefore, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* hesitantly anticipates the positive notion of melancholy that was to awaken in Burton’s predecessors, while, at the same time, it perseveres the Galenic notion of melancholy as a disease.

Chapter Two :  
Shakespeare's  
Melancholics: Jaques and  
Hamlet

Shakespeare's notion of melancholy is indispensable in an understanding of the Renaissance discussion of melancholy. His most renowned character, Hamlet, has often been recognized as the epitome of the Renaissance melancholy man. Therefore, his character is consistently included in scholarly investigations of the era. This chapter will undertake a reading of Shakespeare's comedy *As You Like It*, in which the playwright treats the notion of melancholy with irony, and the tragedy *Hamlet*, in which he approaches the subject on a more solemn note. In so doing, this chapter will uncover that Shakespeare, like Burton, understood melancholy from a Galenic viewpoint, while at the same time, he anticipates more positive notions of the condition.

#### **A. Jaques:**

In his *As You Like It* (written around 1599), Shakespeare uses the character of Jaques to ridicule what Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxi, call the Elizabethan "fashionable melancholic" which they define as a character, who, in an attempt to intrigue others, "wanted to "learn" Melancholy as one learns a game of dance" (235). This is why, when Rosalind remarks that "they say you are a melancholy fellow" (4.1.3), Jaques portentously replies: "I am so; I do love it better than laughing" (4.1.4). This way, as Drew Daniel argues in *The Melancholy Assemblage*, lord Jaques "seems to flatten melancholy into a placeholder of culturally mediated emotional fashion, a standard tactic in the social games played by scholars, musicians, courtiers, soldiers, lawyers, politicians, and ladies" (6). Along these lines, it can be said that Jaques merely use his melancholic complexion in order to present himself as a socially intriguing character. His melancholy, then, is not the fountain of an increased awareness.

At the same time, it appears that Shakespeare invented Jaques to ridicule “the endless variety of melancholies” (Radden 8) that were circulating in the age. In his *Anatomy*, Burton incorporates separate chapters on variable types of melancholy. These include “love melancholy,” “religious melancholy” and “scholarly melancholy.” In early modern England, these notions coexisted, creating an ambiguous complexity in the discourse on the subject. The same uncertainty is manifest in *As You Like It*, particularly when Shakespeare has the melancholy Jaques tell Rosalind: “I have neither the scholar’s melancholy, which is emulation; nor the musician’s, which is fantastical; nor the courtier’s, which is proud; nor the soldier’s, which is ambitious; nor the lawyer’s, which is politic; nor the lady’s, which is nice; nor the lover’s, which is all of these .”(4.1.10)

Here, by stating that every individual experiences melancholy in a self-contained fashion, Shakespeare satirizes the indistinctness that is caused by the early modern tendency to attribute every form of human despondency to melancholy. The irony in *As You Like It* follows from Jaques’s feeble attempt to institute himself in a cluster of melancholy that is superior to all prevailing varieties:

it is a melancholy of mine own, compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects, and indeed the sundry contemplation of my travels, in which my often rumination wraps me in a most humorous sadness.(4.1.15)

This statement reveals that Jaques considers his melancholy to be unique “of mine own”. Supposedly, he has a melancholy understanding of the world that everyone around him fails to appreciate, because it is too convoluted “compounded of many simples”. For Jaques, melancholy functions as “a form of personal distinction” (Campbell 91), which elevates him from the other characters in the play. His overconfidence becomes most vivid in the following passage, where Jaques advises Duke Senior: “give me leave to speak my mind, and I will

through and through cleanse the foul body of the infected world, And they will patiently receive my medicine” (2.7.58). Here, Jaques poses himself as the doctor of the “infected world.” He believes that he is able to heal the world with his “medicine,” which stands as a metaphor for his melancholic intellect. However, emphasizes Oscar Campbell, “most of Jacques “ satiric pronouncements are shown to be either invalid or presumptuous” (100). For example, when Jaques advises Orlando to “rail against our mistress the world, and all our misery” (3.2.270), he does so “just before the lover [Orlando] meets Rosalind for a colloquy full of joyful excitement for both of them” (Campbell 100). This way, Jaques’ character functions as a caricature of the moralising melancholic that is too involved with his own eminence. Therefore, he “continues to be presented as food for laughter” (Campbell 93). For this reason, most scholars agree that his dramatic function in the play is to ridicule the Elizabethan melancholic. It could be said, then, that Shakespeare has incorporated the character of Jaques into the play to rebuke the uses of melancholy.

Still, this analysis would ignore the complexity of Jaques’s melancholy enactment. There are a number of moments in the play where Jaques does intrigue rather than humiliate himself. One example of this is found in Jaques’s monologue: “All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players. They have their exits and their entrances, and one man in his time plays many parts” (2.7.140). Here, Jaques famously discerns the seven stages in the life of a man. The vivid language that Jaques uses here to compare life to a theatrical play, belongs to Shakespeare’s most examined lines. It is remarkable that these esteemed words come from a figure that is generally thought of as a character of ridicule. Drew Daniel, in *The Melancholy Assemblage*, rightfully concludes that Jaques’s performance “oscillates between sincerity and affectation, turning identity into a thing of discursive fashion only to insist that something incommensurable personal lies behind the stereotypical surface.” (6) Likewise, Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxi point out:

The most perfect synthesis of profound thought and poetic wistfulness is achieved when true humour is deepened by melancholy; or, to express it the opposite way, when true melancholy is transfigured by humour – when a man whom at a superficial glance one would judge to be a comic, fashionable melancholic is really a melancholic in the tragic sense, save that he is wise enough to mock at his own Weltschmerz in public and thus to forge an armour for his sensitivity. (235)

Hence, the cumbersome presentation of Jaques's gloomy temperament conceals the more confidential and genuine melancholy that is vested in his character.

### **B. Hamlet:**

In Hamlet (written between 1599 and 1602), too, Shakespeare wavers between different interpretations of the melancholic condition. However, in Hamlet, the indistinctness exists in the leading character of the play, rather than in an antagonist. Moreover, Hamlet does not “mock at his own Weltschmerz” (Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxl 235). This makes the approach to the discussion more forthright than in *As You Like It*.

