

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

LEXICAL CHANGE IN PSEUDO-MEDICAL  
TERMINOLOGY FROM 1910 TO 2000  
in *San Francisco Chronicle* Advertisements

A Pro Gradu Thesis

By

Elena Lucas-Sprague

Department of English

2001

**ABSTRACT**

The Faculty of Humanities  
Department of English

Elena Lucas-Sprague  
LEXICAL CHANGE IN MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY FROM 1910 TO 2000  
in *San Francisco Chronicle* Advertisements

Pro Gradu Thesis  
English Language Philology  
June, 2001

58 pages

The aim of this thesis is to examine, in a restricted area, the process of English language vocabulary change and growth. Obviously, such an examination must be extremely limited in scope, since it is beyond the ability of any single work to adequately plot, let alone completely describe, all the changes that have taken place in any language.

In this paper, I will compare popular medical terminology in newspaper excerpts from two different time periods and identify what, if any, new vocabulary from whatever source: coinages, loans, derivation, composition, etc. have been adopted during the intervening years.

The method used will be to examine data from a particular time period and source and through comparing it to a later and distinct period, and checking differences in dictionaries, identify any lexical changes. From the vantage point granted by the passage of time, I hope to demonstrate the overall influence and value of such changes on the English language and, by extension, on languages in general.

The lexical items discussed here were all taken from *The San Francisco Chronicle* printed in San Francisco, California, and relate to medical topics. Two samples were taken, one from Sunday, March 6, 1910 and the other from Sunday, March 6, 1955 and compared in the hopes of identifying semantic or vocabulary changes between the two periods.

The findings of this paper, that medical terminology has changed significantly over the period examined, support my hypothesis only indirectly, since the majority of the new lexical items are not new borrowings but derivations from older loan words. The scope of this paper precludes decisive proof, yet support for my hypothesis has clearly been achieved.

Key Words: pseudo-medical, archaic, obsolete, loan words, compounding and derivatives.

# CONTENTS

Abstract	1
Table of Contents	2
Introduction	3
Background	6
Language Changes	6
Lexical Changes	8
Variety of Sources	11
Method	13
Lexical Category	15
Data and Analysis	16
General Observations	16
Data Background	17
Group I : Medical Terminology Still in Use	18
Group II : Terms No Longer Used	31
Group III : Unchanged Medical Terms	37
Group IV : Terminology Used to Describe 'Female Complaints'	42
Conclusion	48
Differences Between 1955 and 2000	50
Source of New Lexical Items	51
Persistence of Common Terms	51
Problems and Limitations	52
Hypothesis Validity	54
Bibliography	57

## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to examine, on a modest scale, the process of English language vocabulary change and growth. Obviously, such an examination must be extremely limited in scope, since it is beyond the ability of any single work to adequately plot, let alone completely describe, all the changes that have taken place in any language.

The European media and people today seem to be increasingly aware of and discussing the rapid changes that are taking place around us. Increasing technological advances have made rapid, easy and inexpensive communication accessible to an ever greater segment of humanity. They have vastly extended the reach and range of mass media. Travel for pleasure and business, broadening trade networks, the growing awareness of international interdependence, and of the pandemic nature of the difficulties and crises that are claiming an increasing share of world attention (global warming, human rights issues, and environmental concerns etc..) as well as a myriad other issues, all contribute to a growing exchange of ideas, dialogue and discourse on a global scale.

One consequence of this enormous increase in the breadth and depth of international, intercultural and interlingual contact has been a corresponding rise in many languages in the linguistic importing of foreign vocabulary: both in the areas of specialized jargon and of more common vernacular.

This increase in the borrowing from some foreign source has led, in Europe, to increasing concern and discussion about the effects of such 'contamination' of one language by another. While refuting just such an argument by another linguist, Lass(1987) states, "The point that seems to evade

Johnson and is still far from obvious to most people, is that 'language' is neutral: there are only good and bad users."

The English language is currently the most frequently cited as being 'imperialistic' or guilty of 'cultural colonization' and of diluting other cultures and languages. This is especially ironic when considering the history of invasions and conquests and fashion trends that have so influenced English. That the modern English vocabulary is roughly 70 percent words or morphemes of foreign (ie. non Anglo-Saxon) origin, is a clear reflection of its past borrowings and outside influences. That English is still capable of doing the job of communication quite well despite, or possibly because of, that fact, seems to have escaped the vast majority of the complainants.

There is an ongoing (and historically recurring) dialogue, in both layman and professional circles, about the idea of linguistic 'purity'; the strange notion that words naturalized into ones native language before the 'now' of the speakers, are normal and acceptable but that any modern borrowings being added during their deictically oriented awareness qualify as an undesirable foreign taint that somehow threatens the very culture and future of the borrowing language community. Yet according to Leith(1983) "Languages are part of the history of the peoples who use them, bound up with the changing patterns of the societies they reflect." If it is true that any changes in language reflect the changes and patterns in a culture, how can such lexical changes be considered bad?

It seems obvious that the only languages immune to such changes are dead ones. All languages, by virtue of their use in changing environments and situations, are in an ongoing process of evolution, since the world around us is in constant change and we need to be able to reflect and deal with those changes in our modes of communication.

As long as a language is spoken, its never fully 'stable' or 'fixed'; like all other cultural institutions, languages are constantly changing. If you have speakers, you have a certain amount of variation; and if you have variation, you have the precondition (and enabling mechanism) for change.

There is in fact a certain similarity between linguistic

and biological change: the establishment of a new form is rather like the origin of a new species. We begin with a pool of variants in the community, and some have a greater survival value than others....With linguistic innovation there is no question of 'fitness' in a functional sense - one linguistic form is as good as another for purposes of communication. But there are still selective pressures of a social kind that will favour particular variants: and these are selected cumulatively, with the result that over time the older forms gradually disappear (or nearly disappear) and are substituted for by newer ones. It is this....that we call 'language change'.(Lass 1987:22-23)

Since linguistic change seems to be an inevitable process, a more realistic concern might be the issue not of prevention, but rather of limiting, regulating or controlling the changes. Yet even that idea is fraught with difficulties. The reasonable balance between a prescriptive approach and a 'laissez faire' attitude is not so easy to arrive at. Assuming that can be resolved, there is also the question of who will decide and how such decisions will be enforced or promoted. The questions of how to regard the phenomenon and what, if anything, should be done about such adaptations and how something could or should be done seem particularly germane today. Roger Lass discusses this whole question at length in *The Shape of English* (1987) and he concludes with the following:

"Perhaps the most lasting effect of the 'authoritarian' or 'prescriptive' tradition however is an attitude: that language is 'under threat' or 'decaying', that there are rearguard actions to be fought against all kinds of novel diseases affecting our speech. And one of the most interesting properties of this constellation of attitudes is the general lack of historical perspective, and the invincibility of opinion in the face of contrary data." (Lass 1987:72)

In this paper, I will examine one small sample of language and will describe and discuss the vocabulary changes found. While the question of vocabulary change in general is very interesting to me, the scope of this paper precludes a broad or complete discussion of the processes that cause or influence such changes. The major sources of lexical changes are mentioned here without going into any detailed discussion of the social, technical and

cultural changes that underlie them, since they can be dealt with only in passing while discussing the data.

There were many examples and types of lexical change identified in my sample but, in an attempt to limit the data I analyse to a manageable amount, I chose to concentrate on one type of vocabulary and therefore primarily on the lexical changes contained in the sample.

The goal of this project is to corroborate my assertion that lexical changes are both unavoidable and natural as well as, in the long run, beneficial to the language. For the purposes of this paper beneficial can be defined as something that aids in the efficiency or efficacy of communication. It is certainly true that lexical change has been the norm for English throughout its fifteen hundred year history, and English is still quite capable of conveying information clearly and without confusion; despite its mixed parentage there is no question of its comprehensibility to its speakers.

The aim of this paper is to compare newspaper excerpts from two different time periods and identify what, if any, new vocabulary from whatever source: coinages, loans, derivation, composition, etc. have been adopted during the intervening years. The identification of new lexical items will be primarily through dictionary comparisons.

The hypothesis to be substantiated or disproved is that there will be a significant number of new lexical items, of whatever origin, which will have been added during the interval to the vocabulary which describe the changed conditions and environment. A corollary to this is that there will also be a group of words which are already archaic or that are becoming so, as well as words the meanings of which have narrowed or specialized.

## **Background**

### **Language Changes**

Modern English is the sum of the historical, political, social and

technological changes that have affected it over the last fifteen hundred years. And while all languages change over time, English has become arguably one of the most protean in the world.

Over the course of the history of the English language many things have contributed to the changes that have made modern English so different from the tongue spoken even one thousand years ago. " The structural changes that have taken place over the last millennium are so massive that the English of 900 A.D. is a foreign language to us."(Lass:1987)

When considering the roughly 1500 years of the English language, three main periods are usually recognized according to Baugh and Cable(1996). The period referred to as Old English is from around 450 - 1150 A.D., the period from around 1150 - 1500 A.D. is known as Middle English and the language since then is called Modern English.

In their introduction to the description of these periods, Baugh and Cable (1996) give various reasons for these divisions, the main one having to do with the changes in the inflectional system of the language. They report that the period known as Old English is sometimes described as the period of full inflections since the endings of the noun, the adjective and the verb that were common to the Germanic languages from which it is derived were preserved more or less 'unimpaired'; during the period referred to as Middle English the inflectional system became greatly simplified by the elimination of many suffixes and is thus known as the period of leveled inflections; the language since the 1500's is called Modern English, in which a large part of the original inflectional system has disappeared and so is referred to as the period of lost inflections.

These dramatic changes in the structure of English during the last thousand years have contributed to its malleability in relation to vocabulary. Those very changes have been ones that make the creating and borrowing of new words rather easy and the adaptation of a given word to other uses relatively simple. Roger Lass points out that " as far as word formation goes...a language such as English can take advantage of it's lack of inflectional



morphology and simply use a noun as a verb (1987:141)".

### **Lexical Change**

Leith(1983) states that "new words are more easily added to a language than grammatical forms or structures or sounds, and so the word-stock of a language, or its lexicon, can be considered more open ended." That has certainly been the case with English.

