Introduction

Madness and Melancholy in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Spain: New Evidence, New Approaches*

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This collection of articles proposes new ways of looking at the fascinating question of what it meant to be mad or melancholic in sixteenth- and seventeen-century Spain. It looks at madness and melancholy in a variety of contexts, from the medical, moral and allegorical writings which offer a glimpse of prevailing interpretative standpoints, to actual practices of dealing with the mad in inquisitorial tribunals, hospitals and private medical care. It combines the expertise of historians, historians of medicine and hispanists, working in Spanish, French and British academia, in examining a range of printed and manuscript sources, such as inquisitorial records, surgical handbooks, and hospital admission registers and inventories. In offering five different perspectives, it seeks to transcend disciplinary boundaries between cultural and social history, medical history, and history of ideas and mentalités.

While the existing studies on madness and on melancholy tend to look at these issues separately, this volume will show how in early modern Spain they were thought to be interrelated, and how mind and body were seen to interact in response to physiological, dietary, environmental and social factors. In contrast with the existing emphasis on the more positive aspects of melancholy, the articles here will also stress how it was often related to states of helplessness.

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The Meanings of ‘Melancholy’

The Renaissance has been seen by cultural historians and literary scholars as the ‘Golden Age of melancholy’. Renaissance ‘melancholy’ encompassed a wide range of apparently conflicting meanings, from genius to madness, all related to the effect of black bile on body and mind. Far from being an exclusively medical subject (as mental illness might be today), melancholy was a complex notion, which crossed over the fields of philosophy, medicine, religion, literature, music and the visual arts, as well as popular belief.

The existing scholarly work has tended to focus on the visual and literary representation of melancholy as a temperament associated with genius, pensiveness and sadness, and as a fashionable malady among intellectual and political elites in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Europe. None the less, the term ‘melancholia’ was also used in medical and non-medical Spanish texts to refer to excessive or rotten black bile, which could affect both the body and the mind. This is stressed, for instance, in Fray Luis’ account of Job’s suffering:

porque su enfermedad, por ser de apostemas y llagas, era, a lo que se entiende, de humor melancólico. Y así, por una parte, las apostemas doliendo, y por otra, la melancolía negra y corrompida asiendo del corazón y espantándole, hazen guerra al varón santo.

As we begin to see, in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain, melancholia was associated not only with states of heightened conscience, but also with excess, scorching or putrefaction of bodily fluids, darkness, corruption of mental faculties and helplessness.

In seeking to understand the rich and complex meanings attributed to ‘melancholia’ in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century medical and philosophical texts, it is important to take into account the fact that these texts drew on (and often sought to reconcile) Platonic, Aristotelian and Galenic traditions. Since Antiquity and until the seventeenth century, the term ‘melancholia’ was primarily used to refer to one of the four humours, black bile (or black

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1 The phrase was coined by Jean Starobinski in his seminal study, ‘Histoire du traitement de la mélancolie, des origines à 1900’, Acta Psychosomatica, 3 (Basel: Geigy, 1960). See the Spanish translation, Historia del tratamiento de la melancolía desde los orígenes hasta 1900 (Basel: Geigy, 1962), 40.

2 This focus can be seen as the legacy of the most influential studies on this topic to date: Lawrence Babb, The Elizabethan Malady: A Study of Melancholia in English Literature from 1580 to 1642 (East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1951); Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky and Fritz Saxl, Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion, and Art (New York: Basic Books, 1964). Among recent works which maintain this emphasis, see Winfried Schleiner, Melancholy, Genius and Utopia in the Renaissance (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1991).

3 Fray Luis de León, Exposición del libro de Job, ed. J. San José Lera, 2 vols (Salamanca: Univ. de Salamanca, 1992), I, 265.
choler, as distinct from yellow bile, blood and phlegm), or to various pathological conditions related to (and often identified as) madness. Medieval and early sixteenth-century texts in Spanish drew on Arabic Galenism in using the term ‘malenconía’ to refer to the noxious overabundant black bile produced by certain foods, and the mental and physical disorders produced by it. From the second half of the sixteenth-century Latin and vernacular medical texts published in Spain drew on new Latin translations of Galen and other classical authors to focus on ‘melancholia’ as a subspecies of madness directly associated with an excess of black bile.

The use of the term ‘melancholic’ to describe a character type, or temperament, associated with genius and extraordinary achievement had been reinforced by Ficino’s and Melanchthon’s revival in the late fifteenth century of the Pseudo-Aristotelian Problem XXX.1. If this text had sought to reconcile Hippocratic ideas about the effect of bile with the Platonic notion of ‘furor’ as a state of higher understanding, its renewed popularity in Spain had led, by the mid-sixteenth century, to a widespread belief that melancholic people had exceptional prophetic or intellectual abilities (such as speaking Latin without having studied it). This belief became the subject of heated debate among medical and moral writers between 1550 and 1680. During this period there was also an increasing concern with ‘melancholic’ forms of madness as treatable diseases.

