

Literature and Coping Skills
Professor Ajit K Mishra
Department of Humanistic Studies
Indian Institute of Technology (BHU) Varanasi
Lecture 24

John Keats, “Ode on Melancholy”

Hello, everybody. I am Ajit K Mishra, your course instructor for Literature and Coping Skills. I am here again with the last lecture of this module. I have already told you all that. This is a module on defeating depression and we have already taken care of “Feeling Weird, Losing Touch”, “Feeling Weird, Losing Touch Part 2” and then in my last lecture I talked about “Break, Break, Break” and the coping skills and strategies that it adopts or does not adopt. Now we have come to the last segment of this module that is John Keats “Ode on Melancholy”.

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The slide is titled "Defeating Depression" and features a list of topics on the left and a speaker on the right. The speaker is a man in a dark blue shirt, standing in front of a wall of yellow sticky notes. The NPTEL logo is visible in the top right corner of the slide.


Defeating Depression

- Feeling Weird, Losing Touch-I
- Feeling Weird, Losing Touch-II
- Alfred Lord Tennyson, “Break, Break, Break”
- John Keats, “Ode on Melancholy”

The speaker is standing in front of a wall of yellow sticky notes. The NPTEL logo is visible in the top right corner of the slide.

So today I am going to talk about the idea of melancholy, a subtype of major depressive disorder and we will get to see how the speaker in this poetic composition helps us understand different coping skills and strategies that we require in order to overcome the onslaught of melancholy. So let us take a look at these things. So, in this lecture I am going to focus on the idea of melancholy from the perspective of defeating depression.

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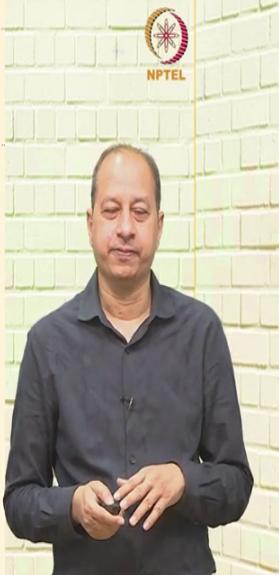


Melancholia

- Melancholia is a subtype of major depressive disorder (MDD)
- melancholic depression used to be seen as a distinct disorder, but the American Psychiatric Association (APA) no longer recognizes it as a separate mental illness
- People with melancholic depression often feel extreme despair and guilt. They also struggle to feel any happiness, even when good things happen in their lives
- Melancholia is sometimes called “endogenous depression,” meaning depression that comes from within

Image Source: Thenounproject

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So, before we do so we need to understand what melancholia is all about, because we are going to talk about melancholy. So, it all has to do with melancholy. So, it is a subtype of major depressive disorder that is MDD. Melancholic depression used to be seen as a distinct disorder. There was a time, during the ancient times it was seen as a distinctive disorder but the American Psychiatrist Association has not recognized it as a separate mental illness or a clinical disorder, or separate clinical disorder. It has been categorized under the MDD that is major depressive disorder.

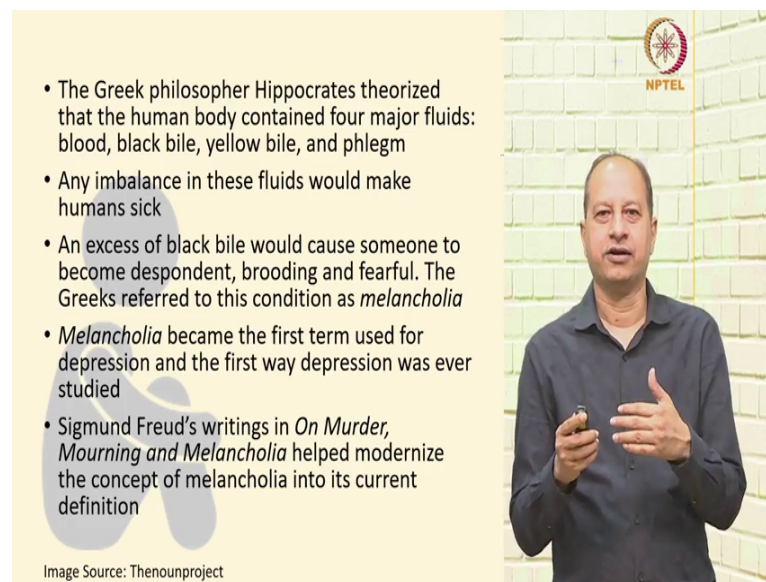
So, people with melancholic depression often feel extreme despair and guilt, something that is very, very akin to MDD. They also struggle to feel any happiness even when good things are happening in their lives, so that is anhedonia which is also a very important or serious symptom of major depressive disorder. So, we can see the similarities between melancholy and MDD. The line of demarcation is very, very blurred.