The English language, like many languages, acquires new lexical items in many ways: 1) loan words from some non-native source, 2) composition-compounding from morphemes already in the vocabulary, whatever their origin, 3) derivation- transformation by affixation according to the rules of the language, 4) acronyms (as in *radar*, an acronym from Radio Direction And Ranging), 5) blends <*mot(or hot)el*>, <perma(nent) frost> 6) backformation (*beg* the verb is derived from the noun *beghard*, *cobble* from *cobbler*, *laze* from *lazy*), etc.

When the speakers of a language need or want a new word for something the three main ways to get one (Lass:1980, Potter:1969, Bradley:1964) are: 1) create one using existing phonetic material(i.e. *barf* which is probably onomatopoeic); 2) create it by composition, the process of combining existing words or morphemes in new ways; 3) Borrow some lexical item from another language as in *sauna*. The first one is not in use to a significant degree anymore, although it must have been the method most used in the beginning of language(Lass:1987). The second and third mentioned above have been, at least in the case of English, used to a greater or lesser degree in conjunction or alternatively at different points throughout the development of the language.

The second strategy which is also known as word-formation, consists of at least three methods:a) compounding: as in *television* compounded from the morpheme *tele*, a Greek loan, and *vision* from Latin via French, or some recent examples are *call-girl*, *sit-in*. b) derivation: using affixes that either

create new words by changing parts of speech or by changing the meaning without changing word class ( *inter-national*, *acid-ify*, *en-light-en*.) c) conversion: when taking advantage of the lack of inflectional morphology in English and using a noun as a verb or ( *to access*, *to contact*, *to sauna*). Another factor in the ongoing development of the vocabulary of English is the constant change through 'sense-shifts'(Lass:1987) where word value or status changes in one direction or another (up or down) or by the broadening (generalization) or narrowing (specialization) of the denotation. Some of the other less prolific sources of new lexical items are mentioned above: backformation, blends and acronyms, but as they have contributed a tiny fraction of vocabulary relative to the whole lexicon, they will not be dealt with in any detail here.

Modern English was also greatly influenced, in the Renaissance period (1500-1650), by an enthusiastic trend toward borrowing words or coining new words from old roots to suit the vernacular of the day. While there were some who objected to these so called 'inkhorn' terms, the prevailing attitude seems to have been one of cheerful opportunism. Many felt that judicious borrowings were not only useful but, given the long history of such loans in the past of the English language and the precedent long established in such admired languages as Latin and Greek, that it was in some way a worthy tradition. One of the more interesting aspects of this trend was the way it excited 'common' interest- even to the extent of inclusion in such popular plays as the *Poetaster* (1601).

Another noteworthy characteristic of this early period of Modern English is how much more plastic it was than now. Baugh and Cable (1996) mention the following example, "When Shakespeare wrote *stranger'd with an oath* he was fitting the language to his thought, rather than forcing his thought into the mold of conventional grammar. This was in keeping with the spirit of his age."

During the next one hundred and fifty years the notion that order was required in language set in motion a number of efforts to quantify the language, ranging from the attempt to establish an 'English Academy' to refine,

standardise and 'fix' the language to dictionaries and the beginnings of prescriptive grammar. There was also a renewal of the argument for and against borrowings and the modern idea of 'usage' began to carry more weight. The dictum of Horace that "use is the sole arbiter and norm of speech" quoted by John Huges in his essay *Of Style* (1698) presumably played some part in this bent. Lass(1987) writes, "Change in language-- except for the necessary importation or creation of new lexis for particular purposes-- was felt to be a danger; change, if left unchecked could lead to loss of comprehensibility..."

Coupled with, and probably partly responsible for the above mentioned attitude, was the growing body of new vocabulary that was acquired via the expansion of the 'English Speaking World'. Baugh and Cable (1996) state that " ...one of the reasons for the cosmopolitan character of the English vocabulary today is seen to be the multitude of contacts the English language has had with other tongues in widely scattered parts of the world."

The most influential factors in change over the last two hundred years have been changes brought about or made possible by the enormous strides which have been made in science and the 'rapid progress made in every field of intellectual activity'(Baugh and Cable:1996). But while the resulting influx of vocabulary was 'new' the principles that made them possible were the same that have been used throughout the history of English. As might have been foreseen in the light of the ongoing English predilection for borrowing, many of the new words have been co-opted 'prete-a- portè' from the people from whom they were adopted.

According to Barber(1964), the speed at which English vocabulary changes has varied from age to age depending on various historical factors. The three greatest sources (Serjeantson 1935, Barber 1964, Lass 1987) of our loan-words have been: Scandinavian, especially in the late Old English and early Middle English period; French, the period of the most borrowings and rapid changes was from the twelfth century to the fifteenth century when vast numbers of words were introduced and adopted into the language;

The new conditions brought about by the Norman Conquest, however,

opened the door for a far more abundant influx of foreign words. It was not only that the tongue of the new rulers, as we have already seen, came to be used by large numbers of Englishmen in the course of daily life, so that much of its colloquial vocabulary was adopted into the native language. The knowledge of French gave access to the rich literature of the continent; from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century a large portion of the literature of England consisted of translations of French romance, and the native poetry was powerfully influenced by French models. Under these circumstances it was natural that the English literary dialect should receive a large accession of French words, many of which found their way into the vocabulary of familiar speech.(Bradley:1964)

The final source was Latin, particularly during the period of the sixteenth century when many new words were taken into the vocabulary of English. Nor has importation, of course, been restricted to these three sources. There are literally dozens of languages that have influenced and contributed to the linguistic richness of the language that is spoken today.

### **Variety of Sources**

In the past, during various periods in the history of the English language, the major sources of new words have been borrowings from other languages; indeed 'we have been so hospitable to foreign words that our vocabulary contains more words of foreign origin than of native stock'(Barber,1964:98), which seems a fact worthy of note. When we remember what a relative upstart English is, a mere 1500 years old, and its humble and fairly unassuming beginnings, it is rather astonishing to consider the wealth of vocabulary in use today, and the diversity of its ancestry.

In her book *A History of Foreign Words in English*(1935), Mary Serjeantson uses more than three hundred pages to briefly outline the contributions to English made by thirty or so different languages. She also points out that one book was only going to be able to mention some examples since it was impossible to trace all the progenitors of English and that, in any

case, it would be the work of many to account for even most words now used in English. Be that as it may, the lists given there are worthy of note, since both the range of source languages is very broad and the words derived would be considered very common ones that come from astonishing roots. Common means, in this context, naturalized to the point that the word in question does not seem to be a newly adopted one; the word is one used in ordinary ways in average contexts. Specialized terms have their place, yet what I found most intriguing in that book was the extraordinary origins of such ordinary terms.

A few of the languages from which examples were taken were: Sanskrit, Hindustani, Persian, Arabic, Quetchua, Eskimo, Malay, Tibeto-Chinese. And some of the words borrowed were, in respective order: *sandal, ginger, pepper; jungle, punch, cot, shampoo, pajamas; lilac, chess and its terms, taffeta, caravan; cotton, zenith, arsenal, alcohol, syrup, ream; chocolate, tomato, buccaneer; igloo, kayak; lorry, bamboo, gingham; silk, tea, ketchup, kow-tow*. There were also mentioned, of course, more esoteric or rare loans from languages such as Basque (*bizarre*), Norwegian Lapp (*lemming*), Bantu (*okra*), and Tonga (*taboo*). Many of these words were borrowed because we had no 'native' lexical item for these things; as the things they describe came into the English speaking sphere, names had to be found for them. Now, however, these terms have been so naturalized that they feel and are used as if absolutely normal and native.

Aside from the whole word loans there is, of course, to be considered what has been done to the words once they have been assimilated to the point where they become subject to the same processes of transformation of either form or meanings that affects native words. If we just take some of the examples mentioned above, we have a great variety of derivative words that come immediately to mind: 'gingery' hair, 'peppered' with mistakes, 'punch' him in the nose, 'shampooable' wigs, the verb 'to caravan', 'alcoholic', 'reams' of lists, 'silky' skin, etc.

The nineteenth century saw a great expansion of vocabulary, especially in the specialized fields of science and technology. The majority, by far, of these words were not, however, recent foreign additions, but created

words derived or combined from words or morphemes that were already common in the language, whether of Anglo-Saxon origin or foreign.

While a long term view of the development of the English language shows that the most productive sources for new vocabulary have been other languages and there is still a small but steady flow of new words into English from other languages, the majority of our current vocabulary expansion is, however, from coinages of older loans, for example, derived from Greek or Latin morphemes; the majority of our recent new words have been built, not borrowed.

New words can be invented, they can be borrowed from another language, or they can be formed by those morphological processes which happen to be active within a speech community at any particular time...Present day English is making fuller use of both composition and derivation than at any previous time in its history. (Potter 1969)

## **Method**

The method used will be to examine data from a particular time period and environment and through comparing it to a later and distinct period, and checking differences in dictionaries, identify any lexical changes. From the vantage point granted by the passage of time, I hope to demonstrate the overall influence and value of such changes on the English language and, by extension, on languages in general.

The lexical items discussed here were all taken from *The San Francisco Chronicle* printed in San Francisco, California, and relate to medical topics. Two samples were taken, one from Sunday, March 6, 1910 and the other from Sunday, March 6, 1955 and compared in the hopes of identifying semantic or vocabulary changes between the two periods.

I chose to use American English from the West Coast of the United States since the regional variety of language written and spoken there is the

one with which, as a native speaker, I am most familiar. It is to be hoped that familiarity with that variant of English will facilitate the identification of new lexical items as well as give me an advantage in analyzing accurately any changes or nuances in the lexical items I examine.

The vocabulary that will be examined has been divided into four distinct groups whose distinguishing features are; 1) terms that are still used by the medical profession but whose meanings have changed, usually by narrowing in specialization or broadening in generalization; 2) terms that are no longer used in any technically medical context but that still are in common use; 3) terms referring to 'common' illnesses whose names haven't changed even if their technical meaning has; 4) terms used to describe a group of illnesses called 'female complaints' that no longer exist as technical medical vocabulary.

