

Depression and Melancholy, 1660–1800

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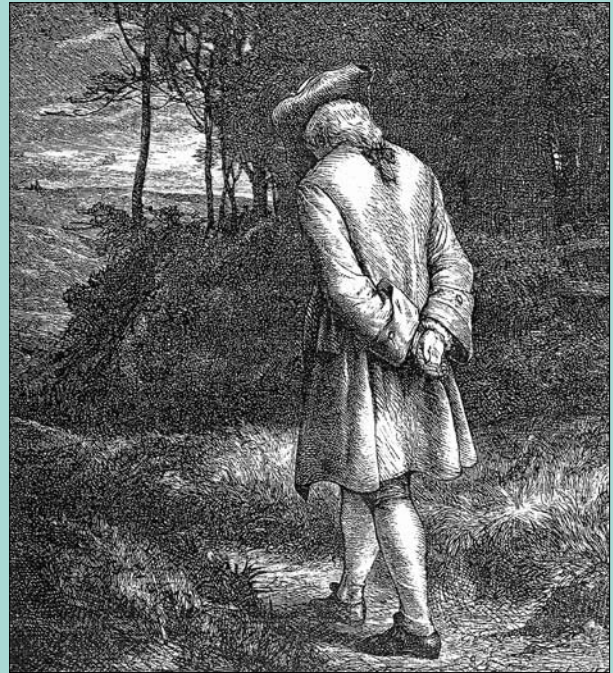
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4 Volume Set: c.1600pp: July 2012

978 1 84893 086 5: 234x156mm: £350/\$625

This four-volume primary resource collection is the first large-scale study of depression. As a psychiatric term ‘depression’ dates back only as far as the mid-nineteenth century. Before then a wide range of terms were used to describe the experience of lowness of spirits. ‘Melancholy’ carried enormous weight, culturally and medically, and was one of the two confirmed forms of eighteenth-century insanity. At the same time the melancholy perspective could be associated culturally with enhanced sensitivity, as in the work of the poet Thomas Gray, with creative genius and intelligence and even with being in the height of fashion, as satirized by Pope in the ‘Cave of Spleen’ episode of *Rape of the Lock*. In the work of the poet William Cowper melancholy assumed an almost wholly religious aspect, with suicide as the only apparent release. Melancholia was also a key concept of the Romantic movement.

Divided chronologically, each volume addresses a particular theme. The first volume examines the relationship between religion and melancholy with particular emphasis on evangelical Protestantism, which abounds with references to the psychological despair experienced by those who believe themselves to have been forsaken by God. Volume two depicts a period of radical change in medical understanding, as attitudes towards the body and its functions became increasingly evidence-based, while volume three explores the ways in which depression was identified, experienced and described from the inside. Finally, the fourth volume brings together a range of publications, including broadsides, songs, poems and essays in order to reconstruct the cultural context of depression at the close of the eighteenth century.



‘Muttering his wayward Fancies, would he rove’ – an illustration for Thomas Gray’s “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” by John Dawson Watson, wood-engraving by the Dalziels

- Includes a substantial amount of material from newly transcribed manuscript sources
- Covers a wide variety of genres demonstrating how depression and melancholy were viewed in society
- The collection comes out of a major research programme at the University of Northumbria
- Full editorial apparatus: general introduction, volume introductions, headnotes and endnotes
- Consolidated index

Contents:

Volume 1: Religious Writings

(David Walker and Anita O'Connell)

Henry More, *Divine Dialogues, Containing sundry Disquisitions & Instructions Concerning the Attributes and Providence of GOD* (1668); Edward Fowler, *The Principles and Practices, of certain Moderate Divines of the Church of England, (greatly mis-understood) Truly Represented and Defended* (1670); Richard Baxter, *Gods Goodness, Vindicated For the help of such (especially in Melancholy) as are Tempted to deny it, and think him Cruel, because of the Present and Future Misery of Mankind; With respect to the Doctrine of Reprobation and Damnation* (1671); Joseph Glanvill, 'Anti-fanatical Religion, and Free Philosophy. In a Continuation of the New Atlantis', from *Essays on Several Important Subjects in Philosophy and Religion* (1676); Richard Baxter, 'The Cure of Melancholy and Overmuch Sorrow by Faith and Physick. Quest. What are the best Preservatives against Melancholy and Overmuch Sorrow?' from *A Continuation of Morning-Exercise Questions and Cases of Conscience, Practically Resolved by Sundry Ministers* (1683); Frances Norton, *Memento Mori: or, Meditations on Death* (1705); Richard Davies, *An Account of the Convincement, Exercises, Services and Travels of that Ancient Servant of the Lord, Richard Davies* (1710); John Stevenson, *A Rare Soul Strengthening and Comforting Cordial, for Old and Young Christians* (1729); William Crawford, *Zion's Traveller: or the Soul's Progress to Heaven. In the several Steps whereby it ascends from Deep Distress and Misery, to the Heights of Triumph and Glory* (1729); Jakob Böhme, *The Four Complexions: Or, A Treatise Of Consolatory Instruction, Against The Time of Temptation for a Sad and Assaulted Heart* (1621) [English trans. c.1730]; Samuel Clarke, 'Of Religious Melancholy', from *Sermons on the Following Subjects* (1731); Anne Dutton, *A Brief Account of the Gracious Dealings of God, with a Poor, Sinful, Unworthy Creature* (1750); John Wesley, 'The Wilderness State. A Sermon on John xvi. 22' and 'Heaviness thro' manifold Temptations. A Sermon on I Peter i. 6', from *Sermons on Several Occasions* (1760); John Langhorne, *Letters On Religious Retirement, Melancholy And Enthusiasm* (1762); Elisabeth West, *Memoirs, or Spiritual Exercises of Elisabeth West* (1766); Benjamin Fawcett, *Observations on the Nature, Causes and Cure of Melancholy; Especially of that which is commonly called Religious Melancholy* (1780); John Howie, *Memoirs Of The Life Of John Howie* (1796)