Throughout the play, it remains uncertain whether Hamlet's melancholic personality is genuine or part of the prince's effort to “put an antic disposition on” (1.5.170) in order to confuse his uncle. For this reason, it remains undisclosed whether Hamlet's melancholy is noble or wicked. Frances Yates, in her *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age*, locates this uncertainty at the very heart of the play:

“In the darkness of the night, Hamlet wrestles with his melancholy problems. Is the melancholy the inspired melancholy, giving prophetic insight into an evil situation and telling him how he is to act rightly and prophetically in that situation? Or is it a symptom of weakness like the melancholy of witches, making him prone to diabolic possession and the deception of evil spirits?” (153)

As Yates concludes, “ these are the questions asked in Hamlet and they were the questions which were raging at the time” (Yates 154). This way, similar to *As You Like It*, the play addresses the ambiguity that surrounded the debate on melancholy that existed in the Renaissance.

Arguably, Hamlet’s melancholy functions as his weakness, which eventually leads to his downfall. The prince himself is aware of this condition, as becomes clear from his words to Horatio and Marcellus in the first act of the play:

“ So oft it chanceth in particular me That, for some vicious/  
mole of nature in them As in their birth wherein they are/  
not guilt (Since nature cannot choose his origin),By their/  
o’ergrowth of some complexion,Oft breaking down the/  
pales and forts of reason,Or by some habit that too much/  
o’erleavensThe form of plausible manners – that these/  
men,Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,(Being/  
nature’s livery or fortune’s star),His virtues else, be they/  
as pure as grace,As infinite as man may undergo,Shall in/  
the general censure take corruptionFrom that particular/  
fault: The dram of eale<sup>5</sup>Doth all the noble substance of a  
doubt to his own scandal” .(1.4.23-38)

In this passage, as Thompson and Taylor explain, Hamlet “is elaborating on the idea that a single fault .. can corrupt or destroy the reputation of an individual person ...” (204). Here, when Hamlet talks about “some vicious mole of nature,” he does not explicitly address his own deformity. Still, as Trevor rightfully argues, “his description makes the connection unavoidable” (79). This way, Hamlet argues that his own melancholy (his “single fault”) destroys him as an individual, as it breaks “down the pales and fort of reason.” Furthermore, he predicts that his melancholy weakness will eventually lead to his own downfall (“scandal”).

By the same token, the prince blames his melancholy when he is confronted with his father’s ghost:

“the de’il hath power  
To assume a pleasing shape. Yea, and/  
perhaps  
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,  
As he is/  
very potent with such spirits,  
Abuses me to damn me!”  
(2.2.533)

Again, Hamlet equates his melancholy to his fatal weakness, as he “insist[s] that his depressive tendencies and natural disposition make him acutely vulnerable to immaterial forces, giving him reason to doubt the credibility of the Ghost who claims to be his father” (Trevor 65). This way, Hamlet’s melancholy is depicted as the cause of his demise.

Still, some scholars have read the very opposite into Hamlet’s melancholy. In their opinion, it functions as his virtue. In contrast with Jaques, who overvalues his own awareness, Hamlet’s melancholy is truly “a form of personal distinction” (Campbell 91) as it elevates him from other characters in the play. Schleiner, for example, points out that through his melancholy, Hamlet has “insights that are closed to others” (260). When the ghost appears at the castle, Horatio tells the sentinels:

Let us impart what we have seen tonight  
Unto young  
Hamlet, for upon my life  
This spirit dumb to us will speak  
to him. (1.1.168)

By stressing that the ghost will be “dumb to [them],” Horatio indicates that he believes that Hamlet is able to understand things that others cannot. According to Yates, this assumption is verified in act three, scene two, when “Hamlet tests the ghost’s story with the play, and the effect of the play on his mother and uncle proves to him that the ghost had in fact given him a truly inspired insight into an appalling moral situation” (154). This way, indeed, Hamlet’s melancholy gives him “insights that are closed to others” (Campbell 260).

In conclusion, it can be said that both Jaques and Hamlet are characters that, though their melancholy insight, are able to diagnose the world’s disability. Just like Jaques, who feel that he must “cleanse the body of the infected world” (2.7.60), Hamlet regards the situation with which he has to deal as a “nasty sty” (3.3.92) (Yates 181). However, unlike Jaques, whose melancholic intuition is unreliable, Hamlet’s melancholic clairvoyance is genuine: “Hamlet’s black humour is proved to be, not the blackness of Hell ... , but the melancholy of a prophet in a world so badly disobedient to the Law that the universal harmony is inaudible, or broken, like sweet bells jangled out of tune and harsh.” (Yates 154)

This way, the prince can be considered as the prime example of Lord Howard’s characterization of “a true prophet in the cave of melancholy” (Faulkner, Kiessling and Blair 5:42). Hamlet’s melancholy is positive because it divulges and contests the debauchery of the world. Importantly, however, the tragedy ends with eventual death of the prince and the slaughter of innocent people. This way, Shakespeare accentuates that, ultimately, Hamlet’s melancholy is a form of weakness.

Chapter Three :  
The “Prophetic strain”

Milton (1608 – 1674) presented a view of melancholy that challenged the indecisive notions of Burton and Shakespeare. This is particularly evident in his companion poems “L’Allegro” and “Il Penseroso,” which are constructed around the antagonism between mirth and melancholy. First published in *The Poems of Mr. John Milton*, both English and Latin (1645), both poems are probably composed somewhere between 1629 and 1631 (Carey 130). “L’Allegro” (“the happy man”) construes a negative vision of melancholy. Milton’s speaker courts “heart-easing Mirth” (13), whom Milton personifies as a “fair and free” (11) goddess. Mirth banishes the “loathed Melancholy of Cerberus” (1-2), a variety of melancholy that is “unholy” (4) rather than inspired. This way, Milton is “exorcising the crucifying melancholy madness of the Galenic tradition” (Babb 270). In contrast, “Il Penseroso” (“the thinking man”) “celebrates Melancholy, portrayed as the saturnine temperament” (Lewalski 50). In this poem, Milton has his speaker praise “divinest Melancholy” (12), which he positions above the “vain deluding joys” of Mirth (1). For the thinking man in “Il Penseroso,” melancholy is not “an alien or condemnable ailment” (Trevor 150). Rather, he appreciates “melancholy in the tradition of Aristotle and Ficino” and “invites her to be his companion and the ruling influence of his life” (Babb 270). This way, “L’Allegro” and “Il Penseroso” are constructed around the contrast between the Galenic and Aristotelian tradition. Therefore, Milton’s companion poems can be read as a debate about the desirability of the melancholic condition. Milton relies on his literary predecessors when he invokes the divinities Mirth and Melancholy. One allusion that is evident is Shakespeare’s invocation of mirth in *Hamlet*, in which Shakespeare has the prince inform Guildenstern of his distress: “ I have of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame the earth seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy the air, look you, this brave o’erhanging firmament,

this majestic roof fretted with golden fire, why it appeareth nothing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours.” (2.2.261)

