

Melancholy appeared when a man doubted God and the meaning of life for the first time and immersed in chaos looked for something that could not be found. Can you find something you have never had? Can you find the meaning of life? Wanting it more than experiencing reality? Melancholic is the man experiencing constant loss of something that exists no more or has never been. Medieval take on melancholy made the concept demonic, ashamed with mortal sin. It was only in Renaissance when its positive and antic image was resurrected and noticed genius and potential of a man as well as his impermanence against the power of time. Even then it was recognised that melancholy was not only an illness stemming from humoral balance disturbance. The following periods scattered its image as a type of personality. Melancholy became a fact and was transformed into cultural phenomenon lasting ever since, subject to neverending changes and evoking permanent and deep fascination. Baroque stripped down melancholy to nudity giving it many masks hiding it under numerous symbols and metaphors, showing human corpses, tears and fear - presenting its more humane and realistic image. The man of Baroque experienced loss in no other way than currently. Confronted by death he was subject to fear, doubt and sadness. Despite widely manifested opinion, setting it in a highly spiritual context of reality perception, directed towards eschatological concepts, it still remained direct witness of events happening around it.

It is where I noticed a chance to explore melancholy directly, treating it as a fully individual experience. Without any doubts it should be considered as a cultural phenomenon that has been present in European culture for ages. Originality of research will especially concern private correspondence, which was extracted in the process of source analysis of funeral sermons. Reaching out to Carmelite literature which has not been experienced in-depth elaboration. Similar situation will be in the case of innovative research. The reason of undertaking the concept of melancholy in old-Polish age is its conspicuous presence in every aspect of social and religious life. At the same time fascination with the concept which can be regarded as an internal civilization manifesto reflecting the atmosphere of the period leads me to research melancholy in synthetic ways. So far the phenomenon has not been widely researched which causes its categorisation and fragmentary analysis attempts focusing only on the selected aspects are not able to grasp the issue holistically.