

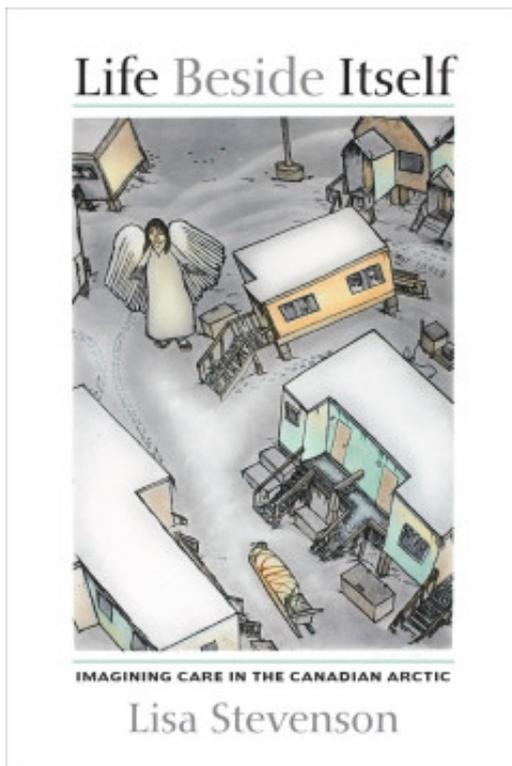
<http://somatosphere.net/2015/10/summer-roundup-forums.html>

## Summer Roundup: Forums

2015-10-09 11:40:19

By Deanna Day

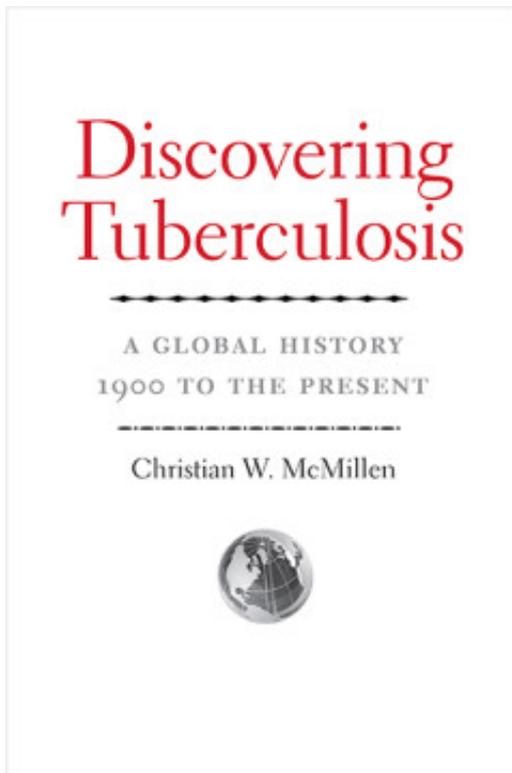
Now that the academic year is in full swing, we thought it would be a great time to do a roundup of the work that you may have missed on *Somatosphere* over the summer. Each Friday for the next few weeks we will highlight a new collection of pieces, beginning today with a set of Forums (four for books and one for a documentary film) that draw together commentary about postcolonialism, pandemics, structural violence and care, the politics of expertise, and how we craft intentional and unintentional narratives of what it all means.



**Book Forum:** [Lisa Stevenson's \*Life Beside Itself: Imagining Care in the Canadian Arctic\*](#)

This forum includes commentary from Zoë Wool, Audra Simpson, S. Lochlann Jain, Angela Garcia, and Anne Allison, along with a response from Lisa Stevenson.

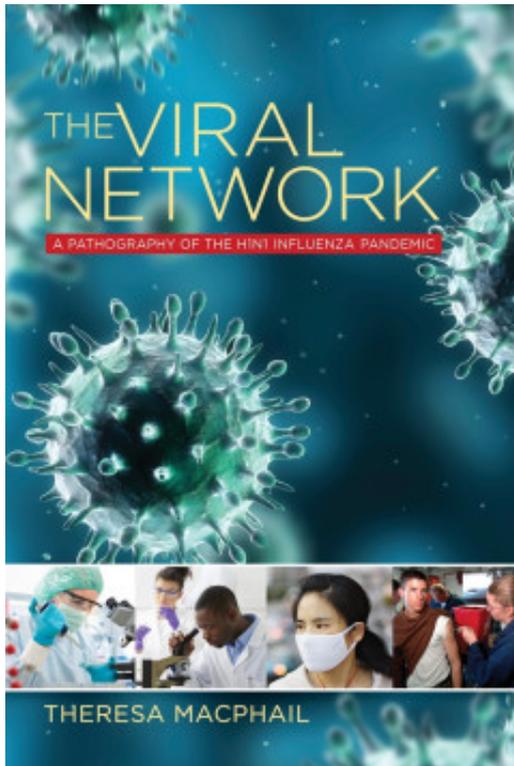
*“It is also a book full of questions, questions that open to possibilities rather than answers. The foreclosure of an answer seems almost antithetical to the kind of knowing—a knowing inextricable from feeling and dreaming and seeing with inner and outer eyes—that we are invited to join in here... It is a kind of knowing that means “desir[ing] an image, rather than a fact” (39). It is a knowing beyond the grasp of post-colonial forms of biopolitical knowledge that govern nothing more than Inuit life and death themselves across two moments of the chronic crisis of Inuit mortality identified by the Canadian state: tuberculosis in the mid 20th century, and suicide in the 21st. Such knowledge, bound to facts and populations, to vital and mortal statistics of aggregates and generic individuals, enacts the violence of a kind of procrustean governance, slicing away the extensions of a life that reach beyond life itself so as to tuck an anonymized Inuit body snugly into bed, or grave, or, as was the case for many tubercular Inuit evacuated to southern sanitariums, first one, and then the other. And this violence, Stevenson shows, is also a form of care.”*  
—Zoë Wool