While engaging in intense debate about the Pseudo-Aristotelian, Neoplatonic and popular connections between the melancholic temperament and prophetic abilities or extraordinary intellectual achievements, medical and moral authors in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain used the term ‘melancholia’ mainly to refer to groundless fear or extreme sadness, as well as to diseases of body, mind and spirit which could be cured, or simply managed, through eclectic methods: diet, pharmacological and surgical remedies, but also regimental and moral treatments such as travel, music and conversation with friends. Explaining that the presence of excessive, rotten or burnt black bile in the body could manifest as sorrowfulness, fear.

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4 This is also the notion which prevails in non-medical texts, and which we can see, for instance, in St Teresa’s remark in 1576 that Padre Fray Antonio ‘tenía gran melancolía, que con nuestras comidas viniera a mucho mal. Dios sea con él, que cierto más me parece falto de salud que de buen alma lo que tiene’. See letter to Juan de Jesús Roca, end of September 1576, in Obras completas (Madrid: BAC, 1986), 1009. The medical texts will be discussed in Orobitg’s and Carrera’s articles here.

5 See, for instance, Ficino, Liber de vita (Florence: A. Mischominus, 1489), I, 5. The impact of Ficino, Melanchthon, and the Problem XXX.1 on redefining the Renaissance notion of melancholy was thoroughly studied in Klibansky, Saturn and Melancholy.

6 On the link between melancholy and genius in sixteenth-century texts, see Vicente Peset, ‘Las maravillosas facultades de los melancólicos (un tema de la psiquiatría renacentista)’, Archivos de Neurobiología, 28:4 (1970), 980–1002. See also Orobitg’s article in this collection.
and sluggishness, or as more manic states of exhilaration, aggressiveness or hilariousness, medical authors also warned that if melancholia was not treated, it might lead to irreversible madness.

In the sixth dialogue of Pedro Mercado’s *Dialogos de philosophia natural y moral* (1558), melancholia is presented as a form of madness: ‘La misma melancolia que es sino locura? Y los melancolicos de locos, en sola la pronunciacion se diferencian’. The symptoms (‘accidentes’) of melancholia ranged from unfounded anxiety to suicidal tendencies:

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dada a entender por sus accidentes, vnos la llaman solicitud sin causa. Otros corrupcion de la imaginacion. El vulgo la llama desmedro y descontento. Yo la digo mal de rauia [...] Y con esto tan alegrementemente se matan [...] se an salido a ahogar a rios comarcanos. Otros temiendo ser sentidos, se an ahorcado en los montes y huertas. Otros con celeridad (para mayor breuedad) se metieron por puñales y espadas.
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*(Dialogos, fols 115v–116v)*

Non-technical uses of the term ‘melancholic’ included a whole range of conditions, from unexplained fear and sadness to extreme irrationality, often linked to physical symptoms. But physicians used the term ‘melancolia’ to explain signs and symptoms of incipient madness, or ‘locura no confirmada’, which could be cured.

In the *Libro de la melancholia* (1585), believed to be the earliest extant treatise on melancholy written in a European vernacular language, the humanist Spanish physician Andrés Velásquez explained that the term ‘melancholia’ had four distinct meanings: one of the four bodily humours (black bile, colder than yellow bile, and drier than blood and phlegm), the noxious burnt or rotten bile also known as ‘cholera adusta’ or *atra bilis*, melancholic disease (*melancholia morbus*, a subspecies of madness), and one of the four temperaments. He noted that Greek medical treatises referred to two main types of madness: ‘melancholia’ and ‘mania’ (with ‘insania’ and ‘furor’ being the Latin equivalents of ‘mania’), usually distinguished by the intensity of their symptoms. Glossing Alexander of Tralles’ notion that ‘nihil enim aliud est insania, quam melancholiae ad maiorem feritatem intensio’, he concluded: ‘así que los accidentes son unos, sólo difieren que en la mania son de mucha más

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7 Pedro de Mercado, *Dialogos de philosophia natural y moral* (Granada: Hugo de Mena, 1574), fol. 116v.

8 *Libro de la melancholia* (Sevilla: Hernando Díaz, 1585), in *El siglo de oro de la melancolia: textos españoles sobre las enfermedades del alma*, ed. Roger Bartra (México, D.F.: Universidad Iberoamericana, 1998), 255–372 (pp. 322–29). I will cite from this edition hereafter.

