

USING DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS TO
UNDERSTAND SELF-DIAGNOSIS AMONGST
NATURAL PHILOSOPHERS AND PHYSICIANS

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- English, which can express the thoughts of Hamlet and the tragedy of Lear, has no words for the shiver or the headache The meekest schoolgirl when she falls in love has Shakespeare or Keats to speak her mind for her, but let a sufferer try to describe a pain in his head to a doctor and language at once runs dry. There is nothing ready made for him. He is forced to coin words himself, and taking his pain in the hand, and a lump of pure sound in the other (as perhaps the people of Babel did in the beginning), so to crush them together that a brand new word in the end drops out. Probably it will be something laughable.
- —Virginia Woolf, *On Being Ill*





- The soul felt the injury to the body directly as pain, because body and soul, though terminologically distinct, were still imagined as one reality and could therefore not be separated

MIND BODY DUALISM IN DESCARTES (1641)

- Mind-body dualism which holds that the mind is a nonphysical—and therefore, non-spatial—substance. Descartes clearly identified the mind with consciousness and self-awareness. He was the first to formulate the mind–body problem in the form in which it exists today.
- The distinction between mind and body is argued in *Meditation VI* as follows: I have a clear and distinct idea of myself as a thinking, non-extended thing, and a clear and distinct idea of body as an extended and non-thinking thing. Whatever I can conceive clearly and distinctly, God can so create.

- With the rise of Cartesianism in the latter part of the seventeenth century, pain and disease would gradually become less functionalist and more ontological

FUNCTIONALIST DISEASE

In the functionalist approach to disease, the illness was seen as “extant only within a specific organism” and attributed to an individual’s bodily constitution or environment, often in the context of Galenic humoralism

FUNCTIONALIST

- In the functionalist view, the body, intertwined with the soul, was thought to have its own intelligence; when Faust tried to prick his finger to sign away his soul to the devil, his finger refused to bleed in an act of intelligent self-preservation.



TWO CASE STUDIES

- John Wilkins (1614-72)
- Martin Lister (1639-1712)

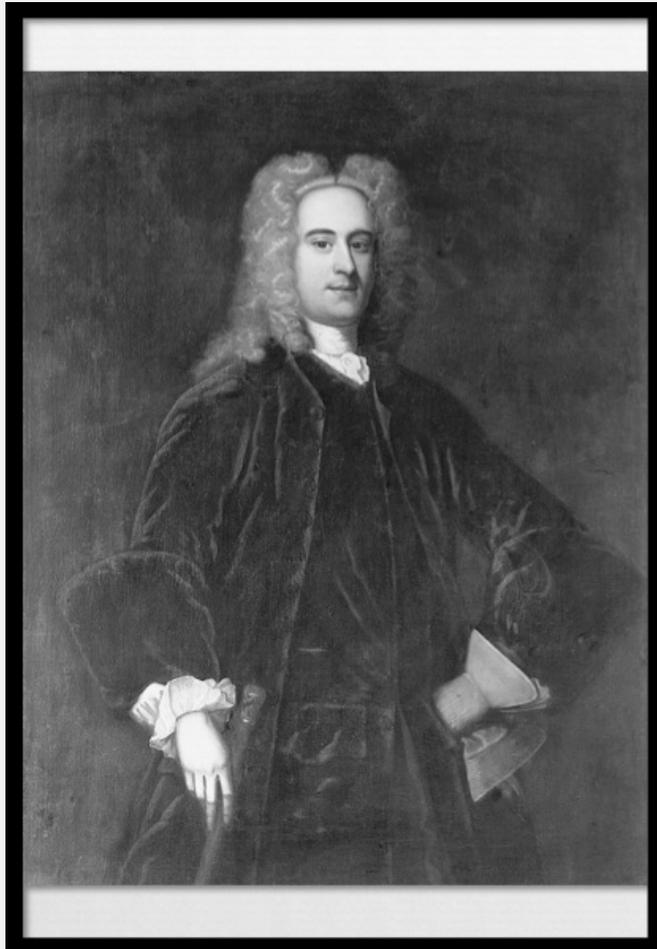
JOHN WILKINS



SYLVIUS DE LA BOË AND ACID ALKALI IATROCHEMISTRY

- *flegma acidum succini rectificatum cum sale tartari*
[lead precipitate of amber refined with salt of tartar], its acidity thought effective to dissolve the chalky alkaline kidney stones.

MARTIN LISTER, ROYAL PHYSICIAN TO
QUEEN ANNE



LETTER TO MARTIN LISTER, 22 MAY 1672

Sir,

- Though I am a stranger to your person, yet I am not so to your Worth nor to severall of your speciall friends. particularly to Mr Willoughby and Mr Ray, with whom I have lately discoursed concerning you. It is upon this Account, that I doe crave your advice. I did purpose this summer to have bestowed some time at Scarborough Spaw, having ben frequently troubled, with fitts of the stone, I doe not thinke that I have in my kidneys any formed stone. But some parcells of concreted sand, about the length of a graine of wheat which will easily crumble into powdere. ~~which~~ And these/ in their passage through the Ureters, doe must trouble me. I had often heard the Scarborough Spaw much commended for such cases. But having lately seen a discourse by one Dr Tonstall, which asserts the contrary, and pretends to severall substances, I could not think of any better way for impartiall satisfaction, then by consulting your Opinion in the matter. I doe make it my request to you, that you will let me know what you think.