This statement reveals that Hamlet feels that it is his own depression that is the cause of his debased view of the world. The prince acknowledges that the world is a “goodly frame” and feels that it is his own lack of mirth that causes it to appear “sterile” and “foul” to him. Milton’s speaker, in “L’Allegro,” expresses a similar message. To him, mirth can prevent the world from appearing like a “Stygian Cave” (3), and give prominence to life’s “unreproved pleasures free” (40). This way, the vision of Milton’s “happy man” imitates Shakespeare’s understanding of mirth in Hamlet.

Other scholars have identified allusions to Burton in Milton’s poems: Whiting incorporates a chapter in Milton’s *Literary Milieu*, in which he “tries to read Milton through Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy*” (Schleiner 312). Miller, in his analysis of “L’Allegro,” delivers a similar observation: “The center of the poem is (among other things) a generalized case history of a black melancholiac undergoing Galenic therapy. The supposed activities of “L’Allegro” are strikingly like those recommended by Burton for the treatment of melancholy” (34).

William Grace, too, in “notes on Robert Burton and John Milton,” observes that the different interpretations of melancholy that Milton includes in his two poems originate from Burton:

...”The “loathed melancholy” of “L’Allegro,” as the melancholy arising from religious superstition, and the “divinest melancholy,” as the melancholy that leads the perception of the beauty of God, are both fully explained in Burton.” (583)

This way, concludes Grace, “Milton draws both verbal suggestions and ideas from Burton’s Anatomy” (583). Others have linked Milton’s “L’Allegro” and “Il Penseroso” to the opening.

Poem in Burton’s Anatomy. As we have seen in the first chapter of this essay, Burton constructs his poem around the opposition between desirable and evil melancholy. The good kind of melancholy is experienced during “blessed dayes” (113), while “evil” melancholy is found in the speaker’s “waking nights” (120). Milton, too, constructs his companion poems “around the allegorical opposition between Day and Night” (Griffin 803).” It can be said, therefore, that Milton’s poems imitate Burton’s account of melancholy.

At the same time, however, Milton distances himself from his predecessors. As we have seen in the previous chapters of the essay, the works of Burton and Shakespeare reflect a certain condemnation of melancholy; it is considered a complexion that is only constructive in exceptional cases. Milton’s work, on the contrary, cultivates a conception of melancholy that is thoroughly positive. This way, Milton reinterprets the ideas of his literary predecessors.

#### **A. The “Prophetic strain”:**

Milton’s divergent understanding becomes apparent when analysing the themes that run through his works. One notable difference lies in Milton’s understanding of the purpose of music. Burton prescribes music as a “forcible medicine” for melancholics. For him, it is a remedy that “cures all irksomeness and heaviness of the soul.” In Milton’s “Il Penseroso,” on the other hand, music is used not “to drive away the dull melancholy,” (Stoll 427). Rather, like Shakespeare’s Jaques, who claims that “I can suck melancholy out of a song as a weasel sucks eggs (2.5.10-1), Milton’s speaker consumes melancholy to “elevate and enlarge it” (Stoll 427). This becomes clear from the following passage: “...Philomel will daign a song, In her sweetest, saddest plight, Smoothing the rugged brow of night, While Cynthia checks her

Dragon yoke, Gently o're th' accustom'd Oke; Sweet Bird that shunn'st the noise of folly,  
Most musicall, most melancholy!" (56 – 62)

Here's music is presented as the inspiration of the speaker's vision. It "shuns" the "noise" that reclines in mirth ("folly"), allowing the speaker to distillate his melancholy from frivolities.

The most significant fulfillment that the speaker in "Il Penseroso" receives from melancholy is similar to the one that Burton describes in his chapter on "Religious Melancholy." However, where Burton is distrustful of melancholy, continually contending the condition's positive facts, Milton's stance is unreservedly confident in its outcome. The speaker in "Il Penseroso" experiences an ecstasy in which he sees "all heaven before mine eyes" (166). Through his vision, he is able to see the Goddess Melancholy, who is hidden from humanity in ordinary circumstances; her "visage is too bright / To hit the Sense of human sight" (13 – 4). Milton's speaker finds himself in a "lonely Tower" (86), which Milton uses to symbolize the edge of worldly domains, as Miller states: "Il Penseroso has reached the top rung of the earthly Platonic ladder. One more step would place him in heaven." (37). It is in this condition that Milton's speaker is able "to unspear The spirit of Plato to unfold What Worlds, or what vast Regions holds The immortal mind that hath forsook Her mansion in this fleshly nook." (88). Milton's speaker, here, envisions heaven: Plato's spirit reveals to him the "vast Regions" in which the soul ("immortal mind") arrives after it has left the body ("fleshy nook"). This way, Milton's melancholic ecstasy is the instigator of divine truth.

Another significant difference between Milton and Burton is the manner in which both end their poems. Burton ends the opening poem in his *Anatomy* by damning the black humour, stating that "All my griefs to this are jolly, / Naught so damn'd as melancholy" (19-20).

### **A.1. Milton's " Il Penseroso ":**

The happy man in "L'Allegro," too, concludes by choosing Mirth over Melancholy: "These delights, if thou canst give, / Mirth with thee, I mean to live" (151 – 2). On the other hand, Milton concludes his "Il Penseroso" receptive of the melancholic condition: "Till old experience do attain To something like prophetic strain. These pleasures Melancholy give, And I with thee will choose to live." (173).

Miller argues that the poem's "accomplishment is subtly asserted by the relative security of the poem's closing couplet. There is no doubt that Melancholy can give such pleasures; there is some question of Mirth's power" (Miller 37).

Trevor rightfully points out that "clear allusions to Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy make it clear that Milton was interested in the topic of depression, and yet the melancholy of "Il Penseroso" is not pathological (159). For Milton, melancholy was the institutor of "heightened self-awareness" (Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxi 228) and the "condition of creative achievement" (Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxi 241). This way, Milton moves away from the sceptical portrayal of melancholy that was typical in the works of his predecessors. Therefore, it is true that "for the seventeenth century Milton is not representative, at least not for the majority of thinkers writing on the subject" (Schleiner 312).