So, and then melancholia is sometimes called endogenous depression. If you remember I talked about Kurt Schneider the German psychiatrist who was the first to use these terms endogenous depression and reactive depression in 1920. So endogenous depression is a kind of depression

that comes from within. We do not need any external stimulus or stimuli for this depression to take place in us.

So, melancholia as this particular idea suggests is all about dispositional issue or dispositional problem. I mean a problem that is very seriously associated with our personality types or traits, so that way I can take you back to our discussion of personality where I also talked about neuroticism, neurotic personality types. So, such disorders also point towards those personality types, because it has to do with disposition.

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- The Greek philosopher Hippocrates theorized that the human body contained four major fluids: blood, black bile, yellow bile, and phlegm
- Any imbalance in these fluids would make humans sick
- An excess of black bile would cause someone to become despondent, brooding and fearful. The Greeks referred to this condition as *melancholia*
- *Melancholia* became the first term used for depression and the first way depression was ever studied
- Sigmund Freud's writings in *On Murder, Mourning and Melancholia* helped modernize the concept of melancholia into its current definition

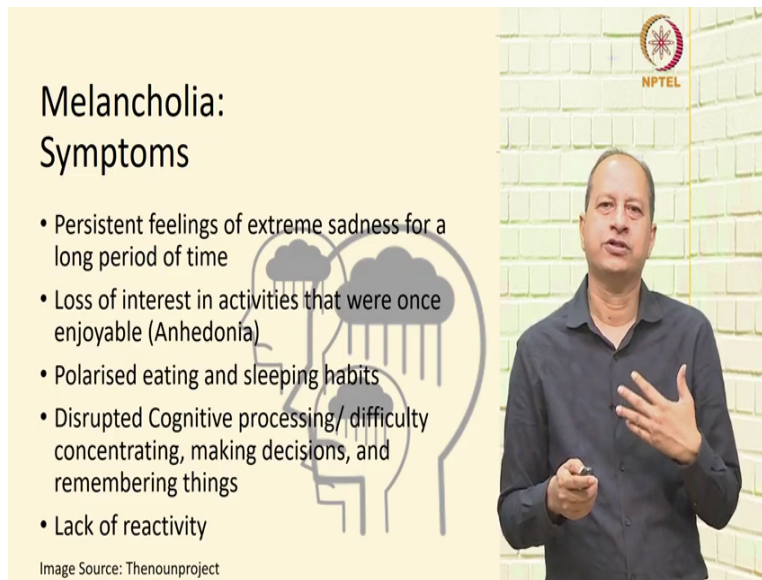
Image Source: Thenounproject

So, melancholia began when the Greek philosopher Hippocrates theorized that the human body contained four major liquids. Blood, black bile, yellow bile and phlegm that is fat. So, he also theorized that people with these humors or an imbalance in any of these humors will lead to some serious dispositional issues.

So, any imbalance in these fluids will make a human sick, not only physically but also mentally, so that was Hippocrates' proposition. So, an excess of black bile is what actually causes despondency, broodingness and fearfulness in somebody, so that means it is the black bile that in fact is a reason behind this type of dispositional issue, that is melancholia.

So, melancholia in fact was the first term that was used for depression or then that was used to understand the problem of depression and that was also how the whole discussion or debate over the idea of depression came into existence, through the use of the word or term melancholia. And this term was popularized when Freud, the father of modern psychology, in fact composed or wrote his book “On Murder, Mourning and Melancholia”. So, he was the one who popularized the idea of melancholia in our times.

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The slide features a yellow background with a list of symptoms for melancholia. To the right of the text is a photograph of a man in a dark blue shirt speaking, with a white brick wall behind him. In the top right corner of the slide is the NPTEL logo. A stylized graphic of a human head with a brain and rain clouds is positioned behind the text.

Melancholia: Symptoms

- Persistent feelings of extreme sadness for a long period of time
- Loss of interest in activities that were once enjoyable (Anhedonia)
- Polarised eating and sleeping habits
- Disrupted Cognitive processing/ difficulty concentrating, making decisions, and remembering things
- Lack of reactivity

Image Source: Thenounproject

And then melancholia has certain symptoms as well like situational depression. It also has a certain very, very important and visible symptoms. So again, persistent feelings of sadness for a long period of time. When that sadness is prolonged so that can be a symptom, that can be a sign of melancholia but then there are occasions when the the similarity is so very close that it becomes difficult for someone to tell whether it is an instance of melancholia or MDD.