9 See Velásquez, *Libro*, 335.
intensión. De donde los maníacos son muy furiosos, terribles y peligrosos’. It was simply a question of degree: melancholy could lead to mania or insanity.

It is therefore surprising that the early modern causal links between melancholic conditions and madness have not yet been sufficiently studied. One reason for this may be that the existing studies on melancholy often draw on well-known seventeenth-century authors like Richard Burton, who tended to reserve the term ‘melancholy’ for the chronic sorrow and fear, produced as the effect of the darkness of natural melancholic humour on the brain, and ‘mania’ for the conditions associated with severe excitement and wild behaviour. But even Burton saw all forms of madness as a continuum: ‘folly, melancholy, madness, are but one disease, delirium is a common name to all’.

It also needs to be acknowledged that by the seventeenth-century the most widespread use of the term ‘melancolía’ in Spain indicated abnormally prolonged sadness, associated with an innate predisposition or temperament (or character, in modern terms), and seen as a weakness rather than as a pathology. There is ample textual evidence of the popular use of the concept of melancholy to account for extreme or prolonged sadness as an innate character feature, as in the claim: ‘porque se puede dezir lo que de los ojos de la melancólica, que llorando nacieron y ansí han de acabar’. The 1673 edition of Covarrubias’ Tesoro de la lengua notes the popular usage, ‘dezimos estar uno melancolico, quando esta triste, y pensatiuo de alguna cosa que le da pesadumbre. Melancolizarse, entristerceerse’, explaining that this usage is erroneous strictly speaking (‘no cualquiera tristeza se puede llamar melancolia en este rigor’), since ‘melancolia’ is a disease produced by melancholic humour, which causes sadness, unhappiness and mental alienation: ‘enfermedad conocida, y passion muy ordinaria, donde ay poco contento y gusto [...]. melancholia est mentis alienatio ex atrabile’. While the popular approach focused on the manifestations of ‘melancholia’, medical texts tried to explain both its symptoms and its causes.

Despite the efforts of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century physicians to find coherent explanations for madness by drawing on Galenic notions such as

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10 Alexander of Tralles, Therapeutica, lib. 1, cap. 17; quoted in Velásquez, Libro, 336. Velásquez also cites the chapter on ‘De mania’ in Jason Pratensis, De cerebris morbis.

11 Richard Burton, The Anatomy of Melancholy, ed. Holbrook Jackson (New York: New York Review Books, 2001), 39.

12 Juan Cortés de Tolosa, ‘Novela de un hombre muy miserable llamado Gonzalo’, in Lazarillo de Manzanares, con otras cinco novelas (Madrid: Viuda de Alonso Martín, 1620). I cite from the modern edition, El Lazarillo de Manzanares con otras cinco novelas, ed. Giuseppe E. Sansone, 2 vols (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1974), II, 197–235 (p. 197).

13 I cite from the 1673–74 edition of the Tesoro, which includes Benito Remigio Noydens’ additions, printed together with Bernardo Aldrete’s Del origen y principio de la lengua castellana, o Romance que oy se usa en España: Sebastián de Covarrubias Orozco, Parte primera del Tesoro de la lengua castellana, o española (Madrid: Melchor Sánchez, 1674), 49”. I hereafter refer to this Parte primera as Tesoro, I.
as black bile or melancholic humour, the mad continued to be feared or laughed at. While some lunatics posed a public threat by attacking other people, other madmen and women attempted to commit suicide. Some behaved like animals; others were simply treated as such. Some were locked up in their own home, in a prison, or hospital. Some died, others resumed their work. The meaning of madness changed from one context to another, being shaped by the ideologies and aims of those who encountered it in the streets, in hospitals, in prison, in allegorical writings, or in themselves. But in early modern Spain, there was one context in which it became increasingly defined as a condition of helplessness which required intervention: hospitals.

In this sense, Spain stands apart from other European countries, and provides a unique example of early institutional care for the mad in the various hospitals established from the early fifteenth century onwards: in Valencia (1409), Córdoba (1419), Zaragoza (1425), Seville (c. 1436), Toledo (1483), Valladolid (1489), Granada (1527). Even though there is some earlier evidence of the use of barred windows, shackles and chains to restrain dangerous lunatics in medieval Iberian hospitals which lodged pilgrims, the poor, the sick and the outcast, the extant evidence of hospital rules suggests that as early as the fifteenth-century there was a clear concern with providing care for the poor mad: ‘a las dichas personas pobres locos les dé de comer y de beber y sean ministrados de todas las medicinas que hubiesen menester, estando en el dicho Hospital hasta ser curados y convalecidos, y que se vayan’.14 Such evidence also suggests that the mad were perceived to be ‘curable’, although it does not in itself allow us to know what was understood by ‘cured’. We can do this perhaps by looking at the history of ideas about melancholy, and at how it may throw light on early modern perceptions of mental disturbance and the relation between mind and body.