**Book Forum:** [Christian McMillen's \*Discovering Tuberculosis: A Global History, 1900 to the Present\*](#)

This forum includes commentary from David Jones, Erin Koch, Janina Kehr, Niels Brimnes, Christoph Gradmann, and Joanna Radin, along with a response from Christian McMillen.

*“Discovering Tuberculosis, then, can be read as a story of the dangers of confusing partial knowledge for total knowledge. This is an apt insight for a historian. ‘The problem of not knowing what was left out’ (154), or what Donald Rumsfeld notoriously called ‘unknown unknowns,’ is ethical, epistemological, and in this book, epidemiological. Yet, as any good historian knows, it is crucial to be aware of why the archive contains what it does and to take seriously the traces that point to what it does not. It is also crucial to understand the limitations of what any individual or institution, even when armed with the best available techniques, can know. This is what feminists have referred to as ‘situated knowledge’ — which embraces partiality in the service of a more refined and effective form of objectivity.” —Joanna Radin*

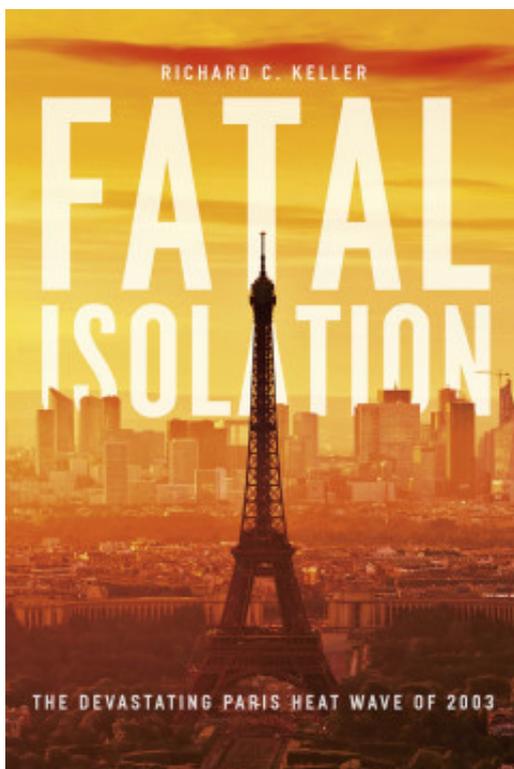


**Book Forum:** [Theresa MacPhail's \*The Viral Network: A Pathography of the H1N1 Influenza Epidemic\*](#).

This forum includes commentary from Lyle Fearnley, Katherine A. Mason, Natalie Porter, Adia Benton, and Carlo Caduff, along with a response from

Theresa MacPhail.

*“Lurking beneath the metaphor of viral contagion in *The Viral Network* is an aspect of the viral experience so fundamental as to be absent from much of the explicit discussion in the book: the power to inflict suffering, and to do so differentially. The viral represents connectivity, to be sure, but it also represents the pain and suffering that that connectivity can create. Perhaps more to the point in the context of MacPhail’s discussion, not all nodes in the network are equal either in their ability to create or ease suffering, or in their likelihood of being made to endure it. ... The steep slopes of global geopolitical power almost always track viral suffering and death more closely and accurately than any epidemiological model. Epidemiologists know this well — and yet they keep building their models, trying to keep deadly viruses, as WHO has often articulated it, ‘at their source.’ The always unspoken addendum being, ‘in the poor places that are going to suffer anyway.’” —Katherine A. Mason*