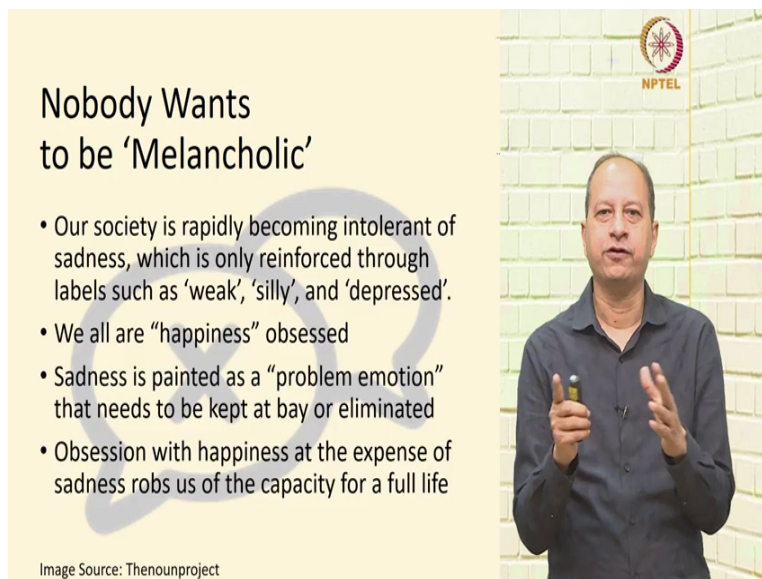
So, we can say this is just another type of depression, but there are trained psychotherapists or psychiatrists, they can tell the difference between major depressive disorder and melancholia. Again, loss of interest in activities that were once enjoyable, anhedonia, and then polarized eating and sleeping habits. That means you are not either eating well or sleeping well. You are

either eating a lot or not eating at all. You are either sleeping a lot or not sleeping at all. You are experiencing sleeplessness. So, these are some of the signs of melancholia.

And then a serious symptom is that it disrupts cognitive processing. So, it will be very difficult for the person who is suffering from melancholia to process information, concentrate, problem solving skills and decision-making skills will also be severely hampered by this particular problem.

And then lack of reactivity. As I told you all that in order for a person to experience a reactive depression or situational depression it is very, very important that the person has that particular potential, has that particular power. But people who experience melancholia lack that particular power. They do not react. So, they become so despondent, they become so cut off, withdrawn that they do not show any interest in things happening around them. So, they do not generally react.

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The slide features a yellow background with a large, faint watermark of a person's head and shoulders. In the top right corner, there is a circular logo with a red and white design and the text 'NPTEL' below it. The main title is 'Nobody Wants to be 'Melancholic''. Below the title is a bulleted list of four points. To the right of the text, a man in a dark blue shirt is speaking, gesturing with his hands. At the bottom left, it says 'Image Source: Thenounproject'.

Nobody Wants to be 'Melancholic'

- Our society is rapidly becoming intolerant of sadness, which is only reinforced through labels such as 'weak', 'silly', and 'depressed'.
- We all are "happiness" obsessed
- Sadness is painted as a "problem emotion" that needs to be kept at bay or eliminated
- Obsession with happiness at the expense of sadness robs us of the capacity for a full life

Image Source: Thenounproject

So, but the problem is nobody wants to be melancholic. You all will surely agree with me that we do not want sadness. We do not love to be sad. Sadness is generally treated as a negative emotion or negative state which is detested, which is deplored, which is seriously discouraged. People do not want to be sad, and that is how people do not want to be melancholic either.

So, it is a big no to melancholia and sadness, because we live in a society that has developed a culture of denial towards sadness, since it thinks that sadness is a negative, devastating, disturbing, distressing emotion therefore it needs to be either overcome or it needs to be exterminated. So therefore, we live in a society that is rapidly becoming intolerant of sadness, because we do not love sadness anymore.


So, sadness is generally leveled through these things, these words, these expressions, like weak if somebody is sad. The person will say oh! You are looking very weak since you are sad, you are looking very silly, looking very stupid, looking depressed. And we all know depressed, the word depression or the word depressed are generally treated as taboo words.

So, these words can easily ostracize or lead to the ostracization of somebody, so that is one big reason why people generally avoid sadness even though they experience sadness, they prevent themselves from talking about that experience of sadness because we all are happiness obsessed people now. We all want to be happy at any expense at any cost. We can go to any extent to be happy. We can buy happiness; we can preserve happiness in the cold storage.