With his new outlook, Milton functioned as a major influence on the Romantic notion of melancholy that was to awaken in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, as Robert Mitchell illustrates: "While earlier physicians had generally sought to eradicate, or at least control, melancholy, many of these eighteenth-century poets were interested in encouraging, or at least exploiting, melancholy moods (a position that received support from John Milton's "Il Penseroso."")"(722)

This way, as Schleiner remarks: “Milton acted a fountainhead ... inspiring a stream of odes on melancholy and/or genius in the following two centuries, as well as stimulating and sometimes even quenching the hydroptic loning of Romantic melancholics” (885). Still, the age saw an increased perplexity in the discussion of melancholy. On the one hand, melancholy lost its allure, because “the poetic expression of the melancholy mood [became] more and more of a convention” (Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxi 237); on the other hand, “new and untraditional possibilities of expression [arised] to rescue the serious and real meaning” (237). Likewise. Sullivan stresses that, even though it did become a less popular topic the discourse on melancholy “by no means disappeared during the 18th century” (885). As an illustration, she points out that “Samuel Johnson showed a particular interest in the topic, famously claiming that Robert Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy* was the “the only book that ever took him out of bed two hours sooner than he wished to rise” (885). In fact, this era can be seen as a juncture in the discourse on melancholy; medical texts, as Elibeth Dolan point out in her “British Romantic melancholia,” moved away from Galenic theory and began to portray the condition as “resulting from the coexistence of great rational intelligence and refined sensibility” (241). These traits were seen as “companion aspects of literary genius” (241). As we have seen in the previous chapters, the seventeenth-century works of Burton and Milton anticipated this notion. However, as Galenic theory decisively lost its authority in the medical field, the perception of melancholy as the outgrowth of reason and sensibility became predominant in the eighteenth century.

### **A.2. Milton’s “ L’Allegro “:**

The eighteenth-century “Graveyard poets,” a pre-romantic literary group that anticipated the Gothicism that was to awaken in nineteenth century, indulged extensively with the theme of melancholy. Often set in graveyards, their poetry’s aesthetics are tied in with the

perception that true understanding of life follows from extensive reflection on mortality. Paradoxically, therefore, the Graveyard poets' obsession with death and sorrow can be seen as a fixation on life, as Punter and Byron point out in their analysis of Graveyard poetry in *The Gothic* "To learn wisdom, it is necessary to take a quicker and more frightening path, which is the path not of reason but of intense feeling; one can best – or perhaps only – learn the secrets of life (if one really wishes to, and has the strength to) from prolonged and absorbed meditation on its extreme limit: death." (11)

For the Graveyard poets, melancholy was the quintessence of "intense feeling," hence, their poetry glorifies melancholy pondering as an attempt to arrive at the bedrock of true knowledge. As Radden point out, this literary school paved the way for the kind of melancholy that was to emerge in the works of the nineteenth century Romantics: "...It was not until after the excesses of the ... "graveyard school" of poetry, with its ruins, churchyards, cloisters, yews, and ghosts, and after writing about melancholy had become stale in the convention, that Romanticism's intensely personal and subjective utterance of "profound individual sorrow" was possible. (Klibanski, Panofsk, and Saxi, qtd.in Radden 32)

This way, the Graveyard school melancholy can be seen as the precursor of the Romantic melancholy that characterized the nineteenth century.

A noteworthy example of this eighteenth century exaltation of melancholy is found in the works of Thomas Warton (1728 – 1790). His "The Pleasures of Melancholy," a poem that he wrote at the age of seventeen, imitates Milton's "Il Penseroso," as it "constructs itself around the allegorical opposition between Day and Night, Mirth and Melancholy" (Griffin 803). The indebtedness to his renaissance predecessor becomes clear in the following passage: "Milton knew, When in abstracted thought he first conceiv'd All heav'n in tumult, and the Seraphim Come tow'ring, arm'd in adamant and gold." (66).

Here, Warton alludes to *Paradise Lost*, in which Milton has a fallen angels raise “an imperial ensign,” which shines “like a Meteor streaming to the Wind / With Gems and Golden lustre rich imblazed, / Seraphic arms and Trophies” (1.537-9). According to Warton, Milton was able to “conceive” the grandeur of the universe (“all heav’n in tumult”) because of the “mystic visions” (Warton 63) that were revealed to him by the “sacred Genius of the night” (Warton 62). This awareness, states Warton, is only available to those who are blessed with a melancholic sensibility: “These are delights unknown to minds profane, / And which alone the pensive soul can taste” (194-5). Here, Warton suggests that Milton’s genius is the product of his melancholy. This way, Warton instils Milton in the tradition of Aristotelian melancholics.

In addition, Warton insinuates that a similar melancholic brilliance resonates in his own spirit, too: “O, lead me, queen sublime, to solemn glooms / Congenial with my soul” (17-8). Warton feels that, like Milton, he is in possession of the ability to gain insight from melancholic contemplation. Therefore, like the speaker in “*Il Penseroso*,” he chooses to settle his mind on the night, and reject the “trivial” mirth that is found during the day: “When azure noontide cheers the daedal globe, And the blest regent of the golden day Rejoices in his bright meridian tower, How oft my wishes ask the night's return, That best befriends the melancholy mind! Hail, sacred Night! thou too shalt share my song!” (107-12)

## **B. Warton's "The Pleasures Of Melancholy":**

It was in the works of the early nineteenth century Romantics, who "extended and refined the eighteenth-century understanding of melancholy as a productive mood" (Mitchell 722) that melancholy "enjoyed its second dawn" (Sullivan 885). Once again, it became "a flexible, powerful, yet potentially volatile tool with which to establish one's literary legitimacy" (Dolan 251). In fact, melancholy became of such vital importance in this era, that some scholars have argued that the term "Romanticism" is "almost synonymous" with the condition (Batten qtd.in Dolan 237). For the first time, as Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxi illustrate, it was possible to completely move away from the traditional notion of melancholy as a "a merciless reality, before whom men trembled" and "in vain [tried] to banish by a thousand antidotes and consolatory treatises" (233). Instead, strongly influenced by the melancholic reveries of Milton and the Graveyard Poets, the Romantic poets "transfigure[d] it [melancholy] into an ideal condition, inherently pleasurable, however painful" (Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxi 233). For the Romantics, melancholy became "a condition which by the continually renewed tension between depression and exaltation, ... horror of death and increased awareness of life, could impart a new vitality to drama, poetry and art" (Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxi 233). This chapter seeks to demonstrate how the Romantics engaged with their melancholy to obtain "increased awareness of life" (233) and imbued a "new vitality" (233) in their poetic works. This way, the early nineteenth century can be seen as the pinnacle of Aristotelian melancholy.