The methodology used to determine the status of the lexical items chosen has been primarily that of comparing dictionary definitions. I principally used the following dictionaries: *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary*(1913), and *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*(1961) 1986. I also used to a lesser extent the *Oxford English Dictionary*(1971), The online Medical Dictionary(1997-99), and the *Webster's New World College Dictionary*(1999). Leech(1983) states, "one important fact that is sometimes overlooked in the discussion of dictionaries: that dictionaries are open-ended, and are continually being adapted to new requirements by the addition of new lexical entries." For the purposes of this paper, that fact is an important one since it is the basis for the assumption that dictionaries can be the deciding factor in determining the status of a word.

In the few cases where my reference sources were unable for some reason to clearly categorize the changes between usages, I used a phone poll of 16 native speakers of American English from the West Coast to check and corroborate my findings or opinion on the status of a lexical item. My polled data comes from family and friends, most of whom are language teachers, secretaries or professionals of one kind or another, one is a librarian; the point is they are all over 35 years of age, more than half have university degrees and

all are American speakers of English. All but one are from the West Coast. Of course, my circle of relatives and acquaintances is hardly a decisive source; but it is a good indication that what I perceive to be common, is, if the other reasonably well educated people I know agree.

### **Lexical Category**

The category of items that illustrated abundant lexical and semantic change examined in more detail here, is that of the terminology of the advertisements of medical and pseudomedical products. I use the term pseudomedical advisedly, since these products are clearly not, by today's standards, anything more than a fraud or ruse to swindle the prospective customer. When examining the sample pages, the sheer quantity of such advertisements, both genuinely medical and clearly fraudulent, in the 1910 edition of the *San Francisco Chronicle* is noteworthy when compared to either the 1955 edition or one of today.

In the sample I have taken here, from a Sunday paper of at least 70 pages of news articles and inserts, of which I have less than 30 full pages, there are more than 30 such advertisements. Since many of these advertisements consist of numerous lines of text complete with two or three testimonials, they offer an abundant source of lexical items to examine. They also, in the amount of space devoted to such products relative to the whole, provide an interesting perspective on the interest and importance placed on such products at the time.

Given the wordiness of the descriptions, testimonials and sales pitches that attends each advertisement, I was able to compile an impressive list of vocabulary related to illnesses and symptoms, and trim it down to around forty of the more interesting items. The words with meanings that had changed the most, or whose use had changed the most were from the category of the terms used to name or describe the illness or disease the product being touted was supposed to cure.



## DATA AND ANALYSIS

### General Observations

Before looking in detail at the lexical items taken for closer study from *The San Francisco Chronicle*(1910), there are some general observations that should be made in the interests of clarity and organization.

The level of education and social expectations at the time should be taken into consideration when examining any material published for the public. It should be remembered that the majority of readers of the original(1910) publication had less education and less access to things like dictionaries than the readers of today, thus the vocabulary used were perforce words that probably were either familiar or clear from context.

Almost all the words chosen here have one thing in common; they are no longer used in standard speech or in the writing one would expect to find in newspapers, magazines, or advertisements nor were they any longer in common use in newspapers in 1955, if the sample taken from the same publication is any proof. All of these words are still currently in use in one form or another but in many cases the semantic meaning has changed. Many lexical items have become so uncommon or such specialized jargon that only the more technically educated or scholarly would grasp the connection between the former use in 1910 and the current use today without difficulty. Some words are now classified as obsolete or archaic due to more accurate replacements, or due to falling into disuse.

The last thing that should be noted is that the origin of nearly all the definitions for the lexical items taken from 1910 and quoted here, is *The Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary*, (1913 edition), since it was the reference source most contemporary with the sample material I could find, and where helpful or of particular interest, the full quote has been included.

The majority of the medical terms included here fall generally into two categories; terms whose use has narrowed and specialized yet still are used in medical jargon if not by the general public; terms which are no longer used

in any technical way in the medical field. There are a few exceptions which were included here just as a sample of some of the curiosities of language change and of the society it reflects at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Also included is a short list of words that have not changed in their laymans medical use although, with the advance of medical science over the intervening decades, the technical meaning has been refined or even revised.

### **Data Background**

One thing worth noting in general is that the significant decrease in the frequency of these advertisements can probably be credited to the vast increase of reliable medical care being available to the majority of citizens. With the increase in inexpensive public transport, the proliferation of automobiles for private use, and the increase of both scientific advances and the accessibility of trained professionals to apply it, the public no longer had to self-diagnose or rely on itinerant ‘doctors’ of unknown qualifications to proscribe cures for their ills.

In various media today there are still numerous advertisements for a great variety of ‘medications’. As was true in 1910, there are advertisements for everything from multivitamin tablets and drinks, standard salves that remove or improve some skin ailment, topical treatments for pain relief, to tablets and pills to alleviate headaches, sleepiness, water retention, stomach upsets, cold symptoms, regularize bowel movements, and generally make life more comfortable, which are available directly from a pharmacy or even a larger supermarket. And, of course, the companies that produce them all spend a great deal of money on marketing to insure that their products sell. Yet the major difference between 1910 and 2000 is the kind of product being marketed for ‘self-prescription’. The ills they are supposed to cure are relatively mild and the medications for them are also safe enough to be left in the hands of laymen.

The two major reasons for the differences between the number of advertisements in 1910 and the number of things advertised today are then: because of the standardization and government licencing and regulation of such merchandise, the quality and efficacy of these products have been vastly improved and; with the increase in good and readily available physician care,

diagnosing and prescribing precisely the right medication for precisely the illness or disease that patients have, the general public has no desire or need to attempt to diagnose and treat themselves. Such broad spectrum 'cures' as were typically advertised in 1910 would also lack credibility with today's more educated and sophisticated customers.

Thus the advertisements today on television and in newspapers and magazines are geared to beauty improvement products, products that promise immediate relief from some minor, common sickness or discomfort, or to standardized treatments for recurring minor ailments. No one could legally get any more exotic or powerful drugs without a prescription nor would most even consider buying such things without consulting a physician first. Today there would be no point advertising such things to *us*, the general public, as we cannot get them without a doctor's prescription, nor would most people be willing to use them without professional advice.

## **GROUP I :**

### **Medical Terminology Still in Use**

The first group of lexical items discussed below are terms used to describe some illness or medical procedure that, while still being used in some way, has changed for one of the following reasons; the word would no longer be used to refer to as illnesses by the general public; the use in 1910 was too general and today would no longer be considered medically accurate; the term has come to be used to refer to a general symptom; the term has become specialized jargon that is only used for referring to a very specific disease or condition among trained individuals.

The following examples belong in this category:

#### **Apoplexy**

Ap"o\*plex'y (#), n. [OE. poplexye, LL. poplexia, apoplexia, fr. Gr. , fr. to cripple by a stroke; from + to strike: cf. F. apoplexie. See Plague.] (Med.) Sudden diminution or loss of consciousness, sensation,

and voluntary motion, usually caused by pressure on the brain. &hand;  
*The term is now usually limited to cerebral apoplexy, or loss of consciousness due to effusion of blood or other lesion within the substance of the brain; but it is sometimes extended to denote an effusion of blood into the substance of any organ; as, apoplexy of the lung.* (W:1913:Page: 70)

Apoplexy was supposed to be an illness that could be cured by a pill of two separate products, by a ‘tonic’ in one advertisement and by a course of vitamins in yet another. It was also referred to in the context of an ‘apoplectic attack’ due to being enraged, which is more like the modern use of stroke or cerebral hemorrhage. It is still in use in the medical field today but it no longer would be used in such a specific and narrow way. It is used to refer to the condition of any "*gross hemorrhage into a cavity or into the substance of an organ*"(W:1986); which can still, of course, in the case of cerebral hemorrhage, be brought on by any strong emotion that increases the blood pressure in the brain enough to cause a rupture and bleeding.

### **Aseptic**

**A\*sep"tic** (#), a. [Pref. a- not + septic.] Not liable to putrefaction; nonputrescent. — n. An aseptic substance. (W:1913:Page: 88)

*Aseptic* is a word that has grown significantly more precise and definite in the interval between the publication of the newspaper in 1910 and the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the above definition, the words *liable* and *nonputrescent* are rather mild and, in this context, even somewhat depreciatory. The term was used in an advertisement describing an ingredient of a product, a tablet that was supposed to do great things for stomach trouble and dyspepsia. Of course, at the time, the whole idea of things being not liable to causing infection was quite enough to reassure many of the prospective customers.

Today the definition includes, “*preventing infection, freed from pathogenic microorganisms by special methods . . .*” which sounds far more reassuring and positive than merely *liable to putrefaction*. One must bear in mind that at the time of the 1910 printing, the whole idea of microorganisms and bacteria and sterility as related to ingredients, environments, medicine and health was an unfamiliar and relatively new one. Today we take such things for granted, in 1910 such things bordered on fantasy or superstition. Lacking the technology to produce the magnification necessary to make visible many things as small as bacteria and viruses, or definitive ways prove the value of sterility and cleanliness, such things were at the time still considered more speculation or opinion than fact.

### **Atrophy**

At\*ro\*phy (#), n. [L. atrophia, Gr. ; priv. + to nourish: cf. F. atrophie.]

A wasting away from want of nourishment; diminution in bulk or slow emaciation of the body or of any part. Milton (W:1913:Page: 97)

*Atrophy* as in the lead in “*Do you suffer from the agonies of atrophy?*” of one article, was used in 1910 as an illness name, not a symptom or in the more abstract or poetic use that would be most common in normal, nonmedical use today. Note that in the definition from 1913, it equates malnutrition and weight loss with the term not the more accurate one of weakening or shrinkage due to “*I: decrease in size of a part or tissue after full development has been attained : a wasting away of tissue (as from disuse, old age, injury or disease) ...*”(W:1986:Page:139). In the modern medical use it is a symptom of something else, not a illness in and of itself. The modern definition also has specifications as to when it qualifies as atrophy, “*after development has been attained*” .