So, we can do anything in order to be happy and in order to sustain our happiness because of our obsession with happiness not with sadness, because we tend to forget that sadness is also an equally important emotion as happiness is. And sadness can actually prepare us for the bigger challenges of life. Sadness can actually make us resilient, strong, it can develop some wonderful coping skills in us, with the help of which we can overcome any amount of stress, anxiety, depression or any amount of mental challenge, because we are happiness obsessed people.

So, sadness is generally painted as a problem emotion, because it causes problems in people. It pushes somebody into a big problem ditch, so that needs to be kept at bay or eliminated. So, this obsession with happiness at the expense of sadness in fact has robbed us of the capacity for full life. Because it cannot be that I will be obsessed with one particular type of emotion and I will try my best to avoid the other kind of emotion. That avoidance will not help me live a full life, so that is a major problem with sadness or melancholy or melancholia.

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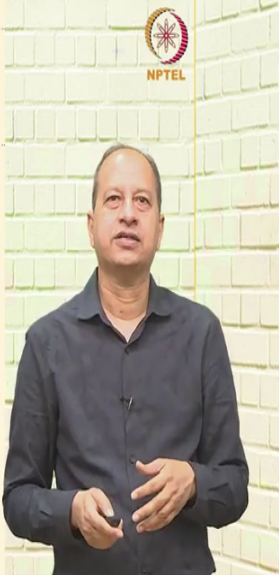


A World without "Sadness"!

- David Pearce, the proponent of "**Paradise Engineering**," proposes that pharmacology, genetic engineering, nanotechnology, and neurosurgery can be converged to eliminate all forms of unpleasant experience from human and non-human life.
- He makes a strong case for replacing suffering with "gradients of bliss"

-- *The Hedonistic Imperative* (1995)

Image Source: Flaticon



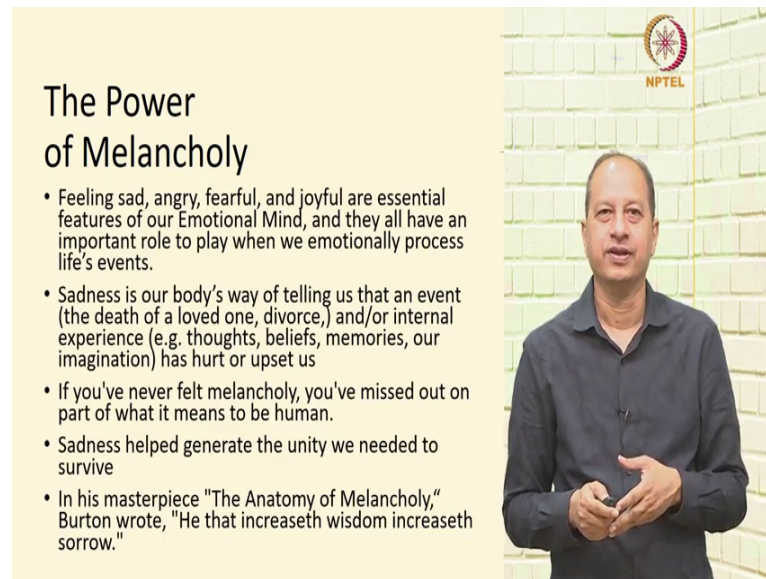
Now imagine a world without sadness. Can you imagine a world without sadness, can you do that? Can I do that? Yes, we have been given enough reason by people, by researchers around us who think and who are very very sure that it can happen. We can have a world without sadness. We can permanently eliminate sadness, melancholy from our lives so that we can continue to be happy.

One such idea is, or has been floated by David Pearce, a British transhumanist who is very, very popular for his idea of paradise engineering. Paradise engineering because he is trying to engineer a world for us which is akin to the paradise in which Adam and Eve lived, lived in complete bliss. There was no strain of sadness anywhere. There was no sign of melancholy anywhere.

So, David Pearce is talking about a world that is akin to paradise. A world in which there will be no strain of sadness of melancholy. So, he thinks that with the help of pharmacology, genetic engineering, nanotechnology and neurosurgery this can be done. We can eliminate all forms for unpleasant experiences from human and non-human life, and he is very sure about that, so that that sounds magical because there will be no need for us to take care of emotions anymore because we will not have emotions that way.

There will be just one kind of emotion that is happiness. There will be no sadness, because we will begin to live in a paradise, in an engineered paradise. So, he makes a very strong case for replacing suffering with the gradient of bliss, eternal, permanent bliss, so that there will be no sign of suffering. There will be no instance of sadness or melancholy anywhere. We will be totally free from melancholy, sadness and suffering.

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The slide features a yellow background on the left with the title "The Power of Melancholy" in black text. Below the title is a list of five bullet points. On the right side of the slide, there is a video frame showing a man in a dark blue shirt speaking, with an NPTEL logo in the top right corner of the frame.