Conversely, when we look at texts on melancholy, we find references which cannot be understood without knowledge of the historical context of hospital care for the mad. For instance, there is an intriguing reference in Mercado’s Dialogos to melancholics doing small jobs or acting as servants in the hospitals in which the raving mad were restrained: ‘estos ya salen de melancolia y entran en furia y mania, y son lo que el vulgo llama locos y a los que aprisionan y atan en las casas de orates, y no a los melancolicos por ser pacíficos; antes se siruen de ellos mas aprovechadamente que de otros siruientes’ (Dialogos, 119r–v). To understand why melancholics might have been given jobs to do in hospitals, it is important to consider the wider

14 Ordenanzas, 21 June 1473; Archivo de Protocolos, Córdoba, Escrituras públicas, copied in 1753, fols 525–41; the will is reproduced in Gerardo García González, Historia de la asistencia psiquiátrica en Córdoba (Córdoba: Imprenta Provincial, 1983), 192–93 (p. 192). See also G. Saldaná Sicilia, Monografía Histórico-Médica de los Hospitales de Córdoba (Córdoba: s.n., 1935); Luis García Ballester and José García González, ‘Nota sobre la asistencia a los locos y “desfallecidos de seso” en la Córdoba medieval: El Hospital de Jesucristo’, Asclepio, 30–31 (1979), 199–207.
context of hospital finances and of prevailing ideas about curing methods for various forms of madness. As we see in Bartholomeus Anglicus’ very popular medieval encyclopedia *De propietatibus rerum*, work was considered an adequate remedy for madness (‘amencia’ or ‘mania’), alongside physical restraint, music, purgatives, lectuaries and blodletting:

la medicina es que los tales sean atados por quitar toda duda que no lloguen assí e alos otros e les hazer tan diversas yinstrumentos de musica por los alegrar e por les quitar el miedo o tristecía e hazer les trabajar templadamente, e finablemente si los letuarios e purgaciones no les sanan los suelen algunos guarir por cirurgia.\(^\text{15}\)

None the less, the idea that ‘melancholics’ were to be found in hospitals for the mad, doing useful jobs, appears to contradict the notion of melancholy as a state of mind associated with genius, with inspiration, and with sadness which has dominated scholarly treatment of this topic in recent decades.

**Existing Scholarship on Madness and Melancholy in Early Modern Spain**

The seminal study by Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxl on the Aristotelian and Neoplatonic notions of melancholy in European Renaissance culture has inspired excellent scholarship on melancholy in Renaissance and Golden-Age Spain in the last three decades, from the pioneering work of Soufas on melancholy in Spanish Golden-Age prose and drama, and Orobitg on Garcilaso and melancholy, to Ferri Coll’s recent analysis of melancholy in Golden-Age poetry, and Rodriguez de la Flor’s subtle and thorough examination of melancholy as a spiritual malaise which pervaded Spanish Baroque written and visual culture.\(^\text{16}\) Our understanding of the cultural history of medical ideas on melancholy has been enriched by a number of crucial studies, from Escudero’s brief comparison of Santa Cruz’s *Dignotio* and Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy* in 1950 to the brilliant analyses.

\(^{15}\) Bartholomeus Anglicus, *De propietatibus rerum*, trans. Vicente de Burgos (Toulouse: Henri Meyer, 1494), lib. 7, cap. 5 (this edition has no folio numbers). Written c.1250, this encyclopedia circulated in Spain through manuscript and early printed copies in Latin and had at least two early Spanish editions (Toulouse 1494; Toledo 1529). When citing from old editions or the original manuscripts, I do not modernize the accents or the punctuation, but resolve abbreviations and replace ‘&’ with ‘e’. All the other contributors to this collection of articles modernize the accents.

\(^{16}\) Teresa Scott Soufas, *Melancholy and the Secular Mind in Spanish Golden Age Literature* (Columbia/London: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1990); José María Ferri Coll, *Los tumultos del alma: de la expresión melancólica en la poesía española del Siglo de Oro* (Valencia: Institució Alfons el Magnànim, 2006); Fernando R. de la Flor, *Era melancólica. Figuras del imaginario barroco* (Palma de Mallorca: José J. de Olañeta/Edicions Univ. de les Illes Balears, 2007).
published in the last twelve years by Orobitg, Bartra and Gambin. While acknowledging the fruitfulness of the existing critical focus on melancholy as a state of mind linked with *desenganó* (in the senses of disillusionment and ‘clarity after deception’) or discontent, and Bartra’s fascinating insights into how sixteenth- and seventeenth-century medical writings on melancholy were rooted in a culture of frontiers, confrontation and acculturation, this collection of articles seeks to pay closer attention to more mundane sixteenth- and seventeenth-century perceptions of melancholy as excessive or rotten black bile, which affected both the body and the mind.

