

Title:

Poetics and stomatology. Transfieldal research of the bruxism phenomenon.

Keywords:

literary studies, medicine, grinding, teeth, romanticism

Summary:

In my thesis, I want to check whether the latest medical findings regarding bruxism can affect the interpretation of the literature. Does the research revealing its function in the processes of regulation and the body's response to stress have implications beyond medical science? The working hypothesis is the supposition that the positive judgement of bruxism is presented in the literary works. I decide to look for two essential elements of this behaviour - clenching and grinding of teeth. The traditional interpretation of this phenomenon has been sanctioned in the literature by the Gospel words about weeping and gnashing of teeth, which quotation I examine in detail. In the introductory chapter, I present arguments in favour of choosing Romanticism as the historico-literary period from which I would like to study particular works especially authored by two main Polish authors of that era – Adam Mickiewicz and Juliusz Słowacki. Next, I explain the terms used in the title of the dissertation and indicate two basic areas of research – “stomatobiography” that is, the reconstruction of the history of real abovementioned authors’ teeth and “stomatopoetics” - the analysis of the image of clenching and grinding teeth presented in the literature.

In the first chapter, I reconstruct the history of real Adam Mickiewicz’s teeth. Based on the analysed material, I note that the writer suffered from teeth all his life. In the second chapter, I analyse the clenching and grinding of teeth in the poet's work. In the summary of the chapter, I group individual realizations of the latter activity on two dimensions: good - bad and earthly - supernatural.

In the third chapter, I deal with the history of Juliusz Słowacki’s teeth. My starting point is the condition of his teeth based on the skull excavated during the exhumation in 1927. Then I look for information from the poet's letters about toothache and extraction operations. The fourth chapter is devoted to the analysis and interpretation of the image of clenching and grinding teeth in the works of Juliusz Słowacki. The latter activity in the writer's work fulfils various functions and is far from the biblical prototype. In works in which it is part of the mental state of the characters, its function

is surprisingly similar to the contemporary understanding of the role of bruxism for the organism in the medical view. The next part of the work is devoted to two transgressive teeth adventures of writers. The first is the image of Saturn grinding his teeth, which is the key to explaining Słowacki's Genesis truths and the other is an unexpected dental episode in the biography of Cyprian Norwid.

In conclusion, I summarize my considerations. It is striking that Mickiewicz suffered from toothache all his life but writes about them extremely economically, and Słowacki, who had good dentition gives a very varied picture of their activities in his works. The working hypothesis was confirmed; I found a positive judgement of bruxism in the literature. Thus I propose to organize the ways of describing the grinding of teeth, based on the works analysed in the work, using the concept of Thomas Kuhn's paradigms. I postulate three basic types of describing teeth grinding in the literature: biblical-Dantesque, psychological-Byronic and medical-aesthetic. Their order is historical, though different from the original Kuhn's concept, successive stages don't abolish the previous understanding of this state, but only constitute the dominant way of understanding them, being in the foreground, while the rest are in the background. I show such an understanding of these paradigms in the analysis of the contemporary literary fragment, postulating the verification of the model proposed here on a broader base of literary texts, with particular emphasis on the latest texts.