The Power of Melancholy

- Feeling sad, angry, fearful, and joyful are essential features of our Emotional Mind, and they all have an important role to play when we emotionally process life's events.
- Sadness is our body's way of telling us that an event (the death of a loved one, divorce,) and/or internal experience (e.g. thoughts, beliefs, memories, our imagination) has hurt or upset us
- If you've never felt melancholy, you've missed out on part of what it means to be human.
- Sadness helped generate the unity we needed to survive
- In his masterpiece "The Anatomy of Melancholy," Burton wrote, "He that increaseth wisdom increaseth sorrow."

But the question is if that is a case, if that is something which can happen and in fact even if it happens what about those emotions that were born with our birth, that came to us naturally. Because like happiness which is a sought-after emotion, sadness is also an equally important emotion, anger is also an important emotion, fear is an equally important emotion. So, it cannot be that we are obsessed with just one particular type of emotion and we allow ourselves not to live fully. Not to live the full human existence; so that is why it is very very important that we revisit our idea of a sadness suffering free world and then concentrate on the idea of the power of melancholy. So, when we take a look at the power of melancholy, we get to see that. Melancholy in fact is essential for the emotional mind, because all these emotions, sadness, anger, fearfulness or joy or happiness they all are essential features of our existence, our emotional mind, because they all have an important role to play when emotionally, we emotionally process life's events.

They play an equally important role, that is how we differentiate one life event from the other. With the help of these emotions, what kind of feelings do they bring to us? So, we can easily distinguish one life event from the other. And then sadness is our body's way to tell us that something is upsetting us, whether it is an external stimuli or stimulus or it is something that is happening from within. It can be somebody's thoughts, beliefs, memories that can cause happiness or sadness in you or maybe somebody's imagination.

So, these feelings can actually be pointed out, can actually be named through the emotion of sadness. So, if somebody has never felt melancholy or sadness it can be very rightly said that that person has missed out on part of what it means to be human. If somebody is human then the person has to experience all those emotions. Now the question is between being a human and being a transhuman.

So, if you prefer to be transhuman you are free from all these obligations, these natural obligations. If you continue to be a human or prefer to remain a human you have to, so that is the biggest difference between being or remaining a human and becoming a transhuman. So, sadness in fact helped generate the unity we needed to survive. It has a unifying power.

Imagine a person who is weeping that person will definitely draw the attention of people around him or her and those people will go and ask why that person is weeping. So, the same kind of response may not be registered or noticed when the person is happy. He is not feeling any sadness or not suffering at all. So, sadness has a unifying power, or uniting power. It can unite us and that is how people in the early days of our civilizational processes came together, together through the emotion of sadness.

And this is probably one big reason why in his “The Anatomy of Melancholy” Robert Burton has very rightly said that “He that increases wisdom, increases sorrow”. So, sorrow and wisdom are complementary to each other. So, if you increase sorrow, if you develop a capacity for sorrows, suffering, pain, sadness, melancholy then there is every chance that you will be increasing your wisdom. That means you will become wiser. So, your becoming wiser is also largely dependent on your capacity to endure pain, suffering and sorrows.

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Ode on Melancholy
By John Keats

No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist
Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;
Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss'd
By nightshade / ruby grape of Proserpine;
Make not your rosary of yew-berries,
Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be
Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl
A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;
For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

Cont.

1. Forgetfulness
2. Drugs
3. Suicide

That brings us to the idea of the “Ode on Melancholy” written by John Keats, an English romantic poet. So, when we take a look at this poetic composition we will be taken aback by the kind of illusions, the kind of analogies that it has drawn and the illusions it has used. This poem was important because it tells us what to do and what not to do. This poem is important because it tells us that there is nothing wrong about melancholy or sadness. Therefore, an ode has been composed.

So, an ode generally praises, exalts. So, an ode has been composed to praise melancholy. So, this is a kind of poem that is written in praise of melancholy, in praise of sadness. So, it tells us that melancholy is something which is not to be detested, but to be embraced. If we can do that, if we can wake up to the idea of melancholy, we can in fact, begin to live life fully and completely. So, with that idea let us focus on these important things.

This poem has three such sections and this is the first section. So, when you look at the first section you will get to know that the poet is talking about or the speaker is talking about three things, three very important things. The speaker is talking about things that one should never do. So, we will come to those three things when we pass through or move through these lines. It begins with an admonition, no do not do that, do not do this, do not do that.