The early modern Spanish views about the relation between mental disturbance and the body are also largely unexplored in the existing scholarship on madness, with the exception of Green’s and Heiple’s studies of sleep patterns and diet in *Don Quijote*. Working within the constraints of disciplinary boundaries, hispanists have generally focused on the cultural aspects of madness and its function in literary texts. But the social and cultural history of madness in early modern Spain is yet to be studied in a systematic way.

Among the very few existing historical studies of madness, Moreno Villa’s *Locos, enanos, negros y niños palaciegos* (1939) and Bouza’s *Locos, enanos y...*
hombres de placer en la corte de los Austrias (1991) provide fascinating passing references to some people at the Habsburgs’ royal court who were deemed to be mad, but make no attempt to discuss what constituted ‘madness’ at the time, or to suggest ways to interpret the ‘folly’ of professional fools.  

A brief account of medical thinking is offered in one of the chapters in González Duro’s largely anecdotal history of madness, Historia de la locura en España (1994). Duro’s popularizing approach contrasts with the careful analysis of historical documents offered by the two most significant monographs on madness in early modern Spain to date, López Alonso’s Locura y sociedad en Sevilla (1988) and Tropé’s Locura y sociedad en la Valencia de los siglos XV al XVII (1994), which focus on the social and cultural history of the hospitals for the inocentes in Seville and Valencia.

The important documents unearthed by López Alonso and Tropé were placed in the wider context of the medieval and early modern history of psychiatric hospitals in a recent brief study by Arrizabalaga.

**New Evidence, New Approaches**

In this special issue, Arrizabalaga collaborates with Huguet to offer a thorough analysis of the previously unstudied registers of mad people from the Barcelona hospital of Santa Creu, which provide invaluable evidence about crucial aspects of hospital care for the mad in seventeenth-century Spain: the social origin of the mad patients, their state when they were admitted to hospital (e.g., speechless, furious, disabled or sick), the material conditions in which they were kept (with wards separating men from women, and evidence of work tools and instruments of punishment and restraint), and whether they died in hospital, or were cured and discharged.

Also in this issue, Tropé presents a wealth of previously unstudied inquisitorial documents which shed important light on views of madness by inquisitors and inquisitorial physicians in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain. While examining the symptoms and signs of madness recorded by inquisitors, the connections made by physicians between the

20 José Moreno Villa, Locos, enanos, negros y niños palaciegos. Gente de placer que tuvieron los Austrias en la corte española desde 1563 a 1700: estudio y catálogo (México D.F.: La Casa de España en México, 1939); Fernando Bouza, Locos, enanos y hombres de placer en la corte de los Austrias (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 1991); Enrique González Duro, Historia de la locura en España, 3 vols (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 1994–96) I: Siglos XII al XVII.

21 Carmen López Alonso, Locura y sociedad en Sevilla: historia del Hospital de los Inocentes (1436–1840) (Sevilla: Diputación Provincial, 1988), 46–47; Hélène Tropé, Locura y sociedad en la Valencia de los siglos XV al XVII. Los locos del Hospital de los Inocentes (1409–1512) y del Hospital General (1512–1699) (Valencia: Diputación de Valencia, Centre d’Estudis d’Història Local, 1994).

22 Jon Arrizabalaga, ‘Locura y asistencia hospitalaria en los reinos hispánicos (1400–1700)’, in Historia de la psiquiatría en Europa, ed. Filiberto Fuentenebro, Rafael Huertas and Carmen Valiente (Madrid: Frenia, 2003), 583–606.
passions, melancholic madness and illness, and the dietary remedies they prescribed, Tropé also discusses the inquisitors’ prejudices about madness, sin and heresy, and their doubts about the actual state of mind of the accused.

The illuminating historical evidence offered by Tropé and by Huguet and Arrizabalaga is complemented by the other three articles in this collection, which aim to provide a wider cultural context for understanding how madness was viewed and treated in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain.

In the first of these, Orobitg focuses on the discussion by Spanish physicians during the second half of the sixteenth century and most of the seventeenth century of Aristotelian and Neoplatonic notions of melancholy as a temperament associated with mental perturbation and with prophetic abilities or extraordinary intellectual achievements. In showing how the dominant medical thinking fluctuated between natural and supernatural explanations, Orobitg traces the analogical thinking and the complex images (related to heat and cold, dryness, darkness, sharpness, air and spirit) which underpinned not only the standard humoural theories of the mind (and their distinctions between ingenio and necedad), but also the demonological interpretations of melancholy with which they co-existed.

