



Cholera and Nation: Doctoring the Social Body in Victorian England (Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century)

Pamela K. Gilbert

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Drawing from sermons, novels, newspaper editorials, poetry, medical texts, and the writings of social activists, *Cholera and Nation* explores how the coming of the cholera epidemics during a period of intense political reform in Britain set the terms by which the social body would be defined. In part by historical accident, epidemic disease and especially cholera became foundational to the understanding of the social body. As the healthy body was closely tied to a particular vision of nation and modernity, the unhealthy body was proportionately racialized and othered. In turn, epidemic disease could not be separated from issues of social responsibility, political management, and economic unrest, which perpetually threatened the nation and its identity. For the rest of the century, the emergent field of public health would be central to the British national imaginary, defining the nation's civilization and modernity by its sanitary progress."

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