So, what is the first instance of this admonition? It says that do not go to Lethe, because that is the mythical river, the Greek mythical river of forgetfulness. So, if you are experiencing melancholy, if you are experiencing sadness the first thing that most of us would like to do is to find a way to overcome it as quick as possible. Therefore, we live in an anti-depressant culture or painkiller culture. So, you can, you can imagine about it.

So, every time I experience pain. I promptly find a pain killer that will give me immediate relief. So, pain is something that we all are averse to, we all strongly hate, because we live in a painkiller culture. There are painkillers everywhere. It is an avoidant culture, it is an antidepressant culture because we have antidepressants at every stage for each one of us, to take care of our pain, suffering and melancholy.

So, in this antidepressant culture there is every possibility that will promptly run to a painkiller whenever we experience sadness or pain. So, the idea is not talking about physical pain. It is about mental pain. The anguish, the agony that we all experience, melancholy, sadness that we all experience. So, if there is an antidepressant or painkiller for that particular pain. Do not do that.

The first thing that people do in order to manage their pain and suffering, they try to forget that. Something that disturbs you, you just forget that, develop forgetfulness, forget your unpleasant memories, forget your suffering that is exactly what we generally get to hear. So, if people forget their suffering, unpleasant, memories that means they are running away from the causes of those painful experiences. So, forgetfulness is no answer to sadness or melancholy.

So, there is absolutely no need for somebody to run to Lethe because you will forget everything. It is the Greek mythical river of forgetfulness. Do not do that. There are a few other things that people also do in order to forget their painful experiences, their melancholy of sadness. Do not try wolf's-bane, that is poisonous, that is poisonous wine.

And then do not allow your pale forehead, pale forehead because you are suffering. You are in pains; therefore, it is a pale forehead. "Do not allow your pale forehead to be kissed by nightshade" that is again a poisonous thing, which is otherwise called a ruby grape of Proserpine.

Do not do that. Do not run to poisonous drinks or poisonous things to relieve yourself of your pain, either temporarily or permanently, because if somebody takes a large dose of any of these poisonous things the person will probably die.

If somebody takes a small dose of any of these things the person will experience an immediate relief in pain and that is one big reason in why in medieval medicine these were also used as painkillers in small doses or small amounts. "Make not your rosary", you are offering prayers through your rosary of yew-berries, that is again poisonous. "Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be your mournful psyche nor the downy owl" that means all these are associated with the idea of death.

"A partner in your sorrow's mysteries". All these things, there is a need for you to avoid, there is a need for you to stay away from all these things. Do not allow them to overwhelm you. So, when that happens this will also happen. You will become so drowsy that you will not be able to wake up to your pain and suffering. So, when that happens you will promptly run away from your pain and suffering.

You will not face your pain and suffering or your melancholy. You will try to forget your melancholy. You will try to drug yourself to forget the painful experiences of melancholy or sadness or you will finally choose to surrender to suicide or death. You will become so obsessed with the objects of death, these objects of death, yew-berries, beetles, death-moths, downy owl, all are the objects of death. You will become so possessed or so obsessed with these objects of death that you will think they are your true friends.

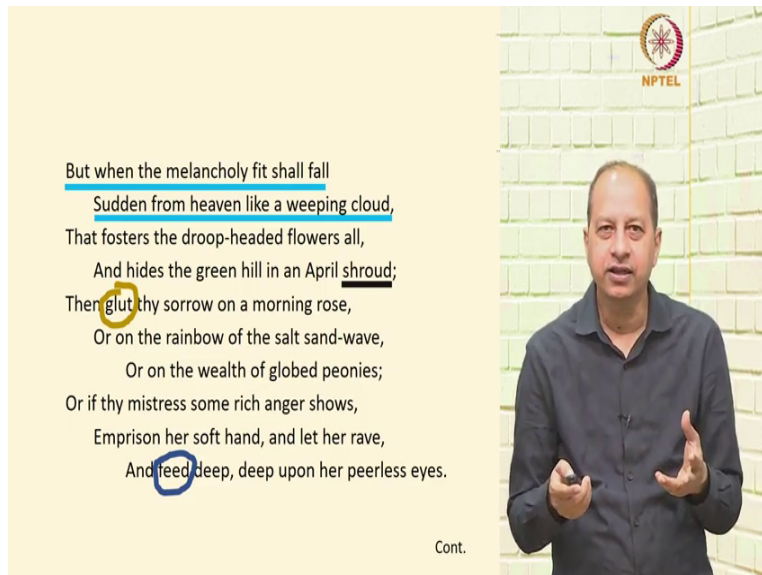
When that happens, you will probably commit suicide and bid farewell to this otherwise wonderful life. So, these are the three important things that we need to stay away from. That is how we can overcome our avoidant coping style. It is very popularly called avoidant coping. So, there is a negative coping strategy that is avoidant coping. So, you avoid, you run away, you escape, you try to forget, you do not face that problem. At best you try to commit suicide.

