Shuttleton's accounts are often riveting, demonstrating the part played by imagination in the framing of this condition, especially the literary imagination that conceptualizes malady by first verbalizing it.

This is not another pedestrian representation of a disease cluster: Shuttleton also embeds perplexing philosophical dimensions of "representing malady"—its degree of stigma—and takes sides in the ongoing debate about the need for demystification. Students of medical history know how assiduously Susan Sontag campaigned in the 1980s to demystify disease, which (in her view) should be a scientific category rather than moral sign or cultural stigma. Her aim was noble and eloquently argued, but history from time immemorial—continuing into the present—weighs against her position. People have always given meaning to disease; infected individuals cannot refrain from attaching morally loaded significance to their maladies that exceed the limits of the pathological signs and literal physical symptoms. For centuries smallpox was living proof of the moral tendency rather than its exception, just as psychological depression is today.

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Lucy E Frank (ed.), *Representations of death in nineteenth-century US writing and culture*, Warwick Studies in the Humanities, Aldershot and Burlington, VT, Ashgate, 2007, pp. xii, 234, illus., £50, $89.95 (hardback 978-0-7546-5528-2).

Like many scholarly works on death in the nineteenth century, Lucy Frank foregrounds the introduction to this diverse and engaging collection of essays with reference to Phillipe Ariès's pioneering text *The hour of our death* (1981). As Frank notes, Ariès's attempt to write the history of death in western culture from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century necessitated a degree of generalization even though he acknowledged historical and national differences. Thus, while Ariès cast American attitudes towards death as an extreme example of western morbidity, he failed to engage with the multiple cleavages within, and complexities of, US society. This volume seeks to redress Ariès's omission by extrapolating and understanding marginal and contested cultures of death in nineteenth-century America.

The volume is divided into three parts. Part One examines the relationship between political agency and discourses of death, mourning and remembrance. Most of the essays emphasize the distance between an African-American politics of mourning that sought to remember the losses and deathly effects of slavery and a notion of a "national" culture of loss, a difference exemplified in Dana Luciano's chapter on responses to the death of President Lincoln. Similarly, discussion of racial differences in modes of mourning is underscored by analysis of the flimsy value attached to African-American mortality by white writers and attempts to challenge perceptions of black mortality by commentators such as W E B Du Bois and Charles Chesnutt. Despite the emphasis on difference in this section, an examination of the legendary speech by Native American Chief Seattle argues for recognition of liminal texts of loss that serve as a middle ground between diverse cultures of mourning and sensibility. Part Two focuses exclusively on poetical works and is concerned primarily with gender and loss. Two engaging chapters on child mortality offer critical reflections on the assumed feminization and mawkishness of mourning in the nineteenth century and the difficulties of negotiating Evangelical models of bereavement. Part Three considers the social rituals and popular discourses surrounding death, such as the use of mourning wear to perform grief, and the appeal of the supernatural to an audience saturated with death in the Civil War.

The literary and cultural emphasis of the essays will appeal to inter-disciplinary

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interests. Whilst there is little by way of "medical" history, contributions on suicide in the social realist novel, the deathly sexuality of femininity, perceptions of mortality rates and responses to bereavement and the afterlife provide informative and critical contexts for consideration of the social meanings attached to dying, death and grief. The emphasis on the specificity of US cultures of death will hold obvious appeal to scholars of American history and many of the chapters assume a degree of pre-existing knowledge. None the less, the relevance of this volume extends beyond the US. Evaluations of reformist agendas on death and social class have a broad relevance to considerations of death in other industrial societies. Likewise, the essays repeatedly situate cultural modes of mourning in relation to the Civil War. Given that the relationship between the Great War and European cultures of death has received so much critical attention, reflections on the impact of the Civil War on US cultures of death offer some revealing comparisons on modern societies' commercial, cultural and emotive responses to mass bereavement and new technologies of killing. Similarly, in privileging marginal stories, the volume addresses questions concerning identity and the universality of grief. As the essays indicate, an individual loss often provides a base from which to claim sympathy with the mourning of others. Yet race, class and gender consistently feature as obstacles to empathy as some deaths and sensibilities are valued more than others. In turn, cleavages in cultures of feeling reinforce and perpetuate the differences that languages of universal loss and national cultures of death would seek to deny.

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Noga Arikha, *Passions and tempers: a history of the humours*, New York, HarperCollins, 2007, pp. xxi, 376, illus., US$27.95, Can.$34.95 (hardback 978-0-06-073116-8).

This is an ambitious and expansive history of the humours—of blood, yellow bile, black bile and phlegm—from the classical world to the present day. Arikha's argument is clear: "our various humours are keys to the map of our psyche" (p. 291). The peculiar blend of psychological and physiological characteristics that make us human, and individuals, has historically been understood through the explanatory power of the fluids that move around the body, and (crucially) between the mental and the physical realms. In the process, "the original four humours imagined by the ancients have been multiplied by the hundreds into hormones, enzymes, neurotransmitters, particles, and the like" (p. xix). Notwithstanding Cartesian philosophy and microbiology, the explanatory power of the humours remains intact.

Arikha's approach is enthusiastic, combining literary and medical texts, and she demonstrates a keen grasp of classical and early modern theories of the body and its workings. Despite its intellectual ambitions, however, this book is above all else a good summary of Galenism and its application throughout a range of medical theories and practices. There are times when Arikha's broad brush-strokes are insufficient to deal with specificities—the cultural meanings of the humours as material entities, for instance, receive little attention. An example of this is the simplicity with which she deals with blood as just another humour that "served the same explanatory functions as those fulfilled by humours", rather than asking exactly *why* and *how* it was regarded as "the engine of life" (p. 190).

In many ways, Arikha's insights are correct—humoral interpretations of the body have survived for centuries as metaphors for personality types and in concepts of balance for explanations of health and disease: one need only think of the thriving alternative (now complementary) therapy movement, and a variety of non-western traditions that similarly strive for holism. And yet there is nothing particularly novel about this observation: it is an example, if ever there was

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