The works of the Romantics are generally characterized by an exaltation of individual subjectivity and empiricism. Moreover, these poets were fascinated with the idea of the "sublime," which can be defined as "a moment of vision which, by providing an intuition of the absolute grounds of existence, claims to close the gap between subject and object"

(McCalman et al.). Wordsworth, in his preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, an authoritative collection of poems by Coleridge and himself, states that a poet must be able to “[consider] man and the objects that surround him as acting and re-acting upon each other, so as to produce an infinite complexity of pain and pleasure” (252). Melancholy, in the Romantic doctrine, became an aesthetic ideal, because it “had the capacity to reveal the infinite powers of the individual self or imagination” (Mitchell 722). This way, the Romantics “weav[ed] it [melancholy] into one of their central aesthetic concepts, that of the sublime” (Sullivan 885). Worthy poetry, in the eyes of the Romantics, was composed by gifted individuals that were capable of encapsulating these “infinite powers” (Mitchell 722). Wordsworth, famously announces that “all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” (240). To him, this was the only way to “discover what is really important to men” (240). In the early nineteenth century, melancholy had become a “powerful feeling” (240) that could stimulate the poet more than any other sensation.

### **C. The Romantic Melancholy:**

A candid example of Romantic melancholy is found in Wordsworth’s “Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey,” (1798) in which the poet recounts a melancholy insight that he experienced when he revisited a place he solitarily walked around half a decade before. Here, he recollects his younger days, when “like a roe / I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides / Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams, / Wherever nature led” (68-71). At this point, one is reminded of Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*. Wordsworth, like Jaques, comes to understand that he is merely a player in a world that like a stage (2.7.140-1). The poet’s recollection of his youth has made him realize that has progressed on the scale of the “seven ages” (2.7.144) of men. Subsequently, he sees that he has come closer to the stage in which he will fade away into “mere oblivion” (2.7.166). Therefore, The experience reminds

Wordsworth of the transience of life, which produces in him a feeling of sadness and nostalgia.

Still, the outcome of the event is not only negative, as Wordsworth sets out to describe in a following passage: “For I have learned to look on nature, not as in the hour Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes The still, sad music of humanity, Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power To chasten and subdue. And I have felt A presence that disturbs me with the joy Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime Of something far more deeply interfused.” (89-97)

Here, the poet argues that his melancholic nostalgia has produced in him a “sense sublime;” it has “elevated” his thoughts, and allowed him to become aware of life in a sense that is “far more deeply infused”. Wordsworth does not elaborate on the exact nature of his epiphany. Arguably, however, his insight follows from what Klibansky, Panofski and Saxi describe as the melancholic’s undergoing of a “contradiction between time and infinity” (234). Wordsworth’s poet has come to understand that his place on earth is ephemeral and worthwhile at the same time. Wordsworth realizes that “through his very melancholy he has a share in eternity (Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxi 235). The way, the poet is able to “[give] a positive value to his own sorrow” (Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxi 235). Paradoxically, then, it is only through a sad experience of nostalgia that Wordsworth can discern the “joy of elevated thoughts” (95-6) This way, Wordsworth’s melancholy has provided him with “increased awareness of life” (Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxi 233).

For the Romantics, “sorrow” and “pleasure” were not antagonistic, as Wordsworth’s experience in “Tintern Abbey” shows. Rather, as Sullivan indicates, these poets attempted to consolidate both seemingly opposing conditions in order to arrive at true knowledge:

“according to the Romantic poets, the experience of pleasure was not diminished, but rather intensified, by the knowledge of sorrow” (885). For this reason, as Sullivan points out, the Romantics “indulged in melancholic fantasies, revelling in the insight they believed sorrow could bring” (885). Melancholy, in the perception of the Romantics, was the only condition that could bring true pleasure.

The interplay between pleasure and grief is evident in Keats’ poetical works, particularly in his “Ode to a Nightingale” (1819), which Miriam Allott depicts as a “characteristic Keatsian statement about the necessary relationship between joy and sorrow” (538). Interestingly, this poem was originally introduced by a stanza that Keats rejected before it was published. As Flesch point out, this stanza “imagines one going to seek the personified melancholy in à kind of odyssey to the underworld” (274):

Though you should build a bark of dead men’s bones, And  
rear a phantom gibbet for a mast, Stitch creeds together for  
a sail, with groans To fill it out, blood-stained and aghast;  
Although your rudder be a dragon’s tail Long severed, yet  
still hard with agony, Your cordage large uprootings from  
the skull Of bald medusa, certes you would fail To find the  
melancholy – whether she Dreamed in any isle of Lethe  
dull. (Allott 538-9)

As Smith stresses in her “Sorrow’s Mysteries: Keats’s ‘Ode on Melancholy,’” it is incorrect to “use a cancelled version of a poem to direct or support one’s interpretation of the final work” (683). Still, I would like to give the stanza some attention, since various scholars have traced Burton’s influence in these lines. This way, Keats’ ode exemplifies what Radden, in her analysis of the history of melancholy, identifies as a “a kind of conversation, or dialogue, conducted across centuries” (Radden ix). Andrew Motion, for example, in his biography of Keats, states that “the opening of the poem pulsates with the same kind of exaggeration that he [Keats] had admired in its principal source: Burton’s *Anatomy*” (402). Likewise, Allott states that “the violent imagery suggests a recent reading of Burton’s account – to which K.’s ode is in effect a reply – of the melancholy that leads to suicide in *The Anatomy of Melancholy*” (539). Importantly, Keats ends this stanza by stressing that “you would fail / To find the melancholy” in the underworld. Arguably, therefore, the unpublished stanza rejects the negative portrayal of melancholy that Keats observed in Burton.

