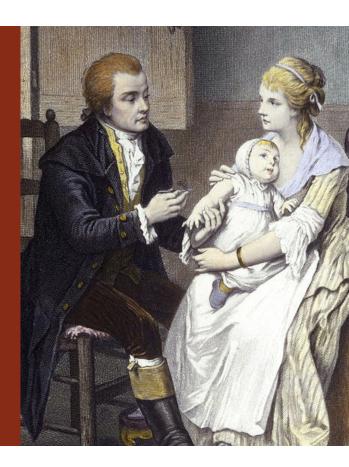
UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONDING TO SOCIAL DISRUPTIONS

BEFORE ANTI-AUTISM: COW MANIA AND THE VACCINATION DEBATES



TRAVIS CHI WING LAU

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 7 P.M. | SMITH RECITAL HALL | SILVER CENTER FOR THE ARTS

This talk will turn to the late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century debates over Edward Jenner's campaigns to nationalize vaccination in Britain. Well before Andrew Wakefield's retracted article in the Lancet claiming the MMR vaccine caused autism, opponents of Jenner's vaccination like Benjamin Moseley and William Rowley decried vaccination as a violent, dangerous procedure that would corrupt the vaccinated, especially children, by reducing them to a bovine state. Lau makes the case that much of the current anti-autism bent of contemporary anti-vaccination discourse draws its rhetoric and affective strategies from long-standing ableist anxieties surrounding "cow mania," a condition associated with the violation of species boundaries and with class tensions.



Travis Chi Wing Lau (he/him/his) is assistant professor of English at Kenyon College. His research and teaching focus on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British literature and culture, health humanities, and disability studies. Alongside his scholarship, Lau frequently writes for venues of public scholarship like *Synapsis: A Journal of Health Humanities, Public Books, Lapham's Quarterly*, and the *Los Angeles Review of Books*. His poetry has appeared in *Barren Magazine*, *Wordgathering, Glass, South Carolina Review, Foglifter*, and the *New Engagement*, as well as in two chapbooks, *The Bone Setter* (Damaged Goods Press, 2019) and *Paring* (Finishing Line Press, 2020). [travisclau.com]

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