## Bright's disease

Bright's" dis\*ease" (?). [From Dr. Bright of London, who first described it.] (Med.) An affection of the kidneys, usually inflammatory in character, and distinguished by the occurrence of albumin and renal casts in the urine. Several varieties of Bright's disease are now recognized, differing in the part of the kidney involved, and in the intensity and course of the morbid process.(W:1913:Page: 181)

This term was used in three different advertisements and was twice used in the plural as in "*if you suffer from one of Bright's diseases..*"(SFC:1910) which was unfamiliar. This lexical item was apparently used as an umbrella term for any urinary tract or kidney problem, even in one piece that promoted a product that was for "*Weak Men*" (ibid) which was linked to references of impotence. In one advertisement, Bright's disease was just one in a long litany of illnesses that a cactus salve was supposed to cure; you were supposed to just apply it to the "*affected member*" (ibid) and voilà, your problems were supposed to be over. It didn't specify just how you were to apply the salve to your kidneys or urinary tract...

While this term was wholly unknown to me, one of the average readers of American English, it was certainly listed as almost precisely the same thing in the modern *Webster's* that I use as my main source of modern American English. The modern listing was very specific, even including the Latin term for the name of a whole group of these disorders. This term is clear today only if you have specialized training in the medical field, otherwise it would require some explanation. Certainly an advertisement for products meant to treat this condition would never be found in a newspaper or non-technical magazine; specific treatments for such relatively rare diseases are available by prescription only and, given the current system of pharmaceutical companies advertising such things directly to the medical profession, it is extremely unlikely that these advertisements will be appearing in retail publications any time soon.

## **Catarrh**

Ca\*tarrh" (?), n. [L. catarrhus, Gr. , , a running down, rheum, fr. ; down + to flow. See Stream.] (Med.) An inflammatory affection of any mucous membrane, in which there are congestion, swelling, and an alteration in the quantity and quality of mucus secreted; as catarrh of the stomach; catarrh of the bladder. &hand; In America, the term catarrh is applied especially to a chronic inflammation of, and hypersecretion from, the membranes of the nose or air passages; in England, to an acute influenza, resulting a cold, and attended with cough, thirst, lassitude, and watery eyes; also, to the cold itself.(W:1913:Page: 225)

*Catarrh* was used in conjunction with the stomach, nose, lungs, and even, in one place, with the womb. It seemed to refer to ulcers or general inflammation, but in the various places that this is used, the meaning is unclear and nonspecific despite the fact that the medical definition is very similar to the modern one. Today it is a general term describing an inflammation of the mucous membrane, a symptom of an illness, not a disease; it would never be used in a diagnostic sense to identify an illness to a patient by modern physicians, only to describe a symptom to another physician. Another interesting thing about this definition, is that it is the only one I came across that included the variants of American and English medical use.

## **Coryza**

Co\*ry"za (k?-r?"z?), n. [NL., fr. Gr. catarh.] (Med.) Nasal catarrh.(W:Page: 328)

*Coryza* was used in the advertisements in which I found it, to mean any disease in the upper respiratory tract involving discharge, which today would be described as everything from the common cold to sinusitis, the only contemporary use in humans is for the common cold and it is only used technically(W:1986). There is a modern use comparable to the one in 1910

also listed in Webster's(1986) "*b: a disease in domesticated animals characterized by inflammation of and discharge from the mucus membranes of the upper respiratory tract, sinuses and eyes; esp.: such a disease in chickens..*"(W:1986:Page:514). the fact that the more common use is for animals might explain why it is no longer used generally to refer to "*common cold*". Since the term has narrowed to veterinarian or farm use, it is no surprise that there are no advertisements in modern media for *coryza* relief or medicine; certainly cold medication and nasal sprays and cold tablets are readily available, none of which ever mention *coryza*.

### **Croup**

Croup (kr??p), n. [Scot. croup, cf. croup, crowp, to croak, to cry or speak with a hoarse voice; cf. also LG. kropp, G. kropf, the crop or craw of a bird, and tumor on the anterior part of the neck, a wen, etc. Cf. Crop.] (Med.) An inflammatory affection of the larynx or trachea, accompanied by a hoarse, ringing cough and stridulous, difficult breathing; esp., such an affection when associated with the development of a false membrane in the air passages (also called membranous croup). See False croup, under False, and Diphtheria.(W:1913:Page:341)

This is a word that still has remnants in common modern speech; I have heard an adjective form of it used to describe a persistent, hacking cough; 'croupy' would still be understood, but never as a technical description. The modern definition that applies to humans is "**1: a spasmodic laryngitis in infants and children characterized by episodes of difficult breathing and hoarse metallic cough that occur esp. at night and may be relieved by steam inhalations**" (W:1986:Page:544), the definition goes on to describe the disease in domestic animals. The above definition makes clear the modern term, laryngitis, is the general term and that 'croup' is a technical variant of it. As is the case with this group of words, while still in narrow use it would not be used in the media to advertise or describe an illness as it was used in the



published material from which I drew my sample, since today a doctor would have to diagnose the illness and then prescribe a specific medication for it.

### **Dyspepsia, Dyspepsy**

Dys\*pep"si\*a (?), Dys\*pep"sy (?; 277), [L. dyspepsia, Gr. , fr. hard to digest; ill, hard + to cook, digest; akin to E. cook: cf. F. dyspepsie. See Dys-, and 3d Cook.] (Med.) A kind of indigestion; a state of the stomach in which its functions are disturbed, without the presence of other diseases, or, if others are present, they are of minor importance. Its symptoms are loss of appetite, nausea, heartburn, acrid or fetid eructations, a sense of weight or fullness in the stomach, etc. *Dunglison* (W:1913:Page: 464)

Dyspepsia was intended to indicate generally disturbed digestion entailing gas, pain, bloatedness and/or heartburn. Today it is used technically for heartburn only, and would not be recognized by the majority of readers. It is no longer considered a disease nor is it even a familiar name for a symptom; it would not be used in an advertizement today.

The next two words I included in this section because of the semantic changes in their meanings, or perhaps I should more accurately state, changes in the semantic charge of the meanings. Both words still exist and, interestingly enough, denote almost exactly the same thing as in the usage in 1910; the differences are in the connotations. The connotations of these words have both shifted from positive to negative indices over time while still referring to the same things. The two words discussed below are still used in medical terminology. The shift can be attributed to, in one case, scientific advances and the relatively recent recognition of an illness afflicting society and in the other, to changes in cultural or social ideas of beauty.

## **Emetic**

E\*met"ic (?), a. [L. emeticus, Gr., fr. to vomit, akin to L. vomere: cf. F. émétique. See Vomit.] (Med.) Inducing to vomit; exciting the stomach to discharge its contents by the mouth. -- n. A medicine which causes vomiting.(W:1913:Page: 485)

Emetic is still in use today is an agent that causes vomiting, but is generally not something most people would buy over the counter just to have on hand. Certainly it has a medicinal use, since in cases like an accidental poisoning inducing vomiting is necessary, it is not however, considered a medicine. The connotation of medicine includes something to heal or aid in healing, or something that is 'good' for you. That meaning is certainly no longer linked with emetics or vomiting; in fact, with things like bulimia becoming a problem, it has a definite connotation of sickness or wrongness today. The only entry for this word in contemporary references is "*An agent that induces vomiting.*" (W: 1986:Page:741). Yet in the definition from 1913 it is clearly listed only in medical terms and as a medicine. Possibly vomiting, like bleeding, was supposed to have some generally beneficial effect. In any case, it seemed an interesting semantic shift.

## **Fat**

Fat, a. [Compar. Fatter (?); super. Fattest (?).] [AS. f&emaciate; akin to D. vet, G. feted, feast, Icel. father, Sw. FET, Dan. fed, and per. to Gr. pi^DAX spring, fountain, pity`in to gush forth, pi`we fat, Skr. pi to swell.]

1. Abounding with fat; as: (a) Fleshy; characterized by fatness; plump; corpulent; not lean; as, a fat man; a fat ox. (b) Oily; greasy; unctuous; rich; -- said of food.

2. Exhibiting the qualities of a fat animal; coarse; heavy; gross; dull; stupid.

Making our western wits **fat** and mean. *Emerson*.

Make the heart of this people **fat**. *Is. vi. 10*.

3. Fertile; productive; as, a fat soil; a fat pasture.

4. Rich; producing a large income; desirable; as, a fat benefice; a fat office; a fat job.

Now parson of Tristan, a **fat** living in Suffolk. *Carlyle*.

5. Abounding in riches; affluent; fortunate. [Obs.]

Persons grown **fat** and wealthy by long impostures. *Swift*.

6. (Typog.) Of a character which enables the compositor to make large wages; -- said of matter containing blank, cuts, or many leads, etc.; as, a fat take; a fat page.

7. The best or richest productions; the best part; as, to live on the fat of the land (W:1913:Page: 545)

*Fat* is used to refer to exactly the same substance in the body in both the publication from 1910 and in various media today. The interesting thing is in the connotations that have so greatly changed. Note that in all seven meaning possibilities from the 1913 source, listed above in full, only the second could be truly taken as derogatory or negative. All the rest of the meanings are desirable or positive. The advertisements that used *fat* to praise their merchandise were all hawking products that purported to help 'gain flesh and nerve'(SFC:1910) or 'reduce those unattractive angles'(ibid) and one even claimed 'gain thirty pounds in thirty days!'(ibid) as if it were a wonderful, desirable thing.

Since our current preoccupation with thinness and skinny beauty are relatively recent, and dictionaries are slow to adjust to reflect semantic changes, I checked the 'modern' definition in the most recent dictionary that

I could consult. When I checked the 1986 Webster's that has been my main resource, the definition still does not reflect the semantic change noted here; I had to find a more recent edition. The definition in the 1999 Webster's New World College Dictionary, 4th edition begins as follows:

### **Fat**

“(1):a-containing or full of fat, oily greasy: b-having much fat in relation to lean (in relation to meat): c-containing volatile oil(as in fat coal): d-containing much resin (wood): (2):a- fleshy, plump: b- too plump, corpulent, obese: (3)- thick, broad (the fat end of the bat)...”(W:1999:Page713)

Notice the second meaning mentioned from 1999, and both its similarity to the first one from the 1913 dictionary and its differences. The 1999 definition then goes on to echo the rest of the meanings mentioned in the first definition without any significant differences. While the most recent definition is almost exactly the same in the beginning, it has that little addition of ‘too plump’ and ‘obese’; these are terms that are undeniably negative today and ones that have no equivalent in any of the older dictionary definitions I was able to consult.