In the opening line of the first stanza in the published version, Keats then exclaims “No, no, go not to Lethe” (1). This way, he rejects the negative type of melancholy that exists in the rejected stanza. This is why Allott calls Keats’ Ode a “reply” (539) to *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. According to Keats, the type of melancholy that exists in Burton’s works only leads to insentience, as it “drown[s] the wakeful anguish of the soul” (10). In the remaining stanzas, however, Keats cultivates an alternative to the hellish type of melancholy that the rejected opening holds. This positive type of melancholy “dwells with Beauty” (21) and is found “in the very temple of Delight,” rather than in the realms of “Lethe” (1). Keats engages with this type of melancholy because he understands that it is the only path to true beauty; it enables him to “burst Joy’s grape against his palate fine” (28). For Keats, “the extremity of delight is generated by a suffering at the centre; and the profoundest exploration of delight returns us to its origin in grief (Cummings 51-2). Likewise, Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxi

point out: “[Keats] feeds his own melancholy with all his mind and senses, making it embrace all the bright splendour of created things, which he can truly “discover” and describe in a profusion of rich and varied terms, because the thought of their transitoriness and the feeling of his own pain alone enable him to take possession of their living beauty.” (238)

#### **D. Wordsworth:**

Like Wordsworth, who in “Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey,” transforms an experience of nostalgia into a moment of augmented appreciation of life, Keats indulges with the ephemerality of living objects to increase his awareness of beauty. This way, Keats’ speaker “advises the auditor how to respond to fits of melancholy in such a way that exalted pleasures will result” (Mitchell 723).

#### **E. Keats:**

Keats’s speaker addresses his potential audience “from a position of superior knowledge, and speaks with all the authority and bitterness of his wisdom.” (Smith 690). Along these lines, it can be said that Keats’ ode is a manifestation of his concept of the “Mansion of Many Apartments,” a metaphor that he formulated in a letter to his friend John Hamilton Reynolds in 1818 (one year before he wrote his “Ode on Melancholy”). In this letter, Keats compares stages of human knowledge to the chambers in a house. The first is called the “Infant Chamber,” which holds those who “do not think” (498). After that, states Keats, “imperceptibly impelled by the awakening of the thinking principle” (498), we move on to the second chamber, which he calls the “Chamber of Maiden Thought.” Keats finds himself drawn to the next chamber, as he experiences a more intense and tragic notion of the universe:

“sharpening one's vision into the nature and heart of Man/  
— of convincing ones nerves that the World is full of/  
misery and Heartbreak, Pain, sickness and oppression —

whereby This Chamber of Maiden Thought becomes/  
gradually darken'd and at the same time on all sides of it/  
many doors are set open - but all dark - all leading to dark/  
passages — We see not the balance of good and evil. We/  
are in a Mist - We are now in that state — We feel the/  
“burden of the Mystery” (498 -9).

Here, as Wilson points out, “Keats shows himself to be intensely aware of the painful world but also keenly willing to embrace this same pain” (Wilson 111). He wants to explore the “darker passages,” because he feels the opportunity of profound experience. It is in this place that “one finds the inspiration for poetry, poetry that explores the mysterious burdens of life” (Wilson 111). Keats states that “to this point was Wordsworth come ... when he wrote “Tintern Abbey” (499). According to Keats, this proves that “he [Wordsworth] is a Genius and superior to us, in so far as he can, more than we, make discoveries, and shed a light in them” (499). This way, argues that Wordsworth’s talent lies in his ability to use his melancholy to shine a light on matters that are hidden from “common” people, who find themselves in an earlier chamber. This way, the Romantics defined their melancholy awareness as the authentication of their literary gift.

In the eyes of the Romantics, Shakespeare was a true example of a literary genius. Arguably, it was Shakespeare’s understanding of melancholy that impressed the nineteenth-century authors. As Coleridge points out in his lecture on Hamlet, the profundity of the play lies in his observation that, throughout the narrative, “laughter is equally the expression of extreme anguish and horror as of joy: as there are tears of sorrow and tears of joy, so there is a laugh of terror and a laugh of merriment” (Coleridge 77). This way, Shakespeare’s plays

reflect Wordsworth's notion that art should reflect "an infinite complexity of pain and pleasure" (Preface 252). Further on, Coleridge argues:

"Much of the genius of Shakespeare is displayed in these happy combinations – the highest and the lowest, the gayest and the saddest; he is not droll in one scene and melancholy in another, but often both the one and the other in the same scene. Laughter is made to swell the tear of sorrow, and to throw, as it were, a poetic light upon it, while the tear mingles tenderness with the laughter." (157)

Shakespeare's talent, according to Coleridge, lies on his ability to integrate sorrow with pleasure. In the eyes of the Romantics, Shakespeare was the prime example of the quest for "increased awareness of life" through "continually renewed tension between depression and exaltation" (Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxi 233). Therefore, it can be said that Shakespeare's treatment of melancholy inspired the Romantics to dwell on their melancholy in an attempt to "impart a new vitality to drama, poetry and art" (Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxi 233).

Coleridge's interpretation of Shakespeare is biased by his Romantic standpoint. T.S. Eliot in his "Hamlet and His Problems," points out that "the kind of criticism that ... Coleridge produced, in writing of Hamlet, is the most misleading kind possible" (87). According to Eliot, Coleridge was a "critic with a mind which is naturally of the creative

order, but which through some weakness in creative powers exercises itself in criticism instead ... Such a mind had ... Coleridge, who made of Hamlet a Coleridge” (87). This way, Eliot stresses that Coleridge interprets Shakespeare’s understanding of melancholy from a Romantic point of view. To Shakespeare, as we have seen in our reading of Hamlet and As You Like It, melancholy was predominantly a disorder, rather than the source of true knowledge. Therefore, when Coleridge argues that Shakespeare aligns sorrow with pleasure, he neglects Shakespeare’s authentic comprehension of melancholy.

