Plague, Pox, and Pestilence: How Humans Interpret Disease

The Dance of death: from the original designs of Hans Holbein
Hans Holbein
1816

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The Dance of death: from the original designs of Hans Holbein
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Objectives:

- Review brief histories of different infectious diseases using rare books in the McGoogan Library collection
- Explore biographies of the book authors/creators
- Discuss different theories of contagion and show how those theories have changed over the centuries
1.

De sympathia et antipathia rerum liber vnvs: de contagion et contagiosis morbis et cvratione libri III

Girolamo Fracastoro
1546

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Girolamo_Fracastoro
Bubonic Plague: The Black Death
The surgeon’s mate: or military & domestic surgery, discovering faithfully & plainly the method and order of the surgeon’s chest, the uses of the instruments, the vertues and operations of the medicines ...

John Woodall
1639
DE PESTE

OR

THE PLAGUE.

And first what the Plague is.

The Plague is a disease venemous and contagious, ravenous, loathsome, noyome, hateful, and hateful to all mankind. Ye, and deadly for the most part, being accompanied with variety of grievous symptoms, as Coughs, Sore Throats, Headache, Bladders, and also producing spots and discolorings of the skin, by ancient authors called "phlegmatic," or "pestilential," which, in the vulgar tongue, means "Gods taken over." For this pestilential Ape and Carbuncle are the first and most manifest signs of the Plague, since the spots are for the most part on the head, in the face, and in the thighs, which cannot truly be called "pestilential." The disease may also be called "Plague of the eyes of the world," and even the word "Plague," derived from the Latin word "plaga," which is a word, a stroke, a stroke or a hurt, a just definition of this horrid disease, for who, so far as this disease, has been wounded, has been plagued, has been straight, has not been by the Almighty. In brief, it is a killing disease, hateful to mankind, for at every stroke, it seizes and pities the healthy man, as well as the healthy and healthy, as well as the sick and sickly, and that with great cruelty; so as Theophrastus Phryganus, among the others a learned Physicist, describing this disease, calls it "pestilential," as Theophrastus Paracelsus, among the others a learned Physicist, describing this disease, calls it "pestilential." The Latin maxim is that, "Sapientia inpatient hominem, non by his goods ". and fight killeth mankind, but killeth it with a limitation, not simply. Hence, it is useless to fight, and if fight at all, not by his goods.
Of the Plague.

A good Remedy to be made, to preserve from evil and pestilential surges, for men of adiction.

E. Storac, Calamin, Pulvismacro, Rubrum, Arsen, Arumv, 

Zedoario, of each 5. 5., make this in porsyth, then take Camphor, and Strychnis, liquid of each 5. 5., and mix them well together, adding in the end Musk and Ambergrises, of each 4. 5., and with Balsam water and Gumne Arabick, or Dragge, as much as is fitting, make it into Balls, and if you please, put it into a Box with holes, to be sold unto it. Also a good Linen Oyle tincture with Cloves, and warme about a man or woman, is a good Cordial to be smelt unto.

An excellent preparation of Wine Pogier, is prepared from infustitu Amor.

E. Myrthe and Aloes, of each 5. 5., Card. Rendillic, Marjoram, 

Zedoorata, Calamin, Alum, Amber, Perny-vialae, whole Tyne, Rod Iron, of each three hundredths, white Sandars 5. 5., &c. Juniper Berries 5. 5., &c. and all these be broken into small powders, and thereto about three gallons of Wine Vineger, and the same made warme one day for three days, then use it, to wet the face and shoulders sometimes, and carry thereof in a Spunge in some Box, to be sold unto others.

