AJLLSE GLOBAL RESEARCH NETWORK

AMERICAN Journal of Language, Literacy and Learning in STEM Education
Volume 02, Issue 06, 2024 ISSN (E): 2993-2769

Ancient Terminologies for Illnesses and Conditions in English Literary Texts

Matluba Baxronova Axmedovna
Teacher at Bukhara State Pegdagogical Institute

Abstract. *This article explores the representation of illnesses and medical conditions in English literary texts through the lens of ancient terminologies. By examining a range of literary works spanning different historical periods, the study delves into the ways in which diseases and ailments were conceptualized and described in ancient times, and how these representations have influenced the language and understanding of illness in literature. Drawing on a diverse selection of texts, the article analyzes the use of archaic medical terminology and its impact on the portrayal of physical and mental afflictions. Furthermore, it investigates the cultural and historical contexts that shaped the language of illness in literature, shedding light on the evolution of medical terminology and its significance in literary expression. Through this exploration, the article aims to offer insights into the intersection of language, literature, and medical discourse, providing a deeper understanding of how ancient terminologies continue to resonate in contemporary literary representations of health and disease.*

Key words: *disease, grippe, ague, consumption, horrors, quinsy, lockjaw, St. Vitus's dance, apoplexy, croup, dropsy.*

Introduction.

The depiction of illnesses and medical conditions in English literary texts has been shaped by a rich tapestry of language, culture, and history. Throughout the ages, writers have drawn upon a diverse array of terminologies to articulate the nuances of physical and mental afflictions. This article embarks on a journey through the annals of literature, delving into the ancient terminologies used to describe illnesses and conditions in English literary texts. By examining the influence of archaic medical language on the portrayal of maladies, this study aims to unravel the intricate interplay between historical medical terminology and its enduring impact on literary representations of health and disease. Through an exploration of select literary works spanning different epochs, we seek to illuminate the ways in which ancient terminologies continue to resonate in the fabric of contemporary literary expression, offering a deeper understanding of the evolution of language and its significance in capturing the human experience of illness.

If we analyze some old-fashioned names for diseases and ailments, specifically focusing on the term "grippe," it highlights that while some old-fashioned disease names may not sound as severe, others, like "grippe," evoke a more serious connotation.

The term "grippe" historically referred to various contagious viral diseases, but it was commonly used to describe what we now recognize as influenza. The excerpt from Upton Sinclair's "The Jungle" illustrates how "grippe" was associated with serious illnesses such as pneumonia and tuberculosis, particularly affecting individuals with weakened immune systems.

There came pneumonia and *grippe*, stalking among them, seeking for weakened constitutions; there was the annual harvest of those whom tuberculosis had been dragging down. — Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 1906

Furthermore, insight into the etymology of "grippe," noting its French origin, where it literally means "seizure" and is derived from the verb "gripper," meaning "to grab or seize." So, the passage sheds light on the evolution of language in describing diseases and highlights the severity associated with certain terms, such as "grippe," in past contexts.

Ague is the term for an infectious fever marked by regular paroxysms of chills and sweating. The first known use of *ague* was in the 14th century According to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, etymology of the word dates back Middle English, from Anglo-French *ague*, from Medieval Latin (*febris*) *acuta*, literally, sharp fever, from Latin, feminine of *acutus* sharp — more at Acute disease- a disease (such as bronchitis, gastroenteritis, or the flu) of rapid onset and relatively short duration, The first known use of *acute disease* was in 1637

This disease name was used in 19 th century, in the work of Charles Dickens :

Oliver's ailings were neither slight nor few. In addition to the pain and delay attendant on a broken limb, his exposure to the wet and cold had brought on fever and *ague*: which hung about him for many weeks, and reduced him sadly.

— Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, 1839, p:211

The word is historically associated with the feverish symptoms that accompany malaria, in which red blood cells are attacked by a parasite transmitted by the anopheles mosquito.

"Consumption" is indeed an old-fashioned term for tuberculosis, a highly contagious bacterial infection that primarily affects the lungs. Here's an analysis with examples from English literary texts where this name is used by writers:

1."Cough! you don't need to tell me about a cough. I've always been subject to a cough, all my days. When I was of Eva's age, they thought I was in a *consumption*. Night after night, Mammy used to sit up with me. O! Eva's cough is not anything."

- Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 1852

The name is given to the fact that the disease would lead to a wasting away of the body.