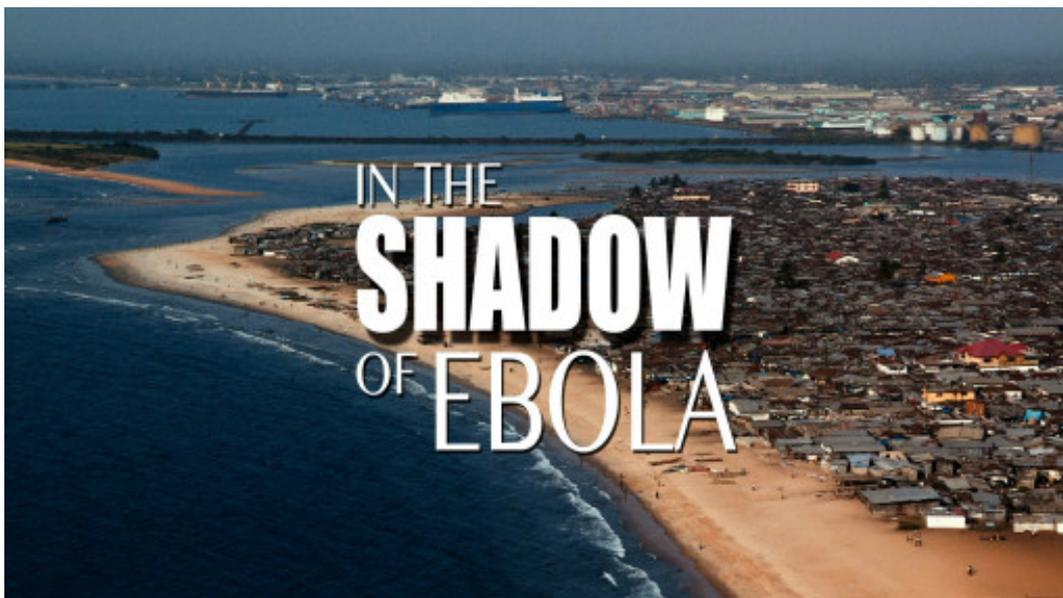
**Book Forum:** [Richard Keller’s \*Fatal Isolation: The Devastating Paris Heat Wave of 2003\*](#)

This forum includes commentary from Sara B. Pritchard, Peter Redfield,

Camille Robcis, Kim Fortun, and Miriam Ticktin, along with a response from Richard C. Keller.

*“I could write about Paris’s 2003 heat wave, the centerpiece of Richard C. Keller’s new book, Fatal Isolation, in good academic fashion, but instead I’m thinking about the elderly woman I saw on a Paris street that July. I could engage with one of Keller’s arguments, drawing on Charles Perrow, that the canicule was a normal accident. Building on Keller’s evidence and analysis, I could make the case that the heat wave was an envirotechnical disaster — a deadly result of the confluence of environmental, technological, and political factors. I could invite us to consider Paris as an envirotechnical system — a city, like many worldwide, where the infrastructure of the built environment, when combined with natural processes like weather, produce an urban heat island effect that can be fatal, especially for society’s most vulnerable citizens. I could place the 2003 heat wave and Keller’s narrative in the context of French environmental history, the field of environmental history, or related scholarship that has explored the human body in and as environment.*

*“But instead, I want to think about the anecdote as methodology and narrative strategy — what it does for Keller’s examination of the 2003 heat wave, what it does for readers, and, in particular, this reader, who has found herself fixated on a fleeting encounter of her own from that summer.” —Sara B. Pritchard*



**Film Forum:** [Gregg Mitman and Sarita Siegel's \*In the Shadow of Ebola\*](#)

Organized and introduced by Marissa Mika, this forum includes commentary from Johanna Crane, Julie Livingston, Michelle Murphy, and Peter Redfield, along with a response from Gregg Mitman and Sarita Siegel.

*Cholera, and its emergency remediation, is an achievement of the politics of infrastructure; it is the result of the purposeful building of some infrastructures and not others, of funding emergency medicine to save from death and not durable systems to protect health. In *The Shadow of Ebola* suggests something similar about Ebola. In many ways, the deadliness of the epidemic was the manifestation of a layered history that has physically and systemically structured precarity into Liberian life...*

*"In addition to grappling with the politics of absent infrastructure, the film provokes attention to the embedded histories of American colonialism, of global capitalism, and of resource-extraction-fueled conflict that have structured the distributions of precarity in Liberia and West Africa... When I googled diamond mining and Ebola in hopes of learning more, I found myself reading, not critical accounts, but instead calls by the diamond industry to ensure that Ebola does not affect its operations in the region juxtaposed with suspicious theories that Ebola might be a human-made weapon tied to a diamond mining conspiracy. In our contemporary historical conjuncture, history seems to repeat, where infrastructures to secure the global logistic chains that maintain resource extraction are protected while the task of affirming human health remains the concern of temporary infrastructures of emergency humanitarianism." —Michelle Murphy*

**AMA citation**

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