Also the smelt unto Oyle of Amber, is very good; I means not Ambergris, for that are too dear for the meanest, yet, and not so well warranted by authors; for that sake. But of this Amber which in Latin is calle Sudinum, and is that of Amber Beads are made, and is gathered in the Sea, in Pugia, in the South Countries, I sign, the Oyle of such Amber, wherein some is white, some is yellow; but that of the white is more excellent, and precious. If a heare of a old Spunge to any other thing be wet in Vineger, and certaine drops of the said Oyle added, or only a dust Spunge, and certaine drops of this Oyle dropped into the Spunges, and put into a Box, and smelt unto, is untouched from any infectious yeare, and comforteth the natural faculties of the body exceedinglie, and is likewise good against Apopnoe, and other Cephalic dispaide. It being held one of the most precious remedys against the Plague of all other, and is not seem to be bought. And the same Oyle, one, two, or three drops taken fasting, either in white Wine, or better, is a very excellent Preparative against the Plague.
2.

The virtue and use of coffee with regard to the plague

Richard Bradley
1720
Syphilis: The Great Pretender
Syphilis, sive morbus gallicus

Girolamo Fracastoro
1531

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Girolamo_Fracastoro
Hieronymi Fracastorij Syphilis, sive Morbus Gallicus.

Ad Petrum Bembum.

V i causis rerum variis, quae femina morbum
I nfuient, nec longa vixi per secula visum
A ttulerint: nostra qui tempeslate per omnes
E uropam, partim Asia, litoraque per orbem.

Scripsit: in Latium vero per trium bellum,
S allorem irripit: nam in ipse gentem recepit.
N oce non & quae curat: & opis quid comperit usus,
M agnumque in angustis hominum solertia rebus.
E t monstrata Deum auxilia: e data munera caelis
H inc canere: & longe secretas querere causas.
A era per liquidum, & veste per sidera clypeis
T incipiam: dulci quando non estis amore
Corruptum: placidus Nature haudbar horribilis
Florisus invitant: & amantes mira Camanea.
B ebus decus clarum Amone, & forte vacare
C onsumitis Leite à magnis pausisper: & alta.
R enum mole finit: tum totum qua subit vertem.
E t invat ad dulces pausum secedere Atysas:
N e nostro contente orbus, modicum laborem:
a i j.
Corky the killer: Story of syphilis

Harry A. Wilmer
1945

Smallpox: The Speckled Monster
The Works of the Right Honourable
Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: including
her correspondence, poems, and
essays

Mary Wortley Montagu
1817

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lady_Mary_Wortley_Montagu
also those compound words which are very frequent and strong in the Turkish language.
You see I am pretty far gone in Oriental learning; and, to say truth, I study very hard. I wish my studies may give me an occasion of entertaining your curiosity, which will be the utmost advantage hoped for from them by you, yours, &c.

TO MRS. S. C.
Adrianople, April 1, O. S.
In my opinion, dear S. I ought rather to quarrel with you for not answering my Nimeguen letter of August till December, than to excuse my not writing again till now. I am sure there is on my side a very good excuse for silence, having gone such tiresome land-journeys, though I don’t find the conclusion of them so bad as you seem to imagine. I am very easy here, and not in the solitude you fancy me. The great number of Greeks, French, English, and Italians, that are under our protection, make their court to me from morning till night; and, I’ll assure you, are many of them very fine ladies; for there is no possibility for a Christian to live easily under this government but by the protection of an ambassador—and the richer they are, the greater is their danger.

Those dreadful stories you have heard of the plague have very little foundation in truth. I own I have much ado to reconcile myself to the sound of a word which has always given me such terrible ideas, though I am convinced there is little more in it than in a fever. As a proof of this, let me tell you that we passed through two or three towns most
violently infected. In the very next house where we lay (in one of those places) two persons died of it. Luckily for me I was so well deceived that I knew nothing of the matter; and I was made believe that our second cook had only a great cold. However, we left our doctor to take care of him, and yesterday they both arrived here in good health; and I am now let into the secret that he has had the plague. There are many that escape it; neither is the air ever infected. I am persuaded that it would be as easy a matter to root it out here as out of Italy and France; but it does so little mischief, they are not very solicitous about it, and are content to suffer this distemper instead of our variety, which they are utterly unacquainted with.

