An anatomical illustration of a human torso, showing internal organs and a prominent red branching structure, possibly representing the respiratory or circulatory system. The drawing is detailed and uses various colors to distinguish different parts of the anatomy.

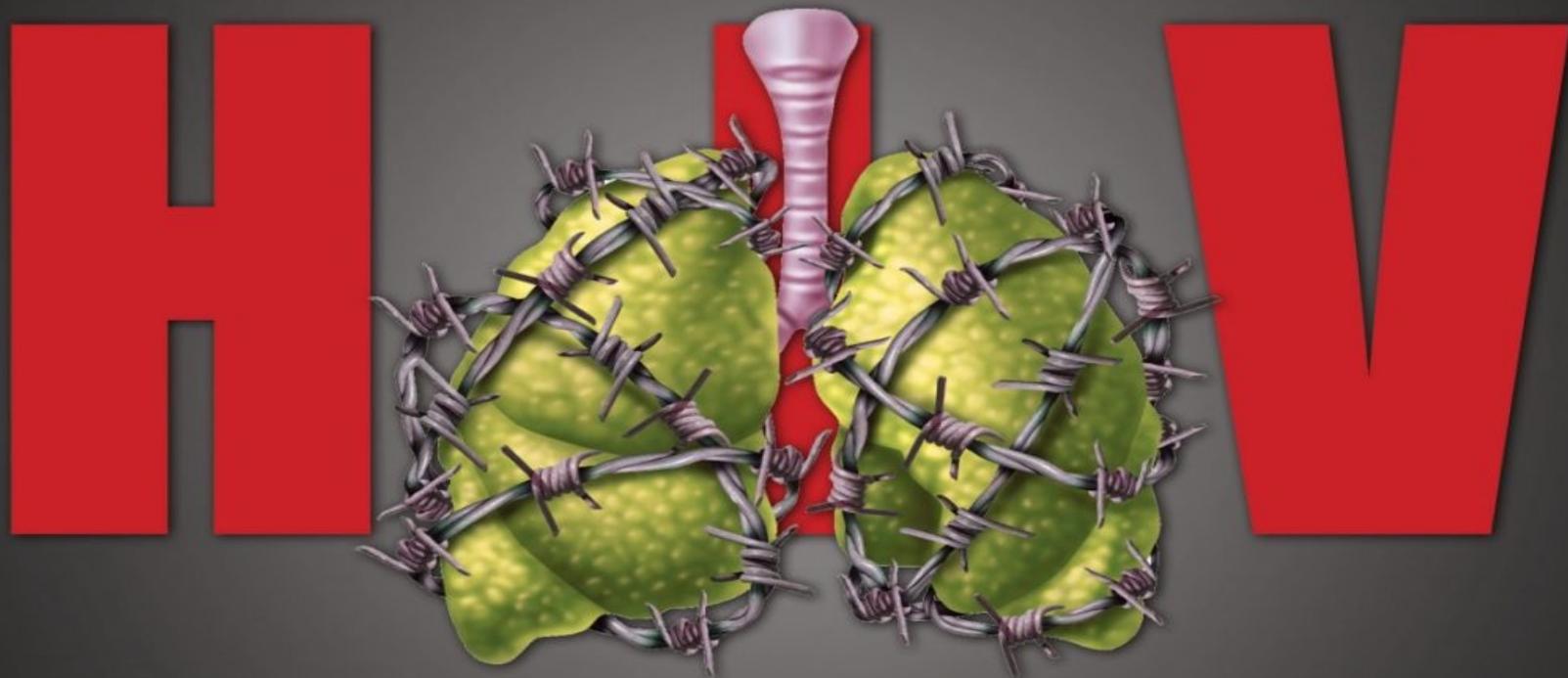
# A CULTURAL HISTORY OF TUBERCULOSIS

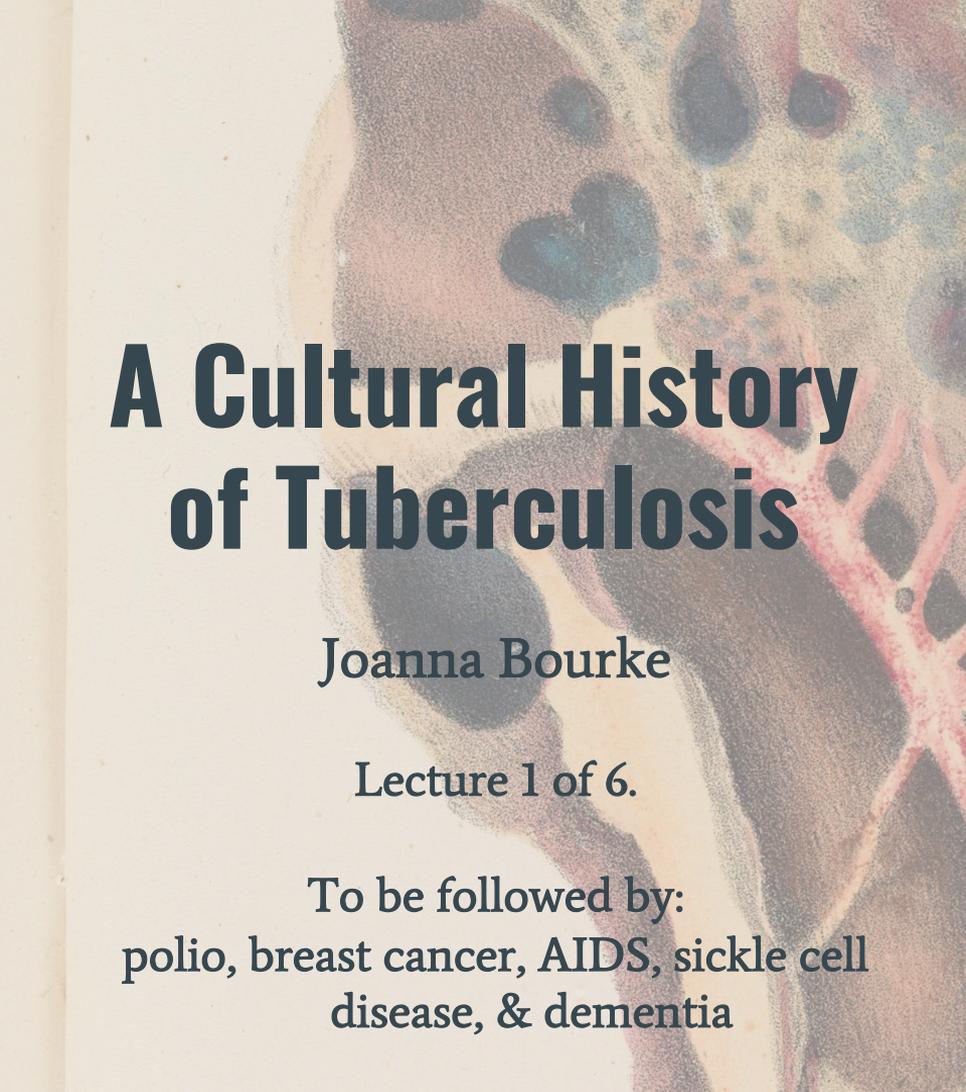