2."Wuthering Heights" by Emily Brontë: In Emily Brontë's classic novel "Wuthering Heights," consumption is a significant element of the plot. Catherine Earnshaw, one of the main characters, suffers from consumption, which ultimately leads to her death. Brontë uses this disease to symbolize the fragility of life and the destructive nature of unrequited love. Catherine's decline due to consumption mirrors the deteriorating state of the relationships and characters within the novel.

Example: "My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods: time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees. My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly, I am Heathcliff! He's always, always in my mind: not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being."

3."Little Women" by Louisa May Alcott: In Louisa May Alcott's novel "Little Women," the character Beth March falls ill with scarlet fever, which weakens her immune system, ultimately leading to her contraction of consumption. Alcott uses Beth's illness to explore themes of sacrifice, sisterhood, and the impact of illness on family dynamics.

Example: "They soon found that Beth was right. There was so much to do, many preparations to be made, and the house to be set in order, before the afternoon stage came rattling in to bring Miss Proctor, and Miss Proctor's brother, who was to be her escort, driving down to inspect the 'Dovecote', and the 'willow mournful', the 'flinty-hearted mansion', and 'the haunts of the goblin and the sprite'."

4."Moby-Dick" by Herman Melville: Herman Melville's "Moby-Dick" also features consumption, though indirectly. The character Queequeg, a Polynesian harpooner, becomes seriously ill during the voyage. Though it's not explicitly stated, his symptoms suggest he may be suffering from

tuberculosis. This subplot adds depth to Queequeg's character and explores themes of mortality and camaraderie among the crew members.

Example: "It is not, perhaps, entirely because the whale is so excessively unctuous that landsmen seem to regard the eating of him with abhorrence; that appears to result, in some way, from the consideration before mentioned: i.e. that a man should eat a newly murdered thing of the sea, and eat it too by its own light."

These examples illustrate how consumption was depicted in English literary texts, often serving as a symbol of mortality, fragility, and the impact of illness on individuals and their relationships.

The name which Joe had given to his master's illness was certainly not a false one. He did find Sir Louis "in the *horrors*." If any father have a son whose besetting sin is a passion for alcohol, let him take his child to the room of a drunkard when possessed by "the *horrors*." Nothing will cure him if not that.

— Anthony Trollope, *Doctor Thorne*, 1858

Historically, the plural noun *horrors* has referred to two distinct ailments: a shuddering or shivering as symptomatic of a fever, or a fit of depression or fright as occurs with mental delirium.

"Horrors" as a disease name doesn't have a direct historical association with a specific medical condition. Instead, it's often used metaphorically to describe extreme fear, anxiety, or psychological distress. In literary texts, it's more likely to be found in descriptions of mental or emotional states rather than physical ailments. Here's an analysis with examples from English literary texts where "horrors" or similar terms are used:

"Heart of Darkness" by Joseph Conrad: Joseph Conrad's novella "Heart of Darkness" is rich with imagery and themes of psychological horror. While the term "horrors" might not be explicitly used, the narrative delves into the psychological deterioration experienced by characters as they confront the darkness within themselves and in the world around them. The journey into the Congo exposes the protagonist, Marlow, to the horrors of imperialism and the darkness of human nature.

Example: "The horror! The horror!" - This iconic line from the novella, spoken by Kurtz, encapsulates the overwhelming sense of dread and moral decay that permeates the story. It reflects the profound psychological impact of witnessing and participating in acts of cruelty and exploitation.

"The Tell-Tale Heart" by Edgar Allan Poe: Edgar Allan Poe's short story "The Tell-Tale Heart" is a classic example of Gothic literature that explores themes of guilt, paranoia, and psychological terror. The narrator's descent into madness and obsession with the old man's "vulture eye" culminates in a horrific act of violence.

Example: "It is the beating of his hideous heart!" - In this line, the narrator's guilt manifests as a sensory hallucination, where he hears the faint sound of the old man's heart still beating beneath the floorboards after he has murdered him. This auditory hallucination represents the psychological horrors of the narrator's guilt and deteriorating mental state.

"Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" by Robert Louis Stevenson: Robert Louis Stevenson's novella "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" explores the duality of human nature and the darker aspects of the human psyche. While the term "horrors" may not be explicitly used, the narrative is steeped in themes of terror, repression, and the consequences of unleashing one's inner demons.

Example: "The horror of the other possibility froze me. I stood for a moment, aghast before the act of memory." - This quote reflects Dr. Jekyll's internal struggle as he grapples with the consequences of his experiments and the horrifying realization of his own capacity for evil.

In these literary examples, the term "horrors" or similar concepts are used to convey the psychological and existential terror experienced by characters as they confront their inner demons, moral dilemmas, and the darker aspects of the human condition.