Taussiet's article offers an overview of moral meanings attributed in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish writings to the concept of locura. She traces an evolution from the ambivalent and ironic attitudes towards locura (understood as folly, opposed to wisdom) of some pre-Tridentine moral allegorists, akin to Erasmus, to the seventeenth-century moralising and disillusioned commentaries on the foolishness of the world (necedad, opposed to judiciousness and virtue).

The last article, by Carrera, looks at the medical understanding of melancholic madness and its cures, and seeks to draw together some of the themes from the previous contributions. In revisiting some of the medical images related to black bile brilliantly analysed by Orobitg, it examines their less mythical and more mundane physiological meanings. It also returns to questions raised by Tropé’s discussion of inquisitorial medical reports about ‘hypochondriacal melancholia’, ‘uterine fury’ and dietary advice. Following up on Huguet and Arrizabalaga’s claim that the insane had been treated medically in hospitals in Aragon and Castile since the early fifteenth century, it outlines the main Galenic methods for curing madness recommended in the medical texts written or reprinted in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain.

Huguet, Arrizabalaga and Tropé offer new evidence about the particular circumstances in which specific individuals would have been labelled ‘sane’ or ‘insane’ (whether in a hospital or in an inquisitorial prison), and the consequences such diagnoses or verdicts would have had for those individuals. But the proliferation of terms historically used to refer to foolish
and mad people can only reinforce the idea that madness has always been an elusive concept, pointing to a wide range of disparate contextual meanings.

Tausiet’s article makes apparent the ambiguity of the Spanish term *locura* and the slippery notions it evokes: folly, foolishness, idiocy and madness. It can sometimes be difficult to distinguish Erasmus’ and other moral writers’ ironic praise of the fool’s simplicity and truthfulness (opposed to duplicity and hypocrisy) from their condemnation of foolishness as a failure to avoid earthly corruption. None the less, clear distinctions can be drawn between the earthly folly (‘locura’) associated with joy and dance in Yanguas’ *Triumphos de locura* (1521), the moral standpoint taken by Gracián in warning against human foolishness (‘necedad’) in *El Criticón* (1651–57), and the madness which leads Sayavedra to commit suicide in *Guzmán de Alfarache* (1598).

Madness has always had a wide range of contextual meanings and been subject to conflicting interpretations. But the textual and historical evidence on madness presented in this collection of articles will seem less ambiguous if we begin by considering the main meanings of ‘locura’, mapping the terms most commonly used to refer to the various types of ‘locos’ in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain.

**Terms Related to Madness and Other Forms of ‘locura’**

‘Loco’ was the most popular term to refer to the insane, but it was also used to denote lack of intelligence or common sense (foolish people, simpletons and idiots) as well as to name professional jesters or buffoons with all their laughter-inducing tricks, their uninhibited behaviour, eccentric loquaciousness and ‘prophetic’ truth-telling.23 The lack of precision of the terms related to unreason can be illustrated in the entry for ‘bufo’ in Covarrubias’ *Tesoro*: ‘significa el truhan, el chocarrero, el morrón, o bobo. […] y assi los locos son vacios de juyzio y sesso’.24 Whether their ‘locura’ was congenital, accidental or feigned, all ‘locos’ were believed to share a certain senselessness, an inability to judge what was appropriate.

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23 The modern term ‘idiot’ does not have a clear correspondence in early modern Spain. While ‘ydiota’ simply referred to an unlearned and ignorant, simple person, the concept of ‘idiocy’ did not exist as such and its symptoms were included in the terms ‘loco’, ‘fatuo’ and ‘demencia’. I none the less use the English terms ‘idiot’ and ‘idiocy’ simply because they are the terms preferred by historians of madness like Michael Macdonald (see *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety, and Healing in Seventeenth-Century England* [Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1981]). For a discussion on the anachronism of the concept of mental disability applied to the early modern period, see C. F. Goodey, ‘“Foolishness” in Early Modern Medicine and the Concept of Intellectual Disability’, *Medical History*, 48 (2004), 289–310.

24 Sebastián de Covarrubias, *Parte Segunda del Tesoro de la lengua castellana, o española* (Madrid: Melchor Sánchez, 1673), 109’. I hereafter refer to this *Parte Segunda* as *Tesoro*, II.
Insanity and foolishness (or inappropriate judgment and behaviour) were thus the two main general meanings of ‘loco’, which were also conveyed by terms such as ‘insensato’ (senseless), ‘falto de seso’, ‘falto de juzyio’ or ‘menguado de juzyio’ (Tesoro, II, 174). The term ‘loco’, however, was also employed in a loose sense, to describe excessive behaviours: ‘el hombre que está en su juzyio, si es muy hablador, dezimos comunemente ser un loco’ (II, 94).