Joanna Bourke

- Professor of History, Birkbeck, University of London
  - And Professor of Rhetoric, Gresham College
  - @bourke\_joanna









# A Cultural History of Tuberculosis

Joanna Bourke

Lecture 1 of 6.

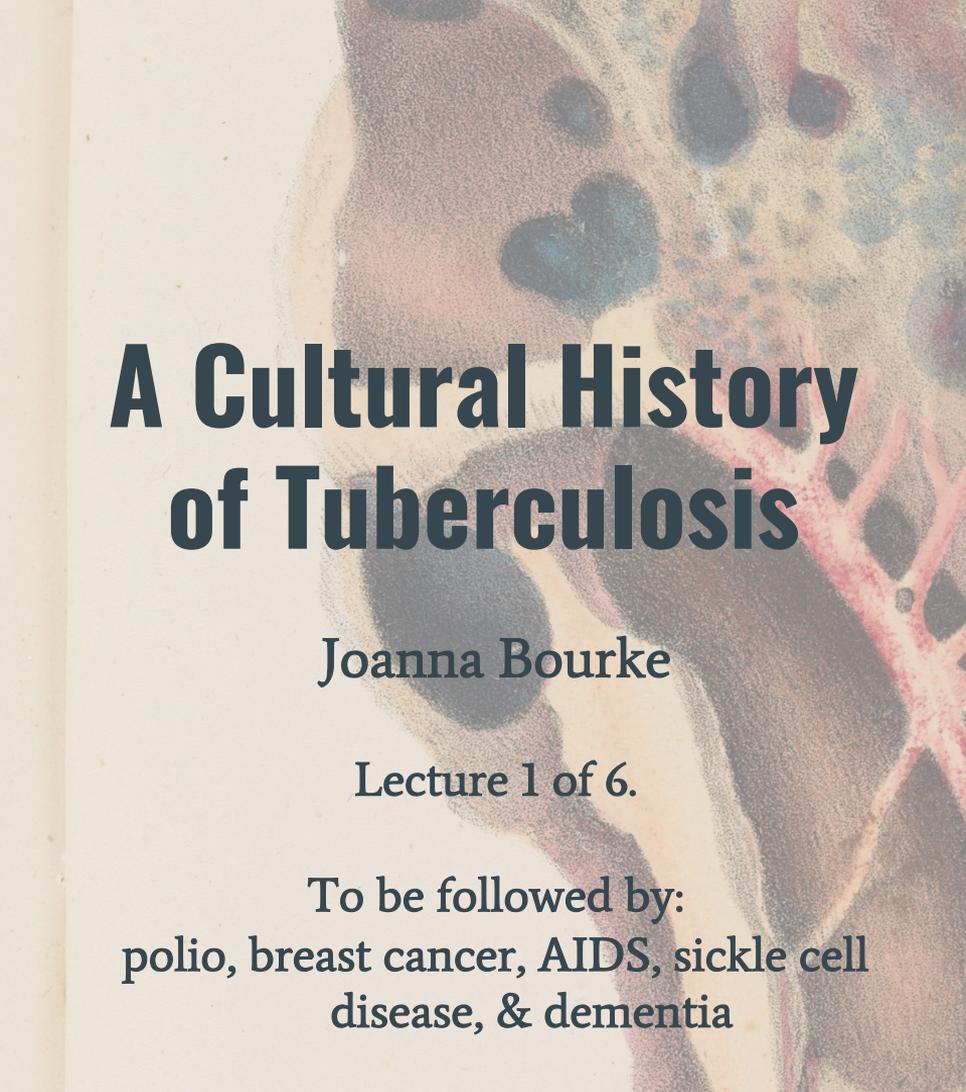
To be followed by:  
polio, breast cancer, AIDS, sickle cell  
disease, & dementia