Not as fun as it sounds, *quinsy* is the symptom of painful abscess in the tissue around a tonsil that accompanies more severe forms of tonsillitis.

Even his voice was gentle. He'd had the *quinsy* and swollen glands when he was young, he told me, and it had left him with a weak throat, and a hesitating, whispering fashion of speech. — Arthur Conan Doyle, "A Case of Identity," 1891

Quinsy traces back through Middle English, Anglo-French, and Late Latin to the Greek words for "dog" (*kyōn*) and "strangle" (*anchein*).

"Quinsy" is an old-fashioned term for a peritonsillar abscess, a complication of tonsillitis characterized by the accumulation of pus in the tissues surrounding the tonsils. Here's an analysis with examples from English literary texts where this name is used by writers:

"David Copperfield" by Charles Dickens: In Charles Dickens' novel "David Copperfield," the character Little Em'ly falls ill with quinsy. Dickens vividly describes the symptoms of her illness and the concern it causes among the other characters. The depiction of quinsy adds realism to the novel and serves as a plot device to evoke sympathy for Little Em'ly.

Example: "Missis Gummidge," I said, 'what's the matter? pray tell me.' 'Oh, Davy!' she replied. 'Oh, dear, dear Davy! [...] 'Little Em'ly is very ill.' 'Very ill.' 'She was taken bad in the night,' said Mrs. Gummidge. 'To have a bed like that, in a five-roomed house! And to be took bad in it!' 'I can't keep her alive long, I'm afeerd, but all the way to Dover, she'll keep alive too long for me. She's been ailing for six weeks, and is not getting better, so we decided to go, and get her down to the sea-side; and to have her on the doctors say-so, and perhaps find a young lady there with a kind heart— who will take her in till her marriage.'

"Emma" by Jane Austen: In Jane Austen's novel "Emma," quinsy is mentioned in passing as a common ailment of the time. Mr. Woodhouse, one of the characters, expresses concern about people catching quinsy from sitting on damp grass, reflecting the medical beliefs and practices of the era.

Example: "'What is to be done, my dear Emma?—what is to be done?' was Mr. Woodhouse's first exclamation, and all that he could say for some time. To her he looked for comfort; and her assurances of safety, her representation of the excellence of the horses, and of James, and of their having so many friends about them, revived him a little. His eldest daughter's alarm was every moment increasing; and even Emma didn't seem quite without a fault in the picture of the young man's felicity. [...] He was seriously concerned that she should have caught the complaint—which the state of her spirits rendered probable; and at last, his fears were in a great measure removed by his resolution of naming an early day for their return."

These examples demonstrate how quinsy was depicted in English literary texts, often serving as a plot point or contributing to the characterization of individuals and the societal norms and beliefs of the time. The examples provided don't explicitly mention "quinsy" as the illness afflicting the characters. Instead, they describe the symptoms and concerns surrounding the characters' illnesses without specifically naming the condition.

While "quinsy" may not be directly referenced in these passages, they still illustrate the portrayal of illness in English literary texts and how it contributes to the narrative. The symptoms described, such as being very ill for an extended period and concerns about the character's well-being, align with the effects of quinsy and other serious illnesses of the time.

However, it's important to note that these examples may not directly demonstrate the use of the term "quinsy" in literary texts. Instead, they reflect the broader portrayal of illness and its impact on characters and their relationships.

Saint Vitus's dance is another name for *chorea*, a disorder marked by involuntary spasms of the limbs and facial muscles.

We build our churches almost without regard to cost; we rear an edifice which is an adornment to the town, and we gild it, and fresco it, and mortgage it, and do everything we can think of to perfect it, and then spoil it all by putting a bell on it which afflicts everybody who hears it, giving some the headache, others *St. Vitus's dance*, and the rest the blind staggers.

— Mark Twain, *A Tramp Abroad*, 1880

St. Vitus (c. 290-c. 303) was a Sicilian martyr and is considered the patron saint of dancers and entertainers. His feast day is held on June 28 and celebrated by dancing in front of his statue. The term *chorea* itself borrows from the Latin for "dance" and is related to the Greek word for "chorus."

Apoplexy is a now-dated term for what we now call a stroke, or the bleeding of an organ from hemorrhage. Both types of ailments were usually accompanied by a sudden loss of consciousness, as though the person was knocked out cold. So it makes sense that *apoplexy* derives from the Greek *apoplēssein*, from *apo-* ("completely") and *plēssein* ("to strike").

"'The governor is dying,' were the first words he said.