A propos of distempers: I am going to tell you a thing that will make you wish yourself here. The small-pox, so fatal and so general amongst us, is here entirely harmless by the invention of ingrafting, which is the term they give it. There is a set of old women who make it their business to perform the operation every autumn, in the month of September, when the great heat is abated. People send to one another to know if any of their family has a mind to have the small-pox: they make parties for this purpose, and when they are met (commonly fifteen or sixteen together), the old woman comes with a nut-shell full of the matter of the best sort of small-pox, and asks what vein you please to have opened. She immediately rips open that you offer to her with a large needle (which gives you no more pain than a common scratch), and puts into the vein as much matter as can lie upon the head of her needle, and after that binds up the little wound with a hollow bit of shell; and in this manner opens four or five veins. The Grecians have commonly
the superstition of opening one in the middle of the forehead, one in each arm, and one on the breast, to mark the sign of the cross; but this has a very ill effect, all these wounds leaving little scars, and is not done by those that are not superstitious, who choose to have them in the legs, or that part of the arm that is concealed. The children or young patients play together all the rest of the day, and are in perfect health to the eighth. Then the fever begins to seize them, and they keep their beds two days, very seldom three. They have very rarely above twenty or thirty in their faces, which never mark; and in eight days' time they are as well as before their illness. Where they are wounded, there remain running sores during the distemper, which I don't doubt is a great relief to it. Every year thousands undergo this operation; and the French ambassador says pleasantly, that they take the
An inquiry into the causes and effects of the variolae vaccinae

Edward Jenner
1798

The Works of the Right Honourable Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: including her correspondence, poems, and essays

“Town Eclogues: Saturday: The Small-Pox”

Mary Wortley Montagu
1817

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lady_Mary_Wortley_Montagu
SATURDAY.

THE SMALL POX.

FLAVIA.

The wretched Flavia, on her couch reclin'd,
Thus breath'd the anguish of a wounded mind;
A glass revers'd in her right hand she bore,
For now she shunn'd the face she sought before.

"How am I chang'd! alas! how am I grown
A frightful spectre, to myself unknown!
Where's my complexion? where my radiant bloom,
That promis'd happiness for years to come?
Then with what pleasure I this face survey'd!
To look once more, my visits oft delay'd!
Charm'd with the view, a fresher red would rise,
And a new life shot sparkling from my eyes!

"Ah! faithless glass, my wonted bloom restore:
Alas! I rave, that bloom is now no more!
The greatest good the gods on men bestow,
Even youth itself, to me is useless now.

K E
Description of the distinct, confluent, and inoculated small pox, varioloid disease, cow pox and chicken pox

John D. Fisher
1829

https://www.perkins.org/john-dix-fisher/
Hansen’s Disease:
Leprosy
Feldtbuch der Wundtartzney

Hans von Gersdorff
1517
Cholera: The Blue Death
A practical treatise on the history, prevention, and treatment of epidemic cholera

Daniel Drake
1832

of the whole, except the last, and there is, therefore, a cause distinct from them all, and their agency is limited to the effect of predisposing the system to its action.

If such a cause does not exist, why is the world now trembling at the geographical progress of an Epidemic, as uniform in its symptoms as small pox, and as fatal in its termination as the plague? The existence of such a cause must, I think, be admitted. Whether it will ever be discovered is extremely doubtful. Meanwhile, philanthropy and science should exert themselves in correcting or removing all the conditions that co-operate with it in the work of human destruction, and thus disarm, if they cannot slay the monster.

CHAPTER III.

SYMPTOMS OF THE DISEASE.