So, these are the three things that we all need to avoid. The first is forgetfulness. We do not have to forget our painful experiences, because they are going to teach us something important. They

are going to make us resilient. They are going to develop a greater amount of endurance in us. So, there is absolutely no need to say no to all these things, just because we live in a culture that denies the importance of sadness or melancholy. There is absolutely no need to say that.

We need to rethink the culture that we all live in. So, forgetfulness is a big no, drugs is a big no. We have an important segment on drug use or drug abuse, substance abuse. So, drugs is a big no, as I told you all these are also used as drugs, the night shade, wolf's-bane. If taken in a larger amount they can turn out to be extremely poisonous, but if taken in small amount they can act as painkillers. And then finally suicide that is something we all need to avoid, and this can be done only when we think of moving out of this particular mire or a quagmire.

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But when the melancholy fit shall fall
Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,
That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
And hides the green hill in an April shroud;
Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
Or on the wealth of globed peonies;
Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
And teed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

Cont.


So, then we come to the second section of this poetic composition. And then in the second section the speaker tells us what to do. In the first section the speaker tells us what not to do. So, it tells us that melancholy suddenly falls. It does not give you a notice and comes. It suddenly falls. It is so sudden that it feels like a downpour, a weeping cloud, a cloud burst or fog, dense fog that covers everything, that shrouds everything. So, the idea of shroud is used here, because it signifies death.

So, melancholy has the power to promptly push the person in to the darker realm. Because it is so sudden that the person is not prepared. The person is not ready. Therefore, readiness or preparedness is a skill that we all need to cultivate in all of us, so that the suddenness of any onslaught including melancholy will not rattle us; so that is the message. It is so sudden that one needs to understand.

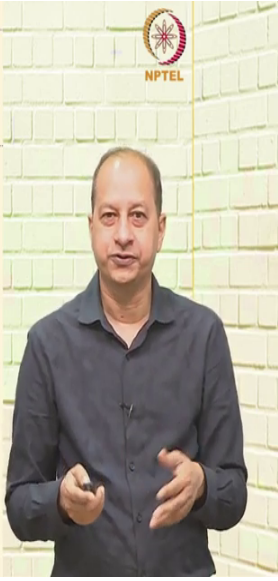
So, when faced with melancholy somebody has to do this particular thing. So, this is very, very important idea “Glut” means you feed and then again there is another word that is “Feed”, glut and feed. So, these two are very important expressions here. So, they tell us about the coping skills that we need to develop. So, we know that very, very well. We know how to cope with melancholy. So, we need to glut, we need to go for a perspective shift, when this happens, when melancholy suddenly falls, we need to shift the perspective.

For example, the morning rose, the salt sand-wave, the globed peonies. They may have a short life but they have the power to help us switch from one particular condition to the other condition. From a negatively fixed condition to a positive one. So, they have that power and then he also talks about the things that are very, very natural and very, very real in the next few lines, in the last segment.

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She dwells with Beauty— Beauty that must die;
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,
Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips:
Ay, in the very temple of Delight
Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
Though seen of none save him whose strenuous
tongue
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;
His soul shalt taste the sadness of her might,
And be among her cloudy trophies hung.



Now he is talking about the beloved, who is absolutely obsessed with beauty, but beauty is going to die. You see that is the reality. We all need to accept the fact that beauty is not permanent. It has short span of life only. So, it must die. That is a reality we need to accept. In the same way as we accept our death reality and we are not scared of it. So even happiness has this particular quality. It always says buh-bye or bids adieu, farewell to all of us.

So therefore, we need to understand that these are transitory things whether it is beauty or joy, these are transitory things. Beyond these things there will be sadness, there will be melancholy and we need to take care, we need to wake up to that call. And there is “aching pleasure”, an oxymoron has been used aching pleasure. The same pleasure has pain contained within it. If you remember (()) (36:03) Fear of Death. So, the same pleasure has some kind of pain contained in it, so that is how within the temple of delight that is happiness, melancholy lives. So, happiness and melancholy are complementary to each other. They make each other complete. We cannot imagine happiness in the absence of melancholy and vice versa, so that is the reason why the speaker finally says that, “His soul shall taste the sadness of her might” and such a person has a fine palate, a fine taste, such a person has become wiser.

