

welcome effort to illustrate that no common colonial policy toward leprosy emerged in these years. Differences in racial populations, national identity, and attitudes toward the intermingling of European and indigenous colonials shaped distinctive chronologies and regulations regarding the containment of those with leprosy. Yet these comparisons remain cursory, in part because they lack any in-depth exploration of the archival sources specific to each institution. Despite his stated intention to challenge the “top-down nature” (p. 177) of previous theoretical models, this archival absence means the voices of those with leprosy or family members intervening on their behalf are largely absent from Edmond’s account.

More impressive is Edmond’s effort to draw clear connections between domestic and imperial policies toward leprosy, addressing the call from such scholars as Ann Stoler to examine the ways in which metropole and colony are mutually constitutive. He effectively uses Paul Gilroy’s conception of the “camp” to examine the wide variety of institutions constructed by Europeans to isolate those viewed as contaminants. In Edmond’s conceptualization, such colonial sites as concentration camps and native reservations, and such domestic facilities as lock hospitals and tuberculosis asylums shared a common imperative to “enclose and isolate the primitive, the diseased, and the backward” (p. 216). His comparison provides a historical context for leprosy that demonstrates how segregationist impulses emerged within domestic settings and were not simply tools of empire.

Yet mapping the intersections among these various encampments, while valuable, ultimately does little to explain the particular power of leprosy to inspire a degree of revulsion disproportionate to its infectiousness, or to account for its hold on the literary imagination. In his concluding chapter, Edmond briefly examines a series of authors to illustrate how leprosy settlements served as a source of both fascination and fear from the 1860s to the 1960s. He attempts to link this literary study to the preceding chapters by demonstrating how each author transgressed

and challenged established imperial boundaries; however, the connections between this cultural analysis and his medical context remain elusive. While one wishes that this work could draw more specific conclusions to bring together the composite parts of his interdisciplinary study, this book will prove rewarding to scholars interested in literary and medical accounts of disease and their complicated imperial genealogies.

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Priscilla Wald, *Contagious: cultures, carriers, and the outbreak narrative*, Durham, NC, and London, Duke University Press, 2008, pp. xi, 373, illus., £55.00 (hardback 978-0-8223-4128-4); £13.99 (paperback 978-0-8223-4153-6).

How should we understand the fear and fascination evoked by discussions of disease carriers and outbreaks—produced in scientific publications and the mainstream media—in a world sensitized to the dangers of global disease spread following the emergence of HIV/AIDS? In her new book, Priscilla Wald, Professor of English at Duke University, combines previously published articles with new material to build a compelling conceptual framework which she uses to explore how scientific and medical ideas about disease and contagion subtly inform and are informed by cultural narratives. All too often, these stories lead to what Wald labels “the outbreak narrative”: a contradictory yet compelling account which invariably identifies a new infection, follows epidemiological investigators as they chart its course through various networks and carriers, and ends ultimately—through human intelligence, co-operation, and scientific authority—with its containment. Wald argues passionately for a concerted re-examination of the way in which Americans construct the stories they tell about disease emergence, given the impact that these

narratives often have on responses to global disease.

The book's first half begins with new material: the introduction explores the literary and mythical underpinnings of epidemiology, while chapter 1 introduces the conventions of the "outbreak narrative". Wald then reconfigures previously published articles exploring issues of gender, race, and social control in relation to such American figures of the early twentieth century as "Typhoid Mary" Mallon and urban sociologist Robert E Park. The book's second half extends her analysis to bridge the entire century, moving from a discussion of the similarities in language featured in public discourse surrounding virology and communism in the 1950s to an examination of how the legacy of earlier disease narratives shaped the ways in which AIDS was interpreted in the 1980s.

Wald follows the lead of such cultural theorists as Paula Treichler, Cindy Patton, and Douglas Crimp, authors who have written extensively on the cultural representations of AIDS. Like them, she is interested in how disease is represented through language, and seeks to show how stories like those of detective mysteries and science fiction films have important and real consequences for the way in which disease threats are imagined, approached, and (ideally) contained. A central idea expressed in these stories is the concept of herd immunity, which represents for Wald a key paradox that helps to explain the morbid fascination that communities have had with "the stranger", "the marginal man", or "the hybrid". Each one, she argues, embodies the uneasy tension between the possibility of biological security, through new genes and immunity, and the menace of a deadly infection harboured by a "healthy carrier".

The scope of Wald's efforts is impressive, both in terms of timescale and interdisciplinary exploration, as is the scrutinizing gaze she brings to her task. She combines a focus on works of popular journalism and science reporting with a keen reading of specialist journals, and merges these with a careful examination of popular works of fiction and

film. Wald brings an analytical ability of surgical precision, carefully guiding the reader through layers of meanings which she teases from her source texts. She also attempts to ground these texts in the unfolding social, cultural, and scientific developments which led to their creation. The result is a richly detailed exploration of the mutually constituting cultural and scientific stories encapsulated in epidemiology, set against the backdrop of twentieth-century US history.

While appreciating Wald's efforts to trace ideas through a diverse range of materials, historians may find themselves wishing for the inclusion of more archival sources. Wald draws upon an impressive array of published and broadcast works, some of which might have been more fully contextualized had the author given greater weight to unpublished archival materials. For example, in her chapter 5 discussion of Randy Shilts's role in the "invention" of the infamous "Patient Zero" character in *And the band played on* (New York, 1987), Wald almost certainly could have gained useful insights from the many boxes of Shilts's professional papers in the San Francisco Public Library's archives.

This is a minor criticism for a work that achieves as much as *Contagious* does. Wald has made a substantial contribution in terms of uniting theoretical insights from such fields as mythology, literature, and film studies, and applying them to the history of infectious disease epidemiology. In doing so, she makes a strong case for the importance of both the cultural critic and of interdisciplinary thinking in the preparation for future outbreaks of global disease.

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Amy L Fairchild, Ronald Bayer, and James Colgrove, *Searching eyes: privacy, the state, and disease surveillance in America*, Berkeley, California/Milbank Books on Health and the Public, no. 18, Los Angeles, University