We come at length to matters of deeper interest than most of what has occupied us in the preceding chapters. To record all the symptoms which have manifested themselves, as the disease has passed through innumerable localities and invaded many distinct nations, would require a volume; and could prove of no great utility, at a moment when a practical hand-book is required. I shall not attempt it; but select such descriptions, as will, in the briefest manner compatible with an accurate knowledge of its symptomatology, present its aspect in several different places, and in its various stages, and grades of violence.

1. Of the first or forming Stage.

The British practitioners in India have not overlooked this important period of the disease; important, because it is that in which it can be most successfully arrested.

Mr. Orton, one of the best of the Indian writers on Cholera, observes:

"The attack of Cholera is usually sudden and violent, but in a great majority of instances, not without some premonitory symptoms; it is frequently preceded by a simple diarrhoea, continuing several days, and still more commonly by other slight affections which are more characteristic of the disease; an extraordinary depression of spirits and general uneasiness come on, attended by tremor, and sense of debility; giddiness or headache, and occasionally ringing in the ears, are also felt, particularly on rising from the recumbent posture, or making any sudden movement. Pains, resembling those which attend the accession of fever, are frequently felt in the limbs; the bowels are griped occasionally, and natural loose stools occur; and nausea come on. The circulation and temperature of the body are variously disturbed, but most commonly, the pulse is accelerated and weakened; the skin is moist, and colder than
one] and opium, arrested the disease; but on the same night, he awoke with cramp in one of his legs, an affection which had never before attacked him in his sleep. At this time, July 8th, diarrhoea and cholera morbus are increasing throughout the city. I was called this morning, to visit a family, every member of which, four in number, had been seized in a single hour with cholera. They had breakfasted in the simplest manner. In the endemic cholera of Cincinnati, in common years, a copious secretion of bile is a prominent symptom; but at the present time, the matters ejected are, in almost every case, devoid of that secretion; and consist of a turbid watery fluid, which is sometimes in great quantities. On the whole, it is quite obvious that the precurserous disorders of the Epidemic already prevail among us.

Stage of Prostration, Asphyxia, or Collapse.

The stage which has just been described, may occur in various degrees of intensity and duration, from a slight indisposition, to a pretty severe but not dangerous affection; and from a single hour to many days. Should it not terminate in health spontaneously, or under medical treatment, it passes on to what may be called the second stage; but which, in many cases, especially in Asia, is the first. I shall borrow from the report of the Madras Medical Board, a lengthened and circumstantial history of this stage and its termination, either in health, or the state of febrile reaction, presently to be described.

The invasion of Cholera generally takes place in the night, or towards morning. The patient is sick at stomach, he vomits its contents, and his bowels are at the same time evacuated. This evacuation is of a nature quite peculiar to the disease; the entire intestinal tube seems to be at once emptied of its fecal or solid matters; and an indescribable, but most subduing feeling of exhaustion, sinking, and emptiness is produced. Faintness supervenes, the skin becomes cold, and there is frequently giddiness, and ringing in the ears; the powers of locomotion are generally soon arrested; spasmodic contractions, or twichings of the muscles of the fingers and toes are felt; and these affections gradually extend along the limbs, to the trunk of the body; they partake both of the clonic and tonic spasm, but the clonic form chiefly prevails. The pulse, from the first, is small, weak, and accelerated; and after a certain interval, but especially on the accession of spasms, or of severe vomiting, it sinks suddenly, so as to be speedily lost in all the external parts. The skin, which from the commencement of the disease, is below the natural temperature, becomes colder and colder; it is very rarely dry, generally covered with a profuse cold sweat, or with a clammy moisture. In Europeans it often partially assumes a livid hue; the whole surface appears collapsed, the lips become blue, the nails present a similar tint, and the skin of the feet and hands become much corrugated, and exhibits a sullen ap-
Anatomie pathologique du corps humain

Jean Cruvielhier
Vol. 1
1829-42

Tuberculosis: The White Plague
De l’uscultation meditate

René Laennec
Vol. 1
1819

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ren%C3%A9_Laennec
Pathological anatomy: illustrations of the elementary forms of disease

Robert Carswell
1838

Weak lungs, and how to make them strong: or Diseases of the organs of the chest, with their home treatment by the movement cure

Dio Lewis
1863

https://www.pafa.org/museum/collection/item/dio-lewis
same thing with his left. Do the same with your right hands. And so continue to alternate. Do this gently 10 times.