MARIAN METHOD

- Marianus Sanctus Barolitanus in 1522
- A grooved staff was passed along the urethra to guide subsequent instruments into the bladder. A vertical incision two to four inches long was made with a sharp-pointed deep-bellied knife, and the tissues divided down to the neck of the bladder. A gorget was passed along the groove and followed by two conductors, female and male; (these were curved bars of iron which were separated to dilate the wound). They were followed by a dilator then the forceps to grasp the stone.
- The trauma to the prostate and bladder neck was significant. Haemorrhage could be considerable, stone extraction through the prostatic urethra was painful and incontinence, fistula and impotence were frequent sequelae.

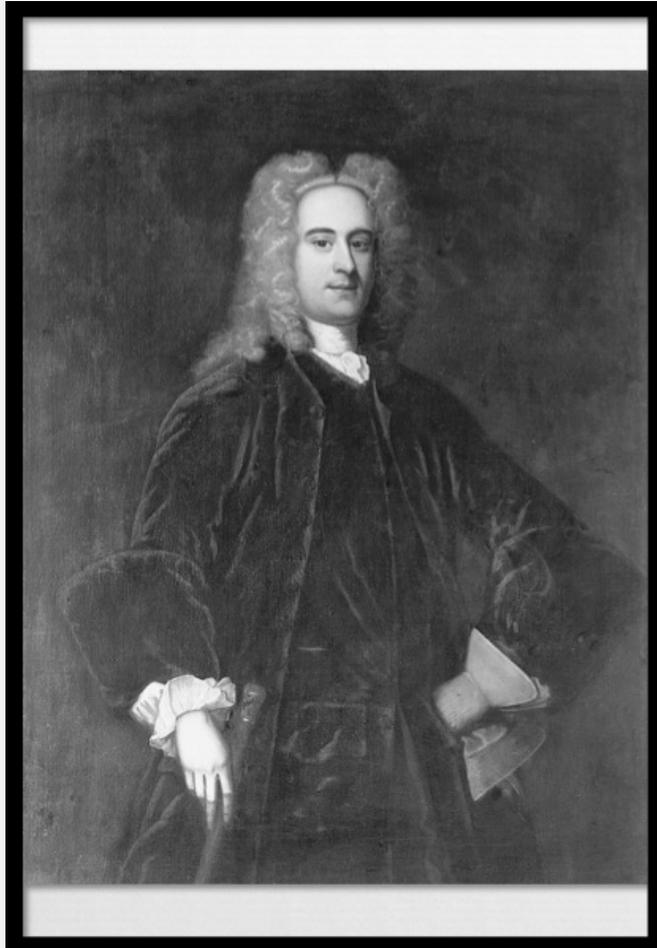
LETTER TO LISTER, 11 JULY 1672

... And this morning I waked with a fitt of the stone upon me which continued till about Eleven of the Clock. I am very sensible of your kindnes in being concerned for me. for the first pre letter you sent me, by which I was encouraged to come to this place, and for the second of advice about using the Waterrrs. They have not the same operation with me as with others, working chiefly by stoole and by salivation and very litle by Urine, which I principally hoped for. I have had two fitts of the stone since my coming and none for two or three month before. I begin to Question whether they may be proper in my Case.

LETTER TO LISTER, 15 JULY 1672

- I agree with you, that I ought not obstinately to contest against these waters, and therefore resolve to leave them this weeke. I am now going with Sir Hugh Cholmeley to Whitby with a purpose of returning to morrow. I have a great desire to see you. But cannot at this time hope for it, by reason of the mishap, and my short stay in these parts. I thinke of going home on Ffriday.

MARTIN LISTER, ROYAL PHYSICIAN TO
QUEEN ANNE



An Account of a Stone cut out from under the tongue of a Man; lately sent in a Letter of Mr. Listers to his Grace the Lord Archbishop of York.

May it please your Grace,

IN obedience to your Grace's Commands, I have penned the Circumstances of a not common Medical observation, viz. the Excision of a stone from under the tongue. And I here with present your Grace also with the stone its self, as I had it from the person it was taken.*

** This Stone is now in the custody of the R. Society, to whom it was presented afterwards.*

As to the occasion and time of its birth, he tells me, (My Lord, you may be pleas'd to give firm Credit to every particular, that he hath answered me at your Grace's instance) it was from a winter Sea-voyage, which lasted much longer than he expected, and wherein he suffered an exceeding cold; and that, not long after his landing, he found a certain *Nodus* or hard lump in the very place whence this stone was cut. There was about 8 years betwixt its breading and being taken away.

