



# **Rhetorics of Bodily Disease and Health in Medieval and Early Modern England (Literary and Scientific Cultures of Early Modernity)**

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Susan Sontag in *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and Its Metaphors* points to the vital connection between metaphors and bodily illnesses, though her analyses deal mainly with modern literary works. This collection of essays examines the vast extent to which rhetorical figures related to sickness and health—metaphor, simile, pun, analogy, symbol, personification, allegory, oxymoron, and metonymy—informed medieval and early modern literature, religion, science, and medicine in England and its surrounding European context.

In keeping with the critical trend over the past decade to foreground the matter of the body and the emotions, these essays track the development of sustained, nuanced rhetorics of bodily disease and health — physical, emotional, and spiritual. The contributors to this collection approach their intriguing subjects from a wide range of timely, theoretical, and interdisciplinary perspectives, including the philosophy of language, semiotics, and linguistics; ecology; women's and gender studies; religion; and the history of medicine. The essays focus on works by Dante, Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Donne, and Milton among others; the genres of epic, lyric, satire, drama, and the sermon; and cultural history artifacts such as medieval anatomies, the arithmetic of plague bills of mortality, meteorology, and medical guides for healthy regimens.

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