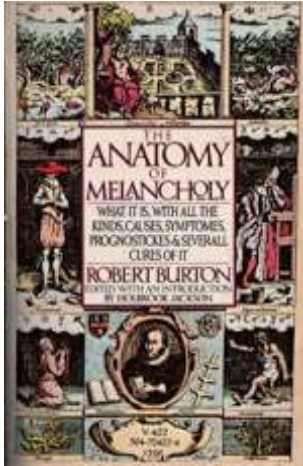


Psychology Visit - The Museum of the Mind



Bethlem Royal Hospital was founded in 1247 and was the first institution in the UK to specialise in the care of the mentally ill. Situated within the hospital grounds, **Bethlem Museum of the Mind** was formally opened by artist Grayson Perry in March 2015. The museum cares for an internationally renowned collection of archives, art and historic objects, which together offer an unparalleled resource to support the history of mental healthcare and treatment.

A –Level Psychology students were fortunate to visit the Museum on a bright spring day in late March. Set in landscaped grounds, the Museum is currently showing a themed exhibition on the Anatomy of Melancholy. Robert Burton, the author of *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, thought that those afflicted with melancholia were “of a deep reach, excellent apprehension, judicious, wise and witty”, and in writing about the condition he believed he was holding up a mirror to society at large.

Today, we might refer to the symptoms of melancholy as indicating depression or bi-polar disorder or even Type 2 schizophrenia. Students at Woodford study the symptoms and causes of major mental disorders in their A level course, including depression and schizophrenia.

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The famous frontispiece of Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* depicts some of the causes – solitude, hypochondriasis, religious mania, disappointment in love – to name a few. These themes were explored through the exhibition, and draw on Bethlem's existing art collections, including famous artists such as Jonathan Martin and Richard Dadd in the nineteenth century; through Charles Sims and Madge Gill in the twentieth; to George Harding and Tracie Hodge in the twenty-first.

Psychologists and psychiatrists recognise a major depression might be triggered by loss and social withdrawal, as well as unreasonable beliefs about physical health. Arguably, this was recognised by Burton over 300 years ago. 21C doctors would now prescribe anti-depressant medication, however, Burton's remedy was herbal, based on the borage plant and the hellebore flower!

Ms Liebeskind, Head of Psychology