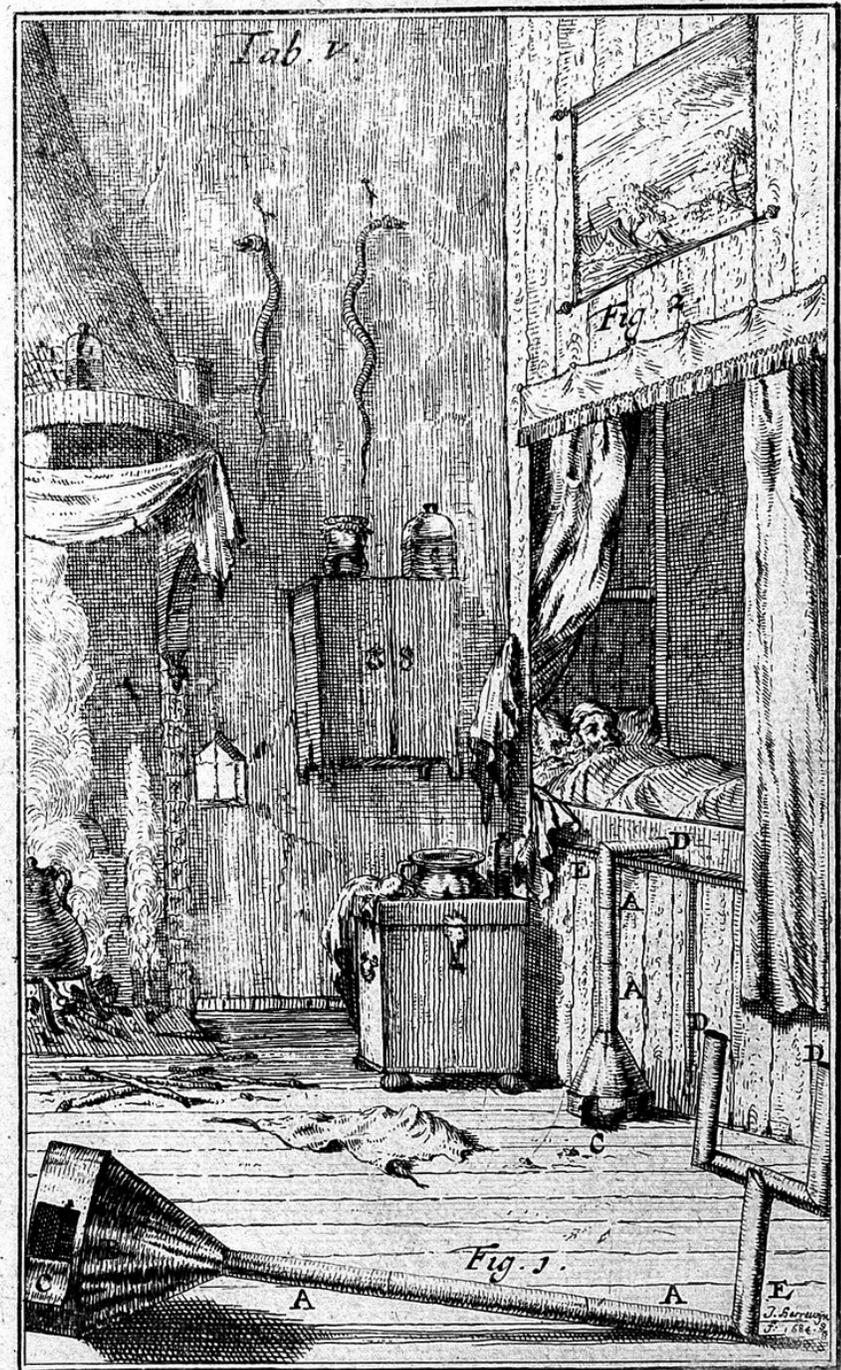
As to its growth, and the inconveniences thence ensuing; he further saith, that upon all fresh-cold-taking, he suffered much pain in that part especially; and yet, that cold once being over, that part was no more painful than the rest of his mouth. He adds, that towards the 7th and 8th year it did often cause sudden

den

- This extremity lasted 5 days, in all which time, the party had so vast a flux of spittle run[n]ing from him, that it was not possible for him to repose his head to sleep, without wetting all the bed about him; inso much as that it was very much questioned by some friendly visitants, whether he had not of himself, or by mistake, made use of some Mercurial medicine

ONE NIGHT WITH VENUS, A LIFETIME WITH MERCURY

- Mercury could be given in the form of calomel (mercury chloride), an ointment, a steam bath or pill.
- Unfortunately, the side effects could be as painful and terrifying as the disease itself. Many patients who underwent mercury treatments suffered from extensive tooth loss, ulcerations and neurological damage





*Daniel Colvial Armiger Musai Regalis
Societatis Fundator*

MUSÆUM REGALIS SOCIETATIS.
OR A
Catalogue & Description
Of the Natural and Artificial
RARITIES
Belonging to the
ROYAL SOCIETY
And preserved at
Gresham Colledge.

MADE
By *Nehemiah Grew* M. D. Fellow of the *Royal Society*,
and of the *Colledge of Physitians.*

Whereunto is Subjoyned the
Comparative Anatomy
OF
Stomachs and Guts.

By the same *AUTHOR.*

LONDON,
Printed by *W. Rawlins*, for the Author, 1681.