### **Gripe**

Gripe, v. t. [imp. & p. p. Griped (?); p. pr. & vb. n. Griping.] [AS. gripan; akin to D. grijpen, G. greifen, OHG. grfan, Icel. gripa, Sw. gripe, Dan. gribe, Goth. greipan; cf. Lith. graibyti, Russ. grabite to plunder, Skr. grah, grabh, to seize. Cf. Grip, v. t., Grope]

**1.** To catch with the hand; to clasp closely with the fingers; to clutch.

2. To seize and hold fast; to embrace closely.

Wouldst thou gripe both gain and pleasure ? Robynson  
(More's Utopia).

3. To pinch; to distress. Specifically, to cause pinching and spasmodic pain to the bowels of, as by the effects of certain purgative or indigestible substances.

How inly sorrow gripes his soul. *Shak.* (W:1913:Page: 651)

This term was used in two ways in 1910: "*Cascaret tablets, cures stomach catarrh and dyspepsia; palatable, pleasant, and potent. Never sicken, weaken, or gripe.*" (SFC:1910), a use clearly in the third sense listed above, but it is also used in the following was "*Warner's Safe Cure; the world's best remedy for kidneys, liver, bladder and blood. They also cure Bilioussness, Torpid Liver, Constipation, and Gripe. No bad after effects.*"(ibid). The later use, seems almost to treat *gripe* as an illness since it is listed with other 'diseases'.

The common modern use is very different. Although the dictionary definition from 1986 is similar to the one quoted above, there is a significant addition to the definition; the term is classified as *archaic*. The explanatory notes in the Webster's 1986 state: "A status label in italics is an indication of the degree of usage orientation...the label *archaic* means standard after 1775 but surviving in the present only sporadically or in special contexts:.."(W:1986:Page:17a).

The only use that is familiar to me and to any of the people I polled by phone was listed as 4<sup>th</sup> in the possibilities of intransitive verbal uses, well after the use as a stomach pain. The most common use, in fact the only use that came unanimously to mind, is that of complaining (verb) or possibly the complaints (nouns) themselves.

Interestingly enough, my British friends (a sample of 3 only) tell me that you can still buy ‘gripe water’ for babies that have gas problems in England. None had heard the word in any other context than ‘complain’ or ‘gripe water’, and the ‘complain’ meaning sounded clearly American to them. In the United States, babies with gas pains get medicine for ‘colic’ not gripe.

### **Gripe-modern definitions**

**3:***archaic:* to cause pinching and spasmodic pain in the bowels of ..vi **1** *archaic...***4** : to complain usu. forcefully : object and criticize with sustained grumbling.. (W:1986:Page:1000)

**2:** *transf. And fig.* The ‘clutch’ or ‘pinch’ of something painful. Formerly often in pl. : Spasms of pain, pangs of grief or affliction. Now *rare* or *obsolete*. (O.E.D.:1971:G:Page:479)

### **Neuralgia**

Neu\*ral"gi\*a (?), n. [NL., from gr. nerve + pain. See nerve.] (Med.) A disease, the chief symptom of which is a very acute pain, exacerbating or intermitting, which follows the course of a nervous branch, extends to its ramifications, and seems therefore to be seated in the nerve. It seems to be independent of any structural lesion. Dunglison.(W:1913:Page: 972)

The change in meaning in this word is quite interesting when you consider the definition given above. In the modern medical lexicon, neuralgia is the name for the pain described as the ‘*chief symptom*’ in 1913. It is not considered a disease now, it is “*an acute paroxysmal pain radiating along the course of one or more nerves usu. without demonstrable change in the nerve*

*structure.*”(W:1986:Page:1520) Thus, over the course of refining the understanding of the ‘disease’, the name retained its association with the symptom but, the cause is no longer identified with the lexical item. It has been so detached from the old meaning that there is not even a less common link, nor any information listed under ‘neuralgia’ that would identify an illness. Note that twice in the original definition the word ‘seems’ is used, which may be a clue why there is no modern link between this term and a specific illness; apparently the cause is not *seated in the nerve*.

### **Varicocele**

Var"i\*co\*cele (?), n. [Varix a dilated vein + Gr. tumor: cf. F. varicoc\8ale.] (Med.) A varicose enlargement of the veins of the spermatic cord; also, a like enlargement of the veins of the scrotum. (W:1913:Page: 1595)

This term has survived very nearly the same, in the modern definition, the first phrase is exactly the same; it simply goes on to mention the result of the varicose enlargement. Notice that in the 1913 definition it extends the definition to cover another problem, that of vein enlargement; that meaning has entirely disappeared. The other thing that has changed significantly in the intervening 70 odd years between the two definitions is in the realm of what things are likely to be advertised in newspapers. While it is certainly likely that there are, somewhere, advertisements that offer relief for this condition, I have never come across any. This is the kind of thing you might find in the small advertisements at the back of a specializing magazine; might, here, is the operative word. In any case, the fact that it is unfamiliar to me may be a reflection of my gender(it is, after all, not something I will ever *need* to know)

or the social shift that has eliminated such advertisements from the arena of general media.

## **GROUP II :**

### **Terms no Longer Used with Technical Medical Meaning.**

In the group of lexical items discussed below are words that are still used in standard English for other purposes than to describe a disease or its symptom. The specialized medical meaning that was used in 1910 has been discarded or is now archaic. Most of these words are clearly part of the active vocabulary of a normally educated person.

#### **Bilious**

Bil<sup>i</sup>ous (?), a. [L. biliosus, fr. bilis bile.]1. Of or pertaining to the bile. 2. Disordered in respect to the bile; troubled with and excess of bile; as, a bilious patient; dependent on, or characterized by, an excess of bile; as, bilious symptoms.3.Choleric; passionate; ill tempered. A bilious old nabob." Macaulay. Bilious temperament. See Temperament.(W:1913:Page: 145)

*'Bilious attacks'* was used in 1910 in the phrase "*suffering from...*" (SFC:1913) rather like the 'heart-attacks' of today. It derives from the root *bile* and is a reference to the medieval physiology theory that had been commonly held to be true, that the health and temperament of an individual was determined by the proportions of the four fluids or semi-fluids of the body; black bile, blood, phlegm and yellow bile. Modern medical jargon use is in reference to the fluid produced by the liver or other organs, but it is not considered a disease or illness. Its non-medical use today is most often as an



adjective, meaning generally nauseating or repellent as in 'bilious green' or as a colloquial reference to spite or hate, "he's so full of bile, it's going to ruin his chances.."

### **Bleed**

Bleed, v. t. 2. To let blood from; to take or draw blood from, as by opening a vein. (W:1913:Page: 154)

### **Bleeding**

Bleed"ing, n. 1. A running or issuing of blood, as from the nose or a wound; a hemorrhage; the operation of letting blood, as in surgery; a drawing or running of sap from a tree or plant. (W:1913:Page: 154)

*Bleeding* is most often used today in the first part of the above definition.sample. The practice of *bleeding* someone in an effort to cure them was listed as *obsolete* in the *O.E.D* (1971)and was first mentioned in writing in 1625; and was apparently still in use as late as 1913. Although there are other usages possible, in the modern sense of the term none would normally refer to an operation intended to deliberately drain blood from someone in the belief it would improve their health or cure some illness as it was obviously used in the sample from 1913.

### **Consumption**

3. (Med.) A progressive wasting away of the body; esp., that form of wasting, attendant upon pulmonary phthisis and associated with cough, spitting of blood, hectic fever, etc.; pulmonary phthisis; -- called also pulmonary consumption.<-- tuberculosis --> Consumption of the bowels (Med.), inflammation and ulceration of the intestines

from tubercular disease. Syn. -- Decline; waste; decay. See Decline.(W:1913:Page:317)

*Consumption* was used to refer to both tuberculosis and various cancers in the 1910, since both types of illnesses could be said to consume the sufferers energy and health. Today this word has no technical medical use, it is most often a reference in general to the destruction or over-use of something as in 'consume resources'. The other common use of this word today would be in reference to food or fuel; modern cars are advertised as having low fuel consumption, businesses concern themselves with materials and fuel consumption savings, and recently the average American beer consumption per capita figures, published in a newspaper, were a source of heated public discussion.

It is also interesting to note that the synonyms listed at the end of the definition were also considered diseases or illnesses at the time. Also worthy of mention is the fact that they were most often associated with a group of mysterious illnesses clumped together under the heading 'female complaints' which will be discussed as a group later.

### **Cupping**

Cup"ping (k?p"p?ng), n. (Med.) The operation of drawing blood to or from the surface of the person by forming a partial vacuum over the spot. Also, sometimes, a similar operation for drawing pus from an abscess. Cupping glass, a glass cup in which a partial vacuum is produced by heat, in the process of cupping. -- Dry cupping, the application of a cupping instrument without scarification, to draw blood to the surface, produce counter irritation, etc. -- Wet cupping, the operation of drawing blood by the

application of a cupping instrument after scarification.

(W:1913:Page: 356)

*Cupping* is no longer used by conventional medical practice in the West, yet it could be familiar to the modern reader by reason of its recent revival through the interest in traditional ‘Oriental’ remedies. The powers attributed to it in the original 1910 usage would, however, astonish the modern practitioners of it. It was purported to cure or effect everything from sterility to mood enhancement, from snake bite to promoting weight gain. So, while it is not a part of the modern medical jargon as a technical term, its use as a legitimate ‘alternative’ medical practice keeps it in the active vocabulary of many English speakers today.

In the above quote, the term *scarification* is used. Today that process is unknown outside of the specialized jargon of those involved in cupping and most readers would probably assume the word was somehow derived from scare not scar.

All of the words discussed thus far fall into the same group of words, those still in use in one form or another that relates in some way or another to medical terminology. The next word is included because it is used here in a clearly medical sense that has no relationship with medical jargon of either the time of publication or today. It is a strange use and one that is clearly unfamiliar and yet the meaning can be easily deduced from its more common meaning.