The concept of ‘locura’ encompassed the following meanings: 1) a loss of reason, mental alienation or dementia, which could be permanent, transient, or intermittent; 2) stupidity in the sense of diminished intelligence; 3) ignorance arising from a lack of education or experience; 4) inappropriate attitudes and habits, including the foolishness associated with youth; 5) laughable behaviours or fooleries; 6) incoherent, absurd, inappropriate or erroneous utterances (‘dezir locuras’), including blasphemy; 7) delusion or self-deception; 8) distorted perception and impaired judgment. While not intended to be comprehensive, the following table (based on my own analysis of definitions from the 1673 Tesoro and of primary sources such as legal documents and literary, moral, religious and medical texts) will give an indication of the different fields of meaning of ‘locura’ and the main related terms for each field in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain:

| loss of reason          | diminished intelligence          |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| delirante              | bobo                            |
| demente                | boto (o voto) de ingenio        |
| destemplado            | corto                           |
| falto de juzyio        | desfallecido                    |
| falto de seso          | estólido                        |
| frenético              | estulto                         |
| furioso                | fatuo                           |
| inocente               | inocente                        |
| insensato              | insensato                       |
| loco atrenguado        | majadero                        |
| lunático               | menguido                        |
| melancólico            | mentecato                       |
| orate                  | modorro                         |
| sin seso               | necio                           |
| turbado                | poco agudo                      |
|                        | rudo de entendimiento           |
|                        | simple                          |
|                        | simplón                         |
|                        | stubido                         |
|                        | tardo                           |
|                        | tonto                           |
Despite the general lack of precision in the use of the term ‘loco’, a distinction was usually made between ‘locos’, who were agitated and displayed fury, and ‘tontos’, who lacked the ability to reason. Covarrubias thus defined ‘tonto’ as ‘el simple, y sin entendimiento, ni razon, pero esse no es furioso, como el que llamamos loco’ (II, 189v). While ‘furioso’ was the most common label for the raving mad, their symptoms were grouped under the medical term ‘mania’, discussed in the last article here.

The four main terms used for those who had fits of fury and mental blindness, combined with lucid intervals, were: ‘orate’ (‘vel horate, el loco que

| Ignorance (lack of education, inexperience) | Foolishness, inappropriate attitudes, habits and behaviours (‘desatinos’) |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| desvanecido                               | alocado                                                              |
| inocente                                   | desabrido en costumbres                                              |
| insipiente                                 | desatinado                                                           |
| majadero                                   | desbaratado                                                          |
| necio                                      | desvariado                                                           |
|                                           | insensato                                                            |
|                                           | mentecato                                                            |
|                                           | necio                                                                |

| Laughable behaviour (‘locuras’ or ‘burlas’) | Nonsensical, incoherent, inappropriate, absurd or erroneous utterances (including blasphemy) |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| bufón                                      | delirante                                                                                   |
| chocarrero                                 | desbaratado                                                                                  |
| morrón                                     | frenético                                                                                   |

| Delusion, self-deception                   | Temporarily distorted perception and/or impaired judgment                                      |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| desvanecido                                | absorto                                                                                     |
| engañado                                   | alienado                                                                                    |
| iluso                                      | arrebatado de un frenesí                                                                   |
| majadero                                   | desacordado                                                                                  |
|                                           | embelesado                                                                                  |
|                                           | enajenado                                                                                    |
|                                           | pasmado                                                                                      |
|                                           | que no está en su acuerdo                                                                   |
|                                           | traspuesto                                                                                  |
|                                           | trastornado el seso                                                                          |
tiene horas, y dilucidos intervalos’), ‘loco atreguado’ (‘el loco que algunas veces por cierto espacio de tiempo buele a estar en su juyzio, haziendo treguas con el la locura’), ‘alunado’ (‘el loco que con las lunas se enciende en su locura, aunque despues buele sobre si passada aquella ocasion, que ordinariamente suele ser en el lleno de la luna’) and ‘lunático’ (‘se llamaron lunaticos los faltos de juyzio; que con los quartos de luna alteran su accidente’). The Catalan term ‘orat’ (like the Spanish ‘loco’) seems to have been used to refer both to the mentally deficient and the insane, while ‘afollats’ referred to lunatics by fits.

