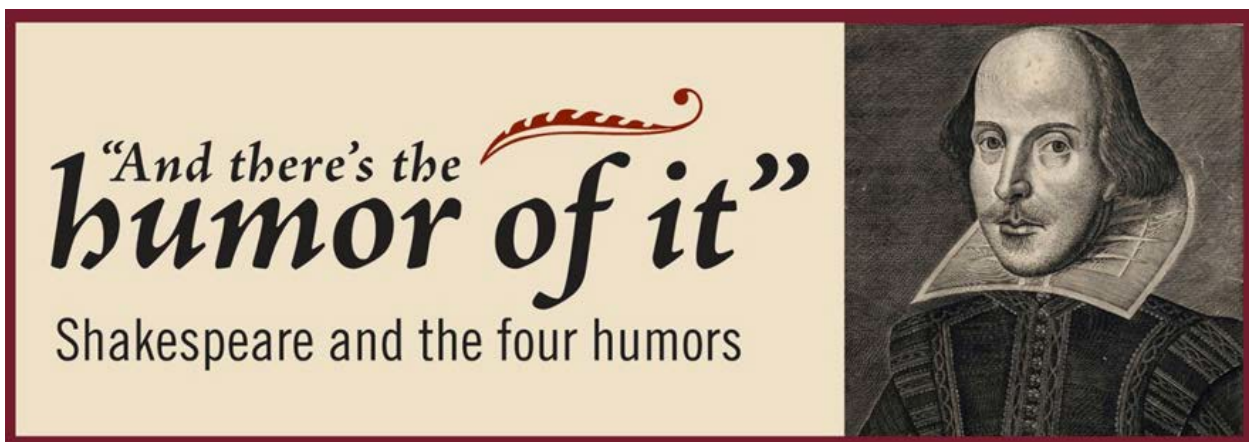


NLM Traveling Exhibitions

PR Information



www.nlm.nih.gov/shakespeare

The National Library of Medicine produced *"And there's the humor of it!": Shakespeare and the four humors*, guest curated by scholar Gail Kern Paster, PhD (director emerita, Folger Shakespeare Library), and historian and educator Theodore M. Brown, PhD (University of Rochester).

The traveling exhibition and companion website explore the language of the four humors and their influence in English poet and playwright William Shakespeare's plays. Shakespeare created characters that are among the richest and most humanly recognizable in all of literature. Yet the playwright understood human personality and health in the terms available to his age—that of the now-discarded theory of the four bodily humors—blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm.

"And there's the humor of it!" includes an [education component](#) that features two K-12 lesson plans and a university module.

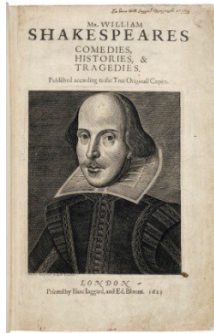
Please include this courtesy line with all public announcements about the project:

The National Library of Medicine produced this exhibition and companion website.

NLM Traveling Exhibitions

PR Information

Host venues for "*And there's the humor of it!*" receive the following PR images. For your reference, there are brief captions for the images. Please include their corresponding **courtesy** noted below when using them.



William Shakespeare created characters that are among the richest and most humanly recognizable in all of literature. Yet the playwright understood human personality in the terms available to his age—the now-discarded theory of the four bodily humors.

William Shakespeare, 1633

Courtesy Folger Shakespeare Library



The four bodily humors—blood, bile, melancholy, and phlegm—represented sanguine, choleric, melancholic, and phlegmatic qualities that were thought to determine people’s physical and mental health, as well as their personalities.

“Sanguis” (left) and “Cholera” (right), *Minerva Britanna*, Henry Peacham, 1612

Courtesy Folger Shakespeare Library



English Renaissance cleric and scholar Robert Burton wrote about the different types of melancholy. He regarded unmarried gentlewomen with little to do as being “torrent of inward humours,” above all, lacking the social purpose conferred only by marriage.

Anatomy of Melancholy, Robert Burton, 1628

Courtesy National Library of Medicine



Shakespeare’s audiences were presented with plays depicting the full range of human behaviors and character types, from the vengefulness of choleric old age to maidenly melancholy.

“Globe Theater,” *Londinum florentissima Britanniae urbs*, Claes Jansz Visscher, 1626

Courtesy Folger Shakespeare Library