*Drains* was used in two places separately in the text from 1910, in the phrase “*suffering from drains and wasting...*” (SFC:1910) and in another place “*a tonic-stimulant that can overcome drains, despondency...*”(ibid). They were both advertisements but they were not in the same article, the same product nor even the same section of the newspaper.

The thing that struck me as I checked this use of the word was that in no reference book could I find support for its use in this way. In the English used in the later half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, various things could be seen as 'draining' in an abstract, figurative, or general way or in the sense of a noun depicting something that causes depletion synonymous with burden or strain like in the phrase 'constitutes a heavy drain on the financial resources', but it was never defined with a strictly medical meaning that indicated an illness or disease. I found no links to the medical use here; not in the *Webster's* dictionary published at the time, not in the more modern counterpart, nor even in the *Oxford English Dictionary* with all its etymological information and referents. The way it was used here seems to be unique; either a passing slang that was never dignified with a place in a dictionary, or an aberration of West Coast American English that did not 'catch on'. Yet despite the lack of support in any dictionary or any other resource material that I found, the meaning is clear and unambiguous; it is simply no longer used in this way nor apparently was it used thus generally at the time.

### **Nervy**

Nerv"y (?), a. [Compar. Nervier (?); superl. - iest.] Strong; sinewy. His *nervy* knees." *Keats*. (W:1913:Page: 971)

There is only one possible meaning listed for this word in 1910 and it is now classified as archaic along with the rest of the contemporary definition which has other meanings that are possible but none of them are in general use and they contradict one another. One is: '*showing calm courage, bold, intrepid.*' The next is : '*marked by effrontery or presumption, brash, impudent.*' Yet another is : '*marked by nervousness ,jerky and excitable*'

(W:1986:Page:1519). None of these meanings would be used in medical or technical contexts today and only the negative ones are at all familiar.

### **Rheum**

Rheum (?), n. [OF. reume, rheume, F. rhume a cold,, L. rheuma rheum, from Gr. , fr. to flow, akin to E. stream. See Stream, n., and cf. Hemorrhoids.] (Med.) A serous or mucous discharge, especially one from the eyes or nose.(W:1913:Page: 1237)

This term has only shifted from the realm of words that a layman would be expected to know to that of an item of medical jargon that has no common use. The only listing for this in 1986 is exactly the same aside from the classification of *obsolete*. In another form it is much more familiar today; any of the derivational illnesses listed under rheumatism, rheumatic fever, or rheumatoid arthritis, would at least be recognized as painful illnesses for which little can be done with today's level of medical technology. None are presently curable, only the symptoms can be somewhat relieved.

### **Torpid**

Torpid(?), a. [L. torpidus, fr. torpere to be stiff, numb, or torpid; of uncertain origin.]

1. Having lost motion, or the power of exertion and feeling; numb; benumbed; as, a torpid limb. (W:1913:Page: 1520)

*Torpid* was used in phrases like '*a torpid liver*' in the sample material from 1913 and also used as a disease as in '*for sufferers of torpidity, atrophy.*'. It was not a recognised medical term *per se*, although the adjectival use in the first case was clearly one that was assumed to be clear to the readers of the time. The modern use still includes the one listed above but goes on to

add: " **b** : *sluggish in functioning or acting* < a-frog > < a-mind > **2** : *lacking in energy or vigor: apathetic, dull...*" . Any reasonably well educated reader today would recognise and understand the adjectival use; the lexical item being used to refer to a disease would be odd and unfamiliar.

### **GROUP III :**

#### **Medical Terms Unchanged in Common Usage.**

The short list of words catalogued below are the only ones from the *San Francisco Chronicle* published in 1910 that would still be familiar to the vast majority of American English speakers and are still in ordinary use today. Though the terms are still used to refer superficially to the same illness, the definitions have changed, in some cases significantly, due to advances in medical and scientific technology.

The common terms for most of these conditions have not changed even if their causes and sources have been far more accurately identified; you will still be able to buy products over the counter aimed at treating these conditions and to identify the condition using the same names as were used in 1910. Even in the case of *piles*, the only one of these terms that is no longer used by the medical profession, which is still used colloquially to describe the more accurate modern term *hemorrhoids*, you can still ask at a drugstore for some medicated cream for this ailment and be sure of being understood and assisted. Because of sociolinguistic changes, *piles* would probably not be on a package label today.

Comparing the definitions paired below, it becomes clear that there are no significant changes in meaning from the stand point of the normal use of these terms.

## **Acne**

Ac"ne (#), n. [NL., prob. a corruption of Gr. ] (Med.) A pustular affection of the skin, due to changes in the sebaceous glands.(W:1913:Page 16)

**Ac-ne** \ *aknè* \ *n-s* [Gk *aknè* eruption on the face, MS var. Of *akmè*, lit., point-more at ACME] : any of several inflammatory diseases involving the oil gland and hair follicles of the skin; *specif.* ACNE VULGARIS –compare PIMPLE. (W:1986:Page 17)

This term is as normal today as it appears to be in 1910. As long as we are preoccupied with appearances and imagine that we can buy healthy looking complexions, I suppose that 'acne' is a term that will continue to be regularly used to sell products that purport to cure all! Perhaps it is the universality of the preoccupation with this problem that keeps this word healthy and current in the lexicon, despite its foreign origins and relatively recent addition to English. The first listing for this word is, according to the *O.E.D.*, in 1835 in a medical journal of the time. Any references to the problem of achieving an unblemished or *pure* complexion that precede that date are to *blotches*, *spots*, or *blemishes*; all rather general and vague terms when compared to the only other one mentioned above: *pimple*. Pimple, which predates *acne* by more than 400 years, is first listed in the *O.E.D.* as found in a medical text *c.*1400 and its origins are unknown. It is also, interestingly enough, still in current use unchanged from the original.

## **Bunyon, Bunion**

Bun"yon, Bun"ion (?), n. [Cf. Prov. E. bunny a small swelling, fr. OF. bugne, It. bugna, bugnone. See Bun.]

(Med.) An enlargement and inflammation of a small membranous sac (one of the *bursæ muscosæ*), usually occurring on the first joint of the great toe.(W:1913:Page: 192)

**Bun-ion** \bʊnyən\ n -s [prob. irreg. fr. *bunny* (swelling)]  
] 1 : an enlargement of the first joint of the great toe resulting from excessive growth of bone at the first joint margin associated with a bursal sac filled with fluid.(W:1986:Page 297)

Note that the first definition of this lexical item makes no mention of the excessive bone growth to which *bunions* are attributed in the modern definition. The symptom, a sac of bursal fluid, is understood to be the cause in 1910, but while it is still associated with it in 1986, it is clearly no longer considered to be the cause. This comparison of definitions clearly illustrates the tendency of many of the terms collected from the 1910 sample to specialize and narrow in definition as the condition is better understood and can be more minutely described. It also demonstrates the tendency of ordinary words for familiar ailments to persist in general use.

### **Eczema**

Ec"ze\*ma (?), n. [NL., fr. Gr. 'e'kzema; "ek out + zei'n to boil.] (Med.) An inflammatory disease of the skin, characterized by the presence of redness and itching, an eruption of small vesicles, and the discharge of a watery exudation, which often dries up, leaving the skin covered with crusts; -- called also tetter, milk crust, and salt rheum.  
(W:1913:Page: 470)



**ec-ze.ma** ... “:an acute or chronic noncontagious inflammatory condition of the skin that is characterized by redness, itching, and oozing vesicular lesions which become scaly, crusted or lichenified and that is often associated with exposure to chemical or other irritants. (W:1985:Page:721)

Again, in the case of this word, the modern dictionary definition is more detailed and specific than the older definition offered by the 1910 edition. The more recent definition also mentions circumstances that may cause the condition. The additional information has two probable sources: a general elevation of the health of the English speaking population that led to the elimination of many skin problems due to poor nutrition and imbalanced diets, and the advances in science that made it possible to identify the modern triggers that have become most common in the world we live in.

### **Hives**

Hives (?), n. [Scot.; perh. akin to E. heave.] (Med.) (a) The croup. (b) An eruptive disease (Varicella globularis), allied to the chicken pox.(W:1913:Page: 696)

### **Hives** [origin unknown]

**1** : urticaria ( W: 1986: Page: 1075)

**2** : an eruption on the skin, when the disorder is supposed to proceed from an internal cause. (O.E.D:1971:H: Page: 310)

This set of definitions is interesting because of the broadness of the earliest definition. That one word would be used both to refer to the croup as well as to be described as a skin disease and be classed as a relative of chicken pox shows how general this term was and how relatively primitive

medical science was not that long ago. The more recent definitions offered here are both far more specific and are considerably narrower than the first one. Note that the last one goes so far as to limit the use of this term to those instances where the hives are supposed to proceed from an internal source, thus specifically limiting the possible causes.

### **Piles**

Piles (?), n. pl. [ME, fr. L. pila a ball. Cf. Pill a medicine.] (Med.) The small, troublesome tumors or swellings about the anus and lower part of the rectum which are technically called hemorrhoids. See Hemorrhoids. [*The singular pile is sometimes used.*] Blind piles, hemorrhoids which do not bleed. (W:1913:Page: 1086)

**Piles ... 1:** HEMORRHOIDS; *also* : the condition of one affected with hemorrhoids <..is suffering terribly from ~s> (W:1986:Page:1715)

The last of these words that have not changed in common use is, as mentioned before, one that is well known but not considered elegant or quite polite. *Piles* is far too graphic a description of the condition to be socially acceptable to the increasingly squeamish Americans who still use the euphemistic term *bathroom* for a room with no way to bathe in it and who invented the lexical item '*rooster*' for a domesticated bird to avoid using a word that might be mistaken for a vulgar reference to male anatomy.

## **GROUP IV:**

### **Terminology Used to Describe ‘Female Complaints’**

The following group of words have one thing in common, they are all words used to refer to what were euphemistically known as ‘female complaints’. Below are two quotes from the *San Francisco Chronicle* from 1910 that reflect the prevailing attitudes of the times of women towards doctors and that of the medical establishment towards women.