Robert Burton, “The Anatomy of Melancholy”, a person who has accepted more and more sorrows. The person has become wiser, the person has not run away from melancholy, has not tried to forget, nor drugged oneself or surrendered to death. The person has decided to accept the reality that pain and pleasure are complementary to each other. Since they embrace each other we all need to embrace each one of them. So, sadness has a huge power that is a might of sadness. There is a power of sadness.

Although it seems to overwhelm us at the same time it also develops a great amount of resilience in us, and when that happens, we can get our trophies. We can get the rewards in our life. We can say we are living this life fully. We are not running away from life. Imagine how many people run away from life. How many people drop the gauntlet and say good bye to life and leave, like broken soldiers, devastated soldiers. So that is the idea.

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Coping Skills & Strategies



- Imagery Skills (Coping and Goal Imagery)
- Avoidance Vs Acceptance
- Mental (Re)calibration
- Positive Thought Therapy
- Comparative States

Image Source: Flaticon



So, the coping skills and strategies that we come across in this particular poetic composition are these. When you take another look at this poetic composition you will be surprised, you will be amazed by the amount of imagery skills employed in this composition. I told you in one of my previous lectures that imagery skill is huge, it is a very important skill. It is a very important coping skill. Athletes, surgeons all over the world, they practice imagery skills meticulously and that helps them perform well; so that is why this particular composition tells us the power of imagery skills, both coping and goal imagery, because the goal of the poem is to shift the perspective of a person that is fixed on death to the perspective of life, so that is why this is very, very important, this particular imagery skill. And that can be done more powerfully with the help of images, which the speaker does here, so that teaches us the imagery skill which is a very powerful coping skill.

And then we come to avoidance versus acceptance, so that is also a very, very important coping skill. Avoidance is a short-lived coping skill. If I avoid something I can protect myself from the onslaught of that particular thing or that particular distressing emotion for a short period of time, but if I accept that is the beginning of my action. The moment I accept, I will act and then afterwards I will be able to overcome it.

So, if I can overcome it once, I know how to overcome it multiple times or many times, so that is the power which I will derive from that particular exercise. So, avoidance and acceptance. In the

first section there is an instance of avoidance when you try to forget, you try to drug yourself, you try to succumb to death. But in the second instance when you begin to accept, that guides you out of the avoidance state and then you find yourself in the acceptance stage.

The next important skill that we get to see here is that of mental calibration or recalibration. It is a very powerful skill. Mental calibration, it is absolutely needed because there are occasions when this mind is stuck. This mind is fixed on certain things and when that happens you do not find a way out and that is one big reason why most people do not know what to do once they are stuck in one particular emotion or one particular thing. So, calibration or recalibration will help you move out of it.

Imagine the smartphone that you own requires calibration periodically. So, when you calibrate your smartphone, it understands your touch extremely well or extremely better. So similarly, we also need to go for mental calibration and this is exactly the skill that we derive from this poetic composition. So, there is a mental calibration. In the first section everyone is stuck.

We are stuck in the first section. Once we are stuck, we do not find any way out. We think of closing, we think of closing the doors and suddenly there is a mental calibration that helps you suddenly shift your focus to the other things. Things around or beyond those disturbing or distressing things, so that is the skill, the coping skill, the mental calibration, coping skill that we derived from this.

And then we come to positive thought therapy. And this is a very, very wonderful skill that we all can counterfeit, positive thought therapy. So most often when it comes to behavior therapies people focus on problems and try to change the behavior of the sufferers in relation to the problems. So most often the focus is on problems or the negative thoughts, something that is disturbing you, causing a problem to you.

But in this instance, in this composition the focus is on the positive thought, not on the negative thought. So, there is a prompt shift from the negative thought to the positive thought and that lasts all through. So that works as therapy, positive thought therapy. For example, if somebody has a problem, if somebody cannot write well, then the person can focus on the positives the

same person has. Can the person speak well? If the person focuses on the positives. The positives will grow larger enough to take care of the negatives, so that is the power of positive thought therapy.

And then comparative states, that is a strategy which is employed in this particular poetic composition with the help of which the speaker offers two states right in front of you. This is state one in which you see forgetfulness, you see drug or substance abuse and then probably death. And there is another state in which you are comfortable, you come to terms with the challenges of life and you emerge victorious and you win the reward.

Now you give me your choice. And I tell you every time people are given such choices everyone will go for the second choice. Because we all want to live. That is a natural drive. That is an evolutionary drive. We succumb only when we do not have choices, so that is a wonderful technique or strategy that has been employed in this particular poem, comparative states.

(Refer Slide Time: 45:06)



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So, these are some of the skills and the strategies that have been employed and that we can derive, that we can learn from this particular poetic composition and then we can enrich our existence; so that is how we have come to the end of this lecture. So, thank you very much for joining me.