Volume 2: Medical Writings

(Michelle Faubert and Allan Ingram)

Gideon Harvey, *Morbus Anglicus: Or, The Anatomy Of Consumptions* (1666); Thomas Willis, *Dr. Willis's receipts for the cure of all distempers: together with an appendix, containing the general forms of prescription for vomits, purges, Diureticks, Sudorificks, Cordials, and Opiats* (1701); David Irish, *Levamen infirmi: or, cordial counsel to the sick and diseased* (1700); 'Sir John Midriff', *Observations on the spleen and vapours: containing remarkable cases of persons of both sexes, and all ranks, from the aspiring Director to the humble Bubbler, who have been miserably afflicted with those melancholy disorders since the fall of South-Sea, and other publick stocks* [1721]*; 'A Physician', *A treatise of diseases of the head, brain, and nerves* [1721]; William Stukeley, *Of the spleen, its description and history, uses and diseases, particularly the vapors, with their remedy* (1723); Sir Richard Blackmore, *A treatise of the spleen and vapours: or, hypocondriacal and hysterical affections* (1725); John Woodward, *Select cases, and Consultations, in Physick* (1757); Richard Browne, *Apothecary in Oakham, Medicina musica: or, a mechanical essay on the effects of singing, musick, and dancing, on human bodies* (1729); Edward Syngé, *Sober thoughts for the cure of melancholy, especially that which is religious* (1749)*; [Anon], *A Treatise on the Dismal Effects of Low-spiritedness* [c.1750]; Robert Whytt, *Observations on the nature, causes, and cure of those disorders which have been commonly called nervous hypochondriac, or hysteric* (1765); William Smith, M D, *A Dissertation upon the Nerves; Containing an Account, I. Of the Nature of Man. 2. Of The Nature of Brutes. 3. Of The Nature and Connection of Soul and Body. 4. Of The Threefold Life of Man. 5. Of the Symptoms, Causes and Cure of All Nervous Diseases* (1768); 'William Wishwell', *A cure for melancholy: or, A remedy against it* (1777)*; Benjamin Fawcett, *Observations on the nature, causes and cure of melancholy; especially of that which is commonly called religious melancholy* (1780)*; John Leake, *Medical instructions towards the prevention and cure of chronic diseases peculiar to women* (1781); Friedrich Hoffmann, *A system of the practice of medicine; from the Latin of Dr. Hoffman* (1783); John Wesley, 'Thoughts on Nervous Disorders; Particularly that which is usually termed Lowness of Spirits', from *The works of the Rev. John Wesley* (1784); William Perfect, *Cases of insanity, the epilepsy, hypochondriacal affection, hysterical passion, and nervous disorders, successfully treated* [c.1785]; William Rowley, *A treatise on female, nervous, hysterical, hypochondriacal, bilious, convulsive diseases; apoplexy and palsy; with thoughts on madness, suicide, &c* (1788)

Volume 3: Autobiographical Writings

(Leigh Wetherall Dickson)

Anthony Wood, *The Life of Anthony à Wood from the Year 1632 to 1672, written by himself, and published by Mr Thomas Hearne* (1772); Alice Thornton, *A Book of Remembrances of all the remarkable deliverances of myself, husband and children with their births, and other remarks as concerning myself and family, beginning from the year 1626* [ms, 1626]*; Edmund Berry Godfrey, *Letters to Valentine Greatracks 1666–71* [ms]*; Elizabeth Freke, *Some few remembrances of my misfortuns have attended me in my unhappy life since I were marryed* [ms, 1671]*; [Anon], *An abstract of the remarkable passages in the life of a private gentleman. In three parts. Relating to trouble of mind* (1715); George Drummond, *George Drummond's diary* [ms, 1736–37]*; Thomas Blacklock, 'An Hymn to Fortitude' and 'A Soliloquy', from *Poems on several Occasions* (1754); Thomas Blacklock, *Letters to James Beattie* [ms, 1774–75]*; Andrew Erskine, 'Ode to Indolence', from *Two Odes to Indolence and to Impudence* (1762); Andrew Erskine, *Letters between the Honourable Andrew Erskine and James Boswell Esq* (1763); Syllas Neville, *The Diary of Syllas Neville* [ms, 1767–88]*; Charlotte Forman, *Letters to John Wilkes* [ms, 1768–69]*; Georgiana Cavendish, 5th Duchess of Devonshire, *Letters to Mary Graham* [ms, 1778]*; John Logan, *Letters to Alexander Carlyle* [ms, 1781]*; James Boswell, *Letter to Edmund Burke* [ms, 1782]*; Robert Burns, *Robert Burns' Commonplace Book 1783–1785, Reproduced in Facsimile from the poet's manuscript in the possession of Sir Alfred Joseph Law* (1938)*; John Gambold, 'On Lowness of Spirits' and 'A Piece Written at a Time when Under the apprehension of Losing His Senses', from *The Works of the late Rev. John Gambold* (1789); Joseph Wright of Derby, *Letters to John Leigh Phillips* [ms, 1789–96]*; Hannah Robertson, *The Life of Mrs Robertson (A Tale of Truth as Well as of Sorrow) who, though a grand-daughter of Charles II, has been reduced by a Variety of Very Uncommon Events* (1791)

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(Allan Ingram and Leigh Wetherall Dickson)

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