#### **Mrs. Cora B. Miller Wants To Send Free to Every Woman Suffering From Any Form of Female Weakness**

...This is a simple, mild and harmless preparation that has relieved so many women in the privacy of their own homes after doctors and other remedies failed. It is especially prepared for the treatment of female diseases, displacements, falling of the womb, irregularities, painful periods, ...nervousness, melancholy, hot flashes, desire to cry, weariness,....(SFC:1910:Page:49)

#### **Dr. Pierce’s Favorite Prescription**

This Prescription has, for over 40 years, been curing delicate, weak, pain-racked women, by the hundreds of thousands and this too in the privacy of their homes without their having to submit to indelicate questionings [*sic*] and offensively repugnant examinations.(SFC:1910:Page:40)

This group of words also has in common the fact that none of these terms are still used in any technically medical context, although most of them are still active as general lexical items that describe moods or feelings, or general states of mind. All of these words were used, primarily though not necessarily exclusively, in advertisements selling products to women.

### **Debility**

De\*bil"i\*ty (?), n. [L. debilitas, fr. debilis weak, prob. fr. de- + habilis able: cf. F. débilité. See Able, a.] The state of being weak; weakness; feebleness; languor.

The inconveniences of too strong a perspiration, which are **debility**, faintness, and sometimes sudden death. *Arbutnot*.

Syn. -- Debility, Infirmary, Imbecility. An *infirmary* belongs, for the most part, to particular members, and is often temporary, as of the eyes, etc. *Debility* is more general, and while it lasts impairs the ordinary functions of nature. *Imbecility* attaches to the whole frame, and renders it more or less powerless. *Debility* may be constitutional or may be the result or superinduced [*sic*] causes; *Imbecility* is always constitutional; *infirmary* is accidental, and results from sickness or a decay of the frame. These words, in their figurative uses, have the same distinctions; we speak of *infirmary* of will, *debility* of body, and an *Imbecility* which affects the whole man; but *Imbecility* is often used with specific reference to feebleness of mind (W:1913:Page: 374)

This is an interesting use of this word, still used today in various forms; it's just that none of its uses or forms are specifically medical in the modern lexicon. In the sample I studied, it was used in 7 of the 32

advertisements, 2 for products aimed solely at men, the rest were for products that were for the use of women. Like the advertisements quoted above, most of the products were touted as intended for an extremely wide range of ailments and promised a great deal in what would today be considered very vague terms. Also worthy of note is the interesting explanation of the distinctions between *debility*, *infirmity*, and *imbecility* included under synonyms. Although it would be considered less than accurate by today's medical or lexical standards, it does give a new slant on the medical standards and ideas of the age.

The last thing that should be mentioned in relation to this term is the intriguing quote included by the dictionary to illustrate the meaning. It purports to list the *inconveniences of too strong a perspiration*, an amusing idea in and of itself, but lists debility and *sometimes sudden death* as results of sweating too much. Arbuthnot certainly had a way with understatement.

### **Despondency**

De\*spond"en\*cy (?), n. The state of desponding; loss of hope and cessation of effort; discouragement; depression or dejection of the mind.(W:1913:Page: 399)

*Despondency* was used as the name of a sickness which would still be considered a problem but it would be called depression today. In current use it is only an adjective synonymous with discouragement, dejection, depression, etc. and it is a fairly highbrow term at that. It would sound a bit odd in speech, in many circles or circumstances; in a literary use it would seem more 'normal'. Certainly this term would not normally be used to advertise a product to the general public, partly because it doesn't have the feel of a comfortable and familiar term and partly because drugs that enhance your moods are either illegal or by prescription only.

## **Failing**

Fail"ing, n.

1. A failing short; a becoming deficient; failure; deficiency; imperfection; weakness; lapse; fault; infirmity; as, a mental failing.

And ever in her mind she cas about For that unnoticed  
failing in herself. *Tennyson*. (W:1913:Page: 537)

While this definition makes sense to the modern reader, the unmodified use to describe a physical state is not one that would come naturally today. The meaning above is still perfectly possible, but would need some kind of specification or context to be taken in relation to one's health; in our current preoccupation with competition and external scoreboards, the most usual use of *fail* today would be on the continuum of failure to success in some endeavor or 'at' something. This would be in the vernacular use apparently since the *Webster's* 1986 has fully half a column dedicated to the above 1913 meaning, and only two lines are used for what I perceive as the most common use. I checked this with 16 speakers of West Coast American English by phone poll because I was so surprised by that distribution. I have been unable to consult a more recent *Webster's* to check. Like the attitude towards *fat* today, this is so recent that it had not been reflected in a dictionary by 1986.

## **Humor**

Hu"mor (?), n.[OE. humour, OF. humor, umor, F. humeur, L. humor, umor, moisture, fluid, fr. humere, umere, to be moist. See Humid.] [Written also humour.]

1. Moisture, especially, the moisture or fluid of animal bodies, as the chyle, lymph, etc.; as, the humors of the eye, etc. & hand; *The ancient physicians believed that there were four humors (the blood, phlegm, yellow bile or choler, and*

*black bile or melancholy), on the relative proportion of which the temperament and health depended.*

3.(Med.) A vitiated or morbid animal fluid, such as often causes an eruption on the skin. A body full of *humors*." Sir W. Temple. (W:1913:Page: 712)

Although this term and the idea of *aligning ones humors* etc. was mentioned before, I wanted to include this definition since it, like the preceding one, is not what one would expect as a modern speaker. The connection to humid and wetness is not as obvious as one would assume from surface structure. The first listing in 1986 was also medical, or at least technical;

**1 a** : *a normal functioning fluid or semifluid of the body, esp. in vertebrates* **b** : *constitutional or habitual character, disposition, ....a temporary state of mind, mood* **2** : *that quality in a happening, action, situation....which appeals to the sense of the ludicrous...*(W:1986:Page:1102)

The more familiar uses for this term are, however, the ones that begin with 1b. But again, when considering the modern uses that a layman would recognize, wetness or any connection to moisture have nothing to do with it. The medical derivation is obvious, but the change by which the association with its original meaning has become such specialized jargon that it is no longer even a possibility for the average modern speaker is also worthy of note. It is not just that the modern word has gone through many steps and semantic changes over time, but that in such a short time such a big change has taken place. The association of humors with bodily fluids or any fluids, has entirely disappeared from the modern semantic meaning to the general population of speakers. Nontechnical English has retained only the association with moods and temperament without recalling the original reason for that

association and this change has taken place in the slightly more than 70 years between the publication dates of the two dictionaries.

### **Melancholy**

Mel"an\*chol\*y (?), n. [OE. melancolie, F. mélancolie, L. melancholia, fr. Gr. ; -, black + gall, bile. See Malice, and 1st Gall.]

1. Depression of spirits; a gloomy state continuing a considerable time; deep dejection; gloominess. Shak.
2. Great and continued depression of spirits, amounting to mental unsoundness; melancholia.
3. Pensive meditation; serious thoughtfulness. [Obs.] Hail, divinest Melancholy !" Milton.
4. Ill nature. [Obs.] Chaucer.(W:1913:Page: 909)

*Melancholy* is another word that has lost any medical or diagnostic use over time. Only the third of the options offered above, being considerably milder than the first two, is still used today. In fact the listing for the word is classified as *archaic* in the 1986 Webster's, although the order of the meanings continues to be the same.

### **Prostration**

4.(Med.) A latent, not an exhausted, state of the vital energies; great oppression of natural strength and vigor. &hand; Prostration, in its medical use, is analogous to the state of a spring lying under such a weight that it is incapable of action; while exhaustion is analogous to the state of a spring deprived of its elastic powers. The word, however, is often used to denote any great depression of the vital powers.(W:1913:Page:1152)



As can be seen above, this definition is the fourth one offered under this listing. I especially like the explanation at the end; I wonder if it indicates that this use was already unfamiliar to the reader. The current usages of this word that still include this meaning are fairly rare, it would be theatrical and overly dramatic, even Victorian; not to be taken seriously as a medical assessment of someone's health. The most common use, according to order, was that of a ceremonial or religious gesture denoting respect.

As mentioned before, this last group of words were all used to describe the 'illnesses' for which various products were purported to be the cure. All of these terms were used specifically in relation to 'female complaints' and their use as pseudo-medical jargon diagnosing conditions of a patient has long since been discontinued. In fact, the very term 'female complaint' has changed, both in assumed meaning and semantic charge; it would be taken as grossly offensive or politically incorrect, and certainly no company, hoping to attract customers today, would use such a term in relation to one of its products. The modern understanding of the word *complaint* would be that of a verbal expression of dissatisfaction or discontent; the association with an illness has been forgotten. It is classified as *archaic or obsolete* today.

## **Conclusion**

The goal of this project was to support or discredit my claim that lexical changes are unavoidable, natural, and in the long run, beneficial for a language and its speakers since the language is a reflection of the evolving and changing speech community and its conditions.

While I certainly cannot claim to have proven anything with the analysis of such a limited and narrow sample, I certainly believe that this small

project goes some way towards supporting my claim. The period chosen was selected because of the assumption that the time spanning the two World Wars was not only one of many new technological advances but also one that, because of the world events that had commanded the attention of the vast majority of the population of the American peoples, brought those events and those new technologies into their consciousness. Thus the new lexical items generated would quickly become common property, being used and understood by one and all.

I had also postulated that because two generations of soldiers and to a much lesser extent, women serving in various support capacities, had been sent to the various arenas of the globe where the wars took them, they would bring home new lexical imports that would share in the spread of other new vocabulary.

The results of the examination of the sample papers from 1910 and 1955 confirmed the former assumption while disproving the later conjecture. The stylistic changes between the two periods were an indirect result of the World Wars: people wanted 'hard' facts not long flowery prose, the kinds of things reported and the way they were written reflected the social climate at the time. But for the purposes of this paper, the assumption that the new technologies and the vocabulary to describe them would become both familiar and integrated into regular use was confirmed.