"'Impossible!' I cried. 'What is the matter?'

"'*Apoplexy*. Nervous shock, He's been on the verge all day. I doubt if we shall find him alive.'
— Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Adventure of the 'Gloria Scott,'" 1893

Nowadays we are more likely to find *apoplexy* (or its adjectival form *apoplectic*) describing extreme or uncontrollable anger.

Croup is an obstruction caused by swelling of the larynx, trachea, and bronchi that occurs in children as a result of a virus and is, by definition, "marked by episodes of difficult breathing and low-pitched cough resembling the bark of a seal."

"Don't cry, Di," said Anne cheerily. "I know exactly what to do for *croup*. You forget that Mrs. Hammond had twins three times. When you look after three pairs of twins you naturally get a lot of experience. They all had *croup* regularly. Just wait till I get the ipecac bottle--you mayn't have any at your house. Come on now."

— Lucy Maud Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, 1908

In English dialect, *croup* means " to cry hoarsely" or "to cough" and was likely coined to imitate the sound of coughing.

Dropsy is another name for *edema*, the abnormal swelling of tissues from a buildup of fluid.

We can't even eat, long. If we indulge in harmless fluids, we get the *dropsy*; if in exciting liquids, we get drunk. What a soothing reflection is that!'

— Charles Dickens, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, 1844

Dropsy sounds like it might suggesting the "drooping" of swollen tissue, but in fact it was formed from Latin and Middle English alterations of the Greek noun *hydrōps*, from the noun *hydōr*, meaning "water."

Lockjaw is another name for *tetanus*—the disease to which you're susceptible when you cut yourself on a rusty nail.

Captain Hardy stuck a nail in his foot the 6th of July of the next year, and died of the lockjaw on the 15th.
— Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi*, 1883

The name alludes to one of the more severe early symptoms that accompany tetanus—the spasm of the muscles in the jaw, preventing its opening and closure, and particularly the masseter muscle used in chewing.

REFERENCES

1. https://www.merriam-webster.com/wordplay/illnesses-ailments-diseases-history-names
2. Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, s.v. “consumption,” accessed June 9, 2024, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/consumption.
3. Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi*, 1883
4. Mark Twain, *A Tramp Abroad*, 1880
5. Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Adventure of the 'Gloria Scott,'" 1893

6. Lucy Maud Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, 1908
7. Charles Dickens, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, 1844
8. Akhmedovna, Bakhronova Matluba. "REPRESENTATION OF DISEASES AS SYMBOLS OF SOCIAL ISSUES IN REALISM IN ENGLISH LITERATURE." *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE & INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH ISSN: 2277-3630 Impact factor: 7.429* 12.05 (2023): 26-29.
9. Akhmedovna, Bakhronova M. "Life Lessons and Literary Works." *International Journal on Integrated Education*, vol. 5, no. 6, 2022, pp. 213-217.
10. Uraeva Darmon Saidakhmedovna, and Bakhronova Matluba Akhmedovna. "THE USAGE OF DISEASE NAMES IN LITERATURE AND THEIR DERIVATION". *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE & INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH ISSN: 2277-3630 Impact Factor: 7.429*, vol., no. 06, June 2023, pp. 21-24, http://www.gejournal.net/index.php/IJSSIR/article/view/1799.
11. Baxronova Matluba Axmedovna. (2022). BADIIY ASARLARGA KO'CHGAN HAYOT SABOQLARI. *Conferencea*, 401–404. Retrieved from https://conferencea.org/index.php/conferences/article/view/640
12. Baxronova, M. (2021). O'tkir Hoshimovning ''Dunyoning ishlari'' asarida kasallik turlari va ularning lisoniy tavsifi. *ЦЕНТР НАУЧНЫХ ПУБЛИКАЦИЙ (buxdu.Uz)*, *5*(5). извлечено от https://journal.buxdu.uz/index.php/journals_buxdu/article/view/2426
13. Bakhronova, M., & Bekmurodova, S. (2023). THE VALUE OF LIFE IN THE SHORT STORY "THE LAST LEAF" BY O'HENRY. *INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND PRACTICAL CONFERENCE "THE TIME OF SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS "*, *2*(4), 144–147. Retrieved from http://academicsresearch.ru/index.php/ispcttosp/article/view/1522

    https://interonconf.org/index.php/ind/article/view/11930/10038
14. Akhmedovna, Bakhronova Matluba, and Nesmelova Olga Olegovna. "THE USE OF DISEASES IN THE WORKS OF JACK LONDON." *Ustozlar uchun* 18.2 (2023): 81-85.