This “misleading” reading of Shakespeare is further illustrated by Myrddin Jones, in his “Gray, Jaques, and the Man of Feeling.” He describes a reinterpretation of Shakespeare’s As You Like It in “Bell’s Edition of Shakespeare’s Plays,” which was published in 1774:

“Interestingly, the play throughout this time was produced in the original text, except that the part of Jaques was expanded by giving to Jaques himself the speech on the wounded deer properly belonging to the First Lord. These changes can be seen in Bell’s Edition of Shakespeare’s Plays, the title-page of which explains that the text used was that ‘now performed in the Theatres Royal in London, Regulated from the Prompt Books of each House’. The result of this alteration is to produce a Jaques much more in tune with the age’s predilection for the man of feeling. In Shakespeare’s text we first see Jaques through the eyes of the First Lord and Duke Senior; eyes that are amused

by him and see the element of affectation in his melancholy. Jaques's own projection of himself as a moralist and wit, and his inclusion of himself in the charge he makes against the Duke.” (Jones 44)

Here, the melancholy of Jaques is given a more positive impression than initially. In Shakespeare's original text, the audience learns about Jaques' melancholy “through the eyes of the First Lord and Duke Senior.” Since those characters treat Jaques as a fool, the audience is inclined to believe that Jaques' melancholy is indeed a kind of madness. However, in the 1774 edition of the play, Jaques' melancholy is understood from his own perspective. This increases the audience's esteem of the type of melancholy that Jaques' character embodies. This way, it can be said that the late eighteenth-century rendition of the play moved towards a more positive interpretation of melancholy than was originally presented by Shakespeare. This way, the Bell's edition of Shakespeare “interpret[s] and respond[s] to ... Renaissance sources” (Radden ix) and broadens the “kind of conversation” on melancholy (Radden ix).

Furthermore, Warton announces that he prefers the melancholy night over the cheerful day, because melancholy darkness is held as the source of true virtue. Here, Warton implicitly echoes Milton's closing words in his “Il Penseroso:” “I with thee [melancholy] will choose to live” (176). This way, Warton poses himself as the disciple of his renaissance idols. For that reason, as Oliver Ferguson states in “Warton and Keats: Two Views of Melancholy,” “The Pleasures of Melancholy” “was a popular and a thoroughly typical example of the kind of imitation that “Il Penseroso” had spawned” (15). At the same time, “The Pleasures of Melancholy” anticipates the works of the Romantics. This is particularly true for Keats's

“Ode on Melancholy.” This way, Warton’s “The Pleasures of Melancholy” can be seen as a transitional work in the discourse on melancholy.

# General Conclusion

## **General conclusion :**

In this thesis, the aim was to highlight a tradition of melancholy that originates from pseudo-Aristotle's *Problemata* XXX,1. The declaration that "all those who have become eminent in philosophy or politics or poetry or the arts" (953a:10-2) are affected with melancholy has stimulated a positive treatment of the condition in (early) modern literature. This study has shown that the positive tradition was anticipated in the works of Shakespeare and Burton, who tentatively began to replace the notion of melancholy as a disease. Even though both authors heavily rely on the Galenic principle, they occasionally hint at more positive facts of the melancholic condition. Subsequently, the Aristotelian outlook was embraced by Milton, who, in his "Il Penseroso," was the first to express unreserved confidence in the potential of melancholy as an instigator of sagacity. To him, melancholy contemplations allow one to envision divine beauty. This outlook was reproduced in the Graveyard poetry of Thomas Warton, who predicted the nineteenth-century Romantic notion of melancholy. Finally, the Romantics weaved the Aristotelian notion into their understanding of melancholy, contending that an understanding of sorrow increased one's appreciation of true beauty. This Romantic motive is epitomized in Keats' "Ode on Melancholy," here interpreted as a reply on Burton's *Anatomy*. Taken together, the outcome of my readings suggest that these authors have contributed to an increasingly positive notion of the melancholic condition. By focusing on the interdependency of the various authors, I have validated that this tendency has constituted a positive tradition of melancholy in literature.

John Doughill, in his *Oxford in English Literature*, states that "the connection between Saturn and the scholar is close and has been often commented on" (247). For this reason, he goes as far as concluding that "in a sense melancholy underlies the whole flow of literature" (247). Even though his speculation may appear to be an overstatement, I would like

to suggest that Doughill's remark is true to a certain degree. My study did not aspire to confirm the idea that there is underlying discussion on the nature of melancholy in "the whole flow of literature (Doughill 247), since the current study has only been able to examine a smaller fragment of the literary canon. Therefore, this study's notion of a tendency towards a more positive interpretation of melancholy may not be applicable to the entire course of literature. Still, since I have based my study on texts of considerable significance in the development of English literature, I believe that it is plausible to place confidence in the significance of my thesis.

It would be interesting to explore whether my proposal would be applicable to other sections of literature. A further study could assess the discussion of melancholy in a more narrow literary era, such as the Middle Ages or the Romantic era. Furthermore, it could trace the development in the periods that follow the early nineteenth century. Sigmund Freud's "Morning and Melancholia" (1917), marks a major shift in the understanding of melancholy. For him, melancholy was not "a result of humoral pathology, astrological influence, or nervous disease" (Sullivan 885). Rather, it "arose from disjunction in self-identity that occurred as an individual progressed through different stages of life" (Sullivan 885). Remarkably, however, even though Freud labels melancholy as a type of "mental disorder" (243), he "seems to allow that melancholia may have a glamorous aspect" (Radden 282). In describing Hamlet as a melancholic, Freud states that "he has a keener eye for the truth than other people who are not melancholic" (246). Arguably, therefore, in reading Shakespeare's melancholic from a psychoanalytic perspective, Freud contributes to the positive tradition of melancholy that his study has scrutinized. This way, the "kind of conversation" on melancholy (Radden 88) perpetuates in more contemporary literature.

# Bibliography

## **Bibliography :**

1. Aesthetics. 1.(2003): 1- 13. 24. Jan. 2018
2. Arcade Publishing, 1999.
3. Aristotle. *The Works of Aristotle*. Ed. E.D. Forster. Vol. 7. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927
4. Babb, Lawrence. "The Background of "Il Penseroso." *Studies in Philology*. 37.2 (1940). 257-73
5. Brady, Emily and Arto Haapala. "Melancholy as an Aesthetic Emotion." *Contemporary*
6. Burton, Robert. *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. Ed. Thomas Faulkner, Nicolas Kiessling, Rhonda Blair. 6 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.
7. Campbell, Oscar James. "Jaques." *The Huntington Library Bulletin*. 8 (1958). 71 – 102
8. Cioran, E.M. *All Gall is Divided: Gnomes and Apothegms*. Trans. Richard Howard. New York:
9. Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *Coleridge's Criticism of Shakespeare: A Selection*. Ed. R.A. Foakes.
10. Cummings, Robert. "Keats's Melancholy in the Temple of Delight." *Keats-Shelley Journal*. 36 (1987). 50 - 62
11. Dolan, Elizabeth. "British Romantic melancholia: Charlotte Smith's Elegiac Sonnets, medical discourse and the problem of sensibility." *Journal of European Studies*. 33 (2003). 437 - 53
12. Dougill, John. *Oxford in English Literature: The Making, and Undoing, of 'the English Athens.'* Michigan UP, 1998.