In the sample from 1910, all technical terms were rather indeterminately used, not just the medical lexical items. The medical vocabulary, as has been shown in detail, was used in too broad a usage or too general one. The medical vocabulary used in the advertisements had almost all changed and much has been replaced or refined. Of the thirty one words defined and discussed in detail in this paper all had undergone some kind of change. Of the five that have not changed in colloquial use: *acne*, *bunyon*,

*eczema*, *hives* and *piles*, all have changed technical definitions and been refined or even redefined as a consequence of the medical advances that took place over the seventy-three year time span between the publishing of the two dictionaries used as the determining factor in defining these lexical items.

The remaining twenty-six words, all but one, were significantly transformed during the intervening time period. *Fat* was the only word the definition of which reflected a negative connotation shift only. Six words were broadened or extended in their meaning during the interval; nineteen words had meanings that either narrowed significantly in the medical field or disappeared from medical terminology altogether.

### **Differences Between 1955 and 2000**

Contrary to expectations, the vocabulary and style of the writing in 1955 had so few lexical items that were noticeably different from the vocabulary of today that I was unable to compile a list of anything but the technical and mechanical inventions that had not existed at the time in 1910. The differences between the text of the sample taken from 1910 and that of the sample taken from 1955 are, almost without exception, ones that would still be true today. There are of course some differences between the language used in 1955 and that used today, but they were both numerically and semantically insignificant.

In short, while I had anticipated comparing the two periods I chose to research, and identifying changes between them and the language of 2000, I found almost no semantic or vocabulary differences between the English used in *The San Francisco Chronicle* in 1955 and that used today. Since there is a great deal of semantic variation in the data between 1910 and 1955, but almost none between 1955 and 2000, I have, in effect, compared for the purposes of this project, the lexical items taken from my earliest sample to the lexical items still common in the language that is in general use today. All

comparisons should therefore be assumed to be between the data collected from 1910 and ‘standard’ West Coast American English as it is used today, unless otherwise specified.

### **Source of New Lexical Items**

I had also theorized that not only would there be many new lexical items during the period in question but that many would be new imports from other languages, as had been the case in the past. This proved to be almost entirely false. In the 1910 edition of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, I found only three new imports from foreign sources, one of which did not survive. None of them were in the target category of medical terminology. I found only one new loan word in the 1955 publication.

The medical terminology used to replace the lexical items from 1910 that have been discarded or redefined are, without exception, derivations or new combinations built from either fresh loans of Latin or Greek lexemes or from borrowed morphemes that had already been incorporated into the English language lexicon. The Latin and Greek terms are of course loan words, but they were not the result of importation due to increased exposure and contact with the speech communities in question as a result of the World Wars; they were the result of the same processes and for many of the same reasons as the earlier loans from those languages for the purposes of scientific terminology.

### **Persistence of Common Terms**

As to the survival of the lexical items used to refer to common illnesses and discomforts, they perhaps, like many terms used to describe everyday items, themselves are so generally used and understood that the distinctions made in technical terms are slow to spread to the language of the general population of speakers. As was the case in England after the Norman Conquest, many new words for common things were added to the lexicon

without easily usurping the places of the old; the context of use was influenced by the social position and occasion of use which led to distinctions between the new additions and the homey old familiar terms. The new words borrowed from French were slow to replace the original Anglo-Saxon terms and in many cases did not so much replace as narrow the meaning of the original term.

A case in point, the term *piles*, a Latin derivative from Middle English, is considered today to be rather coarse or uneducated while *hemorrhoids*, a Middle French derivative of Latin that has been imported, is considered both less graphic and more technical and therefore more socially acceptable. The occasions in which the former would be used today would be between family members in private, or among the older generation (60+) when discussing chronic health problems, and by school boys who are enjoying being crass with their friends. The later borrowed term would be used in the media and in a doctors examination room, etc.. This distinction may lead to the eventual abandonment of the ‘tacky’ or socially less acceptable word, or as is the case with so many words, it may just continue to be retained in the active vocabulary as a low prestige lexical item in that can be used in tandem with the newer and more ‘refined’ term.

It is interesting to note that other common illnesses of a similar type: planters corns, warts, blisters, canker sores, etc., all still go by their original names; less homey and less familiar ailments seem to have more formal and ‘foreign’ names derived from Latin or Greek.

### **Problems and Limitations**

One of the difficulties that I ran into is that there was frequently a divergence between the dictionary definition and the newspaper use of a word. I was unable to tell if the disparity was ignorance on the part of the authors, that would let them use a word so inaccurately, a reflection of the speed at which medical jargon was evolving in general, or a deliberate attempt

on the part of the companies that were advertising to create a smoke screen of elaborate vocabulary to conceal their own and their products pretensions.

Another difficulty encountered has to do with the breadth of this paper. I began this research project with the goal of tracing all the changes in vocabulary between the two periods and of examining and illustrating how English vocabulary has changed with time and circumstances. The sheer number and types of changes between the two periods, however, has forced me to limit the quantity of lexical items to a specific group of terms and to those more interesting kinds of changes that can reasonably be included here. I defined and analysed more than 600 words from the publications of the two time periods but in the end only a tiny fraction of those words would fit here with the discussion that accompanies them.

There were many lexical and stylistic changes that could not be included in this paper in spite of the fact that they were as worthy of note as those that occurred in the terminology used for scientific or medical purposes. The stylistic differences between the two periods (1910 and 1955 and 1985 on) alone have made identifying usage differences much more problematic. The material that eventually could be incorporated was only from one kind of writing, advertisements, and only one class of advertisements, those for medicinal products. This means that while interesting, this study is hardly conclusive because of the severely limited scope of the material discussed.

I was unable to locate any comparable studies with which to compare or correlate my work, and I have had to draw the conclusions outlined here from the data derived from a single publication, the *San Francisco Chronicle* (1910), which was used as the basis for my findings. I have not been able to use either similar publications nor data from the same period for comparison. This necessarily reduces the accuracy of the conclusions I have drawn from the data. The fact that I did not find other studies in the same area

may mean that there are none or merely that they were unobtainable from the resources I have been able to access from here in Jyväskylä with my research skills.

I was unable to locate and access any kind of specialized dictionary of medical terminology from 1910. There either are none available, are none extant, or I simply failed to locate one. The medical definitions included here were found in a general dictionary published at the time. I used, consequently, a similar dictionary as the reference for modern English medical terminology, only checking occasionally with a dictionary that specialised in medical vocabulary when clarification was needed.

### **Hypothesis Validity**

The comparison of lexical items and the attempt to trace the changes made in the lexicon over time may not be the best way to support my claim that languages change and that those changes are both natural and, in the long run, beneficial. Certainly I found nothing in the sample of data from 1910 to directly collaborate the position that foreign loans are at least unharmed to the integrity of a language and the community which speaks it. There are certainly some convincing examples, however, of loan words being useful and necessary for the particular purpose they are imported and or combined.

The findings of this paper, that medical terminology has changed significantly over the period examined, support my hypothesis only indirectly. When new terms were needed for a particular purpose they were readily available because of the historical and social predisposition to capitalize on the process of borrowing the morphemes necessary to precisely delineate the idea or thing in question. That the lexical items used for this purpose had been for the most part borrowed in a prior period in no way detracts from the fact that the source most suitable for the morphemes needed was a foreign one. Today that same medical terminology is used internationally, not because of 'cultural

imperialism' but because the medical field is an international one and professionals need to be able to communicate with clarity and precision about every aspect of their concerns. And it could hardly be termed cultural invasion in any case, when the vast majority of the lexemes involved are not of Anglo Saxon origin.

The internationality of the vocabulary used in the medical, indeed in all the fields of science has contributed immensely to the exchange of information and thus the advance of progress and refinement of our understanding of those sciences. This is undeniable. That the vocabulary sources chosen have been the ones used by the 'cultured ' and 'educated' in Europe for the last few centuries can be no surprise to anyone. Yet this clear proof of the efficacy of such loans has been dismissed as unimportant in the face of the current trend for borrowing foreign terms that supposedly threatens so many languages and cultures.

The scope of this paper precludes decisive proof, yet indirect support for my hypothesis has clearly been achieved. The main function of language is to enable clear communication on a given topic by the speakers of that language, and so it must reflect the world in which the speech community lives and works. Changes in language, regardless of the source of the changes, derivation, combining, borrowing, semantic shifts, etc., are inevitable because changes in the world around us and our attitude towards it are constantly changing. Quibbling over and bemoaning the type and source of change for primarily sociopolitical reasons will not alter that fact.

Since the following quote says my point so neatly, I will restate it here to close:

"Perhaps the most lasting effect of the 'authoritarian' or 'prescriptive' tradition however is an attitude: that language is 'under threat' or 'decaying', that there are rearguard actions to be fought against all kinds of



novel diseases affecting our speech. And one of the most interesting properties of this constellation of attitudes is the general lack of historical perspective, and the invincibility of opinion in the face of contrary data." (Lass 1987:72)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Primary References (listed in order of frequency of use)

*Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary* (1913) G & C. Merriam Co.:New York

*Webster's Third New International Dictionary* (1961) 1986 Merriam-Webster: New York

*The Compact Edition of The Oxford English Dictionary* (1971) 1977 Oxford University Press: Oxford

*The On-Line Medical Dictionary* (1997-99) Academic Medical Publishing & CancerWEB

*Webster's New World College Dictionary* (1999) 4th edition, Merriam-Webster: New York

### Secondary References

Barber, Charles *Linguistic Change in Present-Day English* (1964) Oliver and Boyd:Edinburgh and London

Baugh and Cable *A History of the English Language* (1996) 4<sup>th</sup> edition, Routledge: London

Bradley, Henry *The Making of English* (1964) MacMillan and Co LTD: London

Lass,Roger *The Shape of English-Shape and History* (1987) J.M. Dent & Sons LTD: London

Lass, Roger *On Explaining Language Change* (1980) Cambridge University

Press: London

Leech, Geoffrey *Semantics* (1974) 1983, The Chaucer Press: Suffolk

Leith, Dick *A Social History of English* (1983) Routledge & Kegan Paul:  
London

Potter, Simeon *Changing English* (1969) Andre Deutsch: London

Serjeantson, Mary S. *A History of Foreign Words In English* (1935) 1961  
Routledge and Kegan Paul: London