No. 8. Assistant, standing behind the patient, grasps his hands. (Fig. 6.) Patient draws up the hands, as shown in the dotted lines, assistant resisting. Patient forces his hands back again to the first position, assistant resisting. Repeat 5 times.

No. 9. Assistant, standing behind the patient, who is seated, grasps his uplifted hands. Patient draws down the hands, as shown by the dotted lines, assistant resisting. Patient forces the hands back to

clubs on the back of the neck. Carry them out again to the position seen in Fig. 3. Now let the farther ends of the clubs touch at the nose. Carry them back again to Fig. 3 position. Let them fall backward, so that they hang down vertically, (Fig. 4,) but without moving the arms other than with a twisting motion. In this the hands must not be allowed to give way on the handle, but must grasp firmly. To reach this vertical position of the clubs as they fall behind, it is necessary to bend the back considerably. Raise the clubs again to Fig. 3 position, and allow them to fall again, but this time forward, and until they reach the vertical position. Thus alternate between the fall backward and forward, 5 times, and end by bringing the clubs to the hanging position by the side of the legs.
SPECIAL EXERCISES.

No. 4. Hand Swing Sidewise, four, eight, or twelve times.

Rings same as in the last. The swinging which is sidewise, is carried on by efforts of the legs and arms. This exercise operates happily by enlarging the chest. (Fig. 4.)
Huber the Tuber: a story of tuberculosis

Harry A. Wilmer
1943

Influenza
Conservation of Public Health Series
“Spanish” Influenza

University of Nebraska College of Medicine
1918


the handkerchief. At that moment a brilliant beam of light entered the adjacent window, and, just as dust particles can be seen when a beam of light enters a dark

made visible. One could readily see that a dozen people were literally hidden infections bacilli had been present in the throat or nose of this person, all of them

are transferred to others, in the respiratory tract. The disease is apparently most contagious in the first

probable that healthy carriers exist. Because of these facts, any condition that brings men in close contact,

favors the spread of the disease. Crowded offices and particularly street cars are the dissemination of the causative germ.

THE METHODS OF CONTROL

that the organisms enter only through the nose and throat. During epidemic

moving picture shows, churches, etc., because here there is every possibility that

the organisms be breathed in. One of the best means of prevention

is the exercise of the greatest care in avoiding promiscuous spitting, and

ing. If it is necessary for a person to be in a crowd, care should be taken to keep

person. All workshops and homes should be kept well ventilated and open to

sunlight as much as possible, for sunlight is a very efficient disinfectant.

Cases of the disease should be isolated in bed during the course of the

on a case should wear gauze masks over the face when near the patient. The

not be in a draft because of the danger of pneumonia following the infection. The

infected, because they carry the germ which causes the disease. Boiling will be

thorough cleaning, airing and sunning. This is the usual disinfection that is necessary.

Quarantine is unnecessary. It is impracticable. Observation of the

precautions outlined above is all that is required.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

During the presence of the epidemic all persons are urged to use in each

nostril two or three times daily a few drops of some sterile oily material. For this

vaseline may be used. Use five or ten drops of thin oily material two or three times

hot salt and water or vinegar, or nasal douches such as covering of the mucous membrane of the air passageways. The oily material on the

individuals attacked should be put to bed under the best possible nursing

care. Consult your family physician promptly. Take no chances.

Note—Reprints for additional copies of the Bulletin should be sent to the University of

Kansas College of Medicine, Fort Scott and Dewey Avenue, Omaha, Nebraska.
Questions?
Thank You!

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