The medical meaning of frenesía (also discussed in the last article here), is the only one included in Covarrubias’ definition of ‘frenecia’: ‘una especie de locura causada accidentalmente de la gran calentura, la cual mitigandose cessa’ (Covarrubias, Part II, fol. 16r). But ‘frenesi’ was also used as a non-technical term to indicate states of agitation and distorted perception or delusion, as well as to comment on the incertitude and instability of worldly pursuits. This latter meaning is found, for instance, in Segismundo’s soliloquy in Calderón’s La vida es suenño: ‘què es la vida? vn frenesi / què es la vida? vna ilusion’.

The Tesoro notes that the popular use of the term ‘loco’ in the sense of ‘tonto’ or ‘bobo’ is incorrect (II, 94r). However, the use of these terms as interchangeable was supported by the fact that all types of locos, whether raving, stupid, or simply deluded, were admitted into the overpopulated ‘casas de orates’, ‘casas de locos’ and hospital wards dedicated to the mad in the Spanish Peninsula from the early fifteenth century onwards.

Finally, the term ‘inocentes’, used to name the hospitals for the mad founded in Valencia in 1409 and in Seville around 1436, referred to three categories of people to whom they gave shelter: foundlings (abandoned children), ‘locos mansos’ (peaceful mad people) and ‘simples’ (simpletons and idiots). But it also referred, more generally, to the fact that insane people and idiots were seen as lacking the necessary mental faculties to understand their actions, and thus had no legal rights or responsibilities. In theory, they enjoyed immunity from the usually savage penalties imposed on criminals and heretics in early modern Spain.

As this collection of articles will hopefully demonstrate, early modern madness can be best understood by taking into account not only moral and medical ideas, but also the material conditions in which abnormal states of mind were named as ‘melancholic’, ‘mad’ or ‘foolish’, together with the motivations and aims of such labelling. Even though terms like ‘tonto’, ‘loco’ and ‘inocente’ were often used interchangeably and indiscriminately, in specific contexts, like an inquisitorial prison, the use of such labels had

25 For ‘orate’, ‘loco atreguado’, ‘alunado’ and ‘lunatico’, see Tesoro, II, 27r, 194v, 42r, 95r.

26 La vida es suenño, end of Act II, in Pedro Calderón de la Barca, Primera parte de comedias, 6 vols (Madrid: Francisco Sanz, 1685), I, 1–49 (p. 33).
serious consequences and thus needed to be supported by medical evidence. In medical treatises and inquisitorial medical reports, the term ‘melancholia’ was crucial to diagnoses intended to establish the causes and hence the cures for various forms of madness. The fact that the notion of ‘melancholia’ had no legal implications explains, in turn, why it is not even mentioned in legal texts.

The previously unstudied historical documents presented here by Tropé and by Huguet and Arrizabalaga will provide a nuanced picture of madness as helplessness, linked with poverty, disability, bodily diseases characterised by fever, and deprivation. The cases discussed by Tropé will show how people became mad, furious, rebellious and dangerous when deprived of freedom, light and warmth, in prisons which, as the inquisitorial physicians would acknowledge in their written reports, were too cold and damp to enable the prisoners to recover from their melancholic madness.

As we will see in Tausiet’s article, the claim made by ‘Locura’ in Yanguas’ Triumphos that ‘Prudencia’ (temperance, moderation and judiciousness) could not be easily found on earth, continued to be made throughout the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries. But we will also see how this claim might be applicable to the context of inquisitorial procedures. In promoting orthodoxy, inquisitors exercised no moderation and encountered little temperance and judiciousness. As Tropé’s evidence will suggest, prisoners howled and shrieked, perhaps expressing outrage or despair, and in some cases the pain of gangrene infections and tertian fevers. When madness was suspected from such behaviours, or suggested by medical reports, torture was seen as an appropriate method of interrogation. In such situations, the most judicious attitude seems to have been that of physicians, who, in cases like that of Alonso de Mendoza in 1595 and Ana de Acosta in 1662, recommended that these prisoners should be offered the opportunity to experience joy as a remedy for their episodes of madness. As absurd as such recommendations may seem, they were inspired by the Hippocratic belief that, even though sadness could sharpen the mind and thus be linked to wisdom, excessive sorrow was a cause of madness which needed to be counteracted with its opposite. Sanity, like wisdom, was not to be found in excessive joy or sadness, or excessive intellectual activity, but in temperance, in moderation.

Temperance or moderation were not always attainable or even desirable virtues for people whose lives were dominated by poverty, deprivation (of food, shelter, or sleep), or lack of freedom (e.g. if imprisoned). Their mad, melancholic or foolish behaviours might be interpreted in modern terms as signs of abjection or rebelliousness. But, as the following articles will suggest, madness, melancholia and foolishness also need to be understood within the specific socio-cultural contexts in which they were manifested and dealt with.