13. Eliot, T.S. "Hamlet and His Problems." *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism*. New
14. Flesch, William. *The Facts of File Companion to British Poetry, 19th Century*. New York: Facts On File, Inc. 2010.
15. Freud, Sigmund. "Mourning and Melancholia." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Ed. James Strachey. Vol. 14. London: Vintage, 2001. 243 – 58.
16. Gardiner, Judith Kegan. "Elizabethan Psychology and Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*." *Journal of the History of Ideas*. 38.3 (1977). 373 - 88
17. Grace, William. "Notes on Robert Burton and John Milton." *Studies in Philology*. 52 (1955). 578 - 91
18. Griffin, Robert. "The Eighteenth-Century Construction of Romanticism: Thomas Warton and the Pleasures of Melancholy." *English Literary History*. 59.4 (1992). 799-815
19. *History of Natural Philosophy, Religion and Art*. Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1979.
20. Jackson, Stanley. *Melancholia and Depression: From Hippocratic Times to Modern Times*.
21. Jones, Myrddin. "Gray, Jaques, and the Man of Feeling." *The Review of English Studies*. 25.97 (1974). 38 - 48
22. Keats, John. *The Poems of John Keats*. Ed. Miriam Allott. New York: Longman Group Limited, 1970.
23. Klibansky, Raymond, Erwin Panofsky and Fritz Saxl. *Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the*
24. Kristeva, Julia. *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*. Trans. Leon Roudiez. Columbia UP, 1987

25. Lau, Beth. "Keats, Associationism, and "Ode to a Nightingale." *Keats-Shelley Journal*. 32 (1983). 46-62.
26. Lawler, Clark. *From Melancholia to Prozac: A History of Depression*. Oxford UP, 2012.
27. Lewalski, Barbara. *The Life of John Milton: A Critical Biography*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003.
28. Lindemann, Mary. *Medicine and Society in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge UP, 2010.
29. London: Athlone Press Ltd., 1989.
30. Methuen and Co.,Ltd. 235 - 266
31. Miller, David. "From Delusion to Illumination: A Larger Structure for L'Allegro – Il Penseroso." *PMLA*. 86. (1971). 32-9
32. Milton, John. *Complete Shorter Poems*. Ed. John Carey. London: Longman, 1971.
33. Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. Ed. Alastair Fowler. 2nd ed. Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2007.
34. Milton, John. *The shorter poems. The Complete Works of John Milton. Vol. 3*. Ed. Barbara Lewalski and Estelle Haan. Oxford UP, 2012.
35. Mitchell, Robert. "Melancholy." *Encyclopedia of the Romantic Era, 1760 – 1850*. Ed. John Murray. New York: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2004. 722
36. Motion, Andrew. *Keats*. London: Faber and Faber, 1997.
37. Punter, David and Glennis Byron. *The Gothic*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004.
38. Radden, Jennifer. *The Nature of Melancholy: From Aristotle to Kristeva*. New York: Oxford UP, 2000.
39. Schleiner, Winfried. *Melancholy, Genius, and Utopia in the Renaissance*. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1991

40. Shakespeare, William. *As You Like It*. Ed. Juliet Dusinberre. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006. 3rd Series.
41. Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. Ed. Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006. 3rd Series.
42. Smith, Barbara Herrnstein. "Sorrow's Mysteries": "Ode on Melancholy." *Studies in English Literature, 1500 – 1900*. 6.4 (1966). 679 - 91
43. Sullivan, Erin. "Melancholy, medicine, and the arts." *The Lancet*. 372.9642 (2008). 884-5
44. Trevor, Douglas. *The Poetics of Melancholy in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009.
45. Warton, Thomas. "The Pleasures of Melancholy." *The Poetical Works of the Late Thomas Warton*. Oxford UP, 1802. 68 - 96
46. Wilson, Eric G. *Against Happiness: In Praise of Melancholy*. New York: Sarah Crichton Books, 2008.
47. Wordsworth, William. "Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey." *Lyrical Ballads*. Ed. R.L. Brett and A.R. Jones. London: Methuen and Co.,Ltd. 111-6
48. Wordsworth, William. "Preface." *Lyrical Ballads*. Ed. R.L. Brett and A.R. Jones. London:
49. Yale UP, 1986.
50. Yates, Frances A. *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age*. London: Ark Paperbacks, 1983.
51. York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1921. 87 – 94.
52. "melancholy". OED Online. Dec. 2013. Oxford UP. 26 Jan. <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/116007?rskey=i0yqxH&result=1&isAdvanced=false>>.

53. "Sublime." Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age. Ed. Iain McCalman, et al.  
Oxford UP,
54. <<http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.7523862.0001.006>>
55. <<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199245437.001.0001/a>>
56. 2009. Oxford Reference Online. 23 Jan. 2018.

## **Abstract:**

This thesis aims at defining the concept of Melancholy and the phases it witnessed , and the variety of understanding throughout centuries. Moreover , the study sheds light on the positive tradition of Melancholy in English literature. In brief , it shows the concept of Melancholy through the eyes of the most influential poets in old times.

**Key words : Melancholy – variety of understanding – the positive tradition.**

## **ملخص الدراسة:**

يهدف الموضوع هذه المذكرة إلى محاولة تعريف مفهوم الشجن وتحديد المراحل التي يمر بها وفهم تنوعه عبر الأزمنة، من خلال هذه الدراسة حاولنا تسليط الضوء على الجانب الإيجابي للشجن في الأدب الإنجليزي للشجن في الأدب الإنجليزي وإبرازه حسب منظور الشعراء الأكثر تأثيراً في العصور القديمة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية : الشجن- التنوع – الجانب الإيجابي للشجن**

## **Résumé:**

A travers ce mémoire, nous tentons de définir le concept de la Mélancholie, déterminer les phases que celle-ci traverse et comprendre sa diversification à travers le temps. A travers cette étude, nous avons tenté de jeter la lumière sur l'aspect positif de la Mélancholie dans la littérature anglaise, et mettre en exergue le concept de la Mélancholie selon le regard de l'un des poètes les plus influents dans le passé.

**Les mots clés : diversification – la Mélancholie – l'aspect positif**