Today:

1 in 3 people are infected with  
mycobacterium tuberculosis (MTB)

TB is responsible for 1 in 4 preventable  
deaths

Only 1 in 5 TB patients have access to an  
effective treatment programme



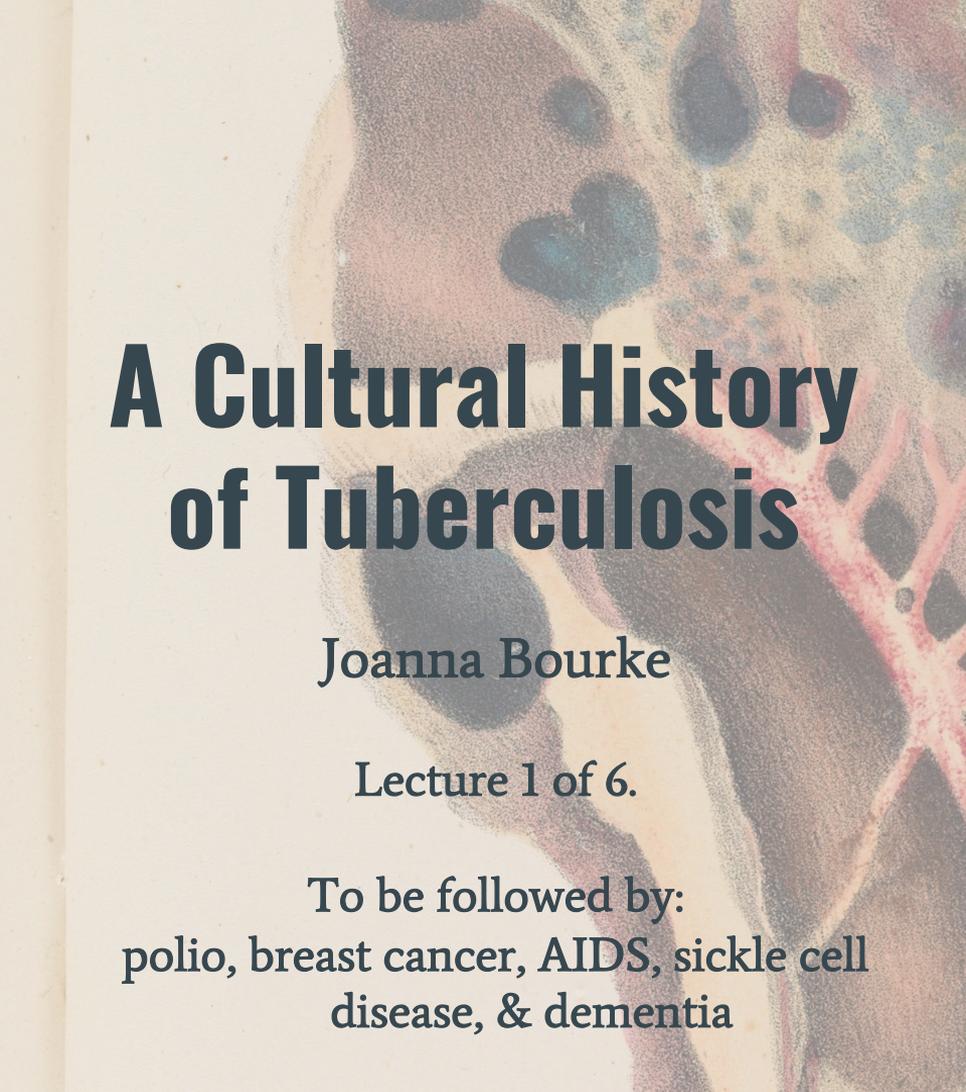
# A Cultural History of Tuberculosis

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Lecture 1 of 6.

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What can a  
cultural history of TB  
contribute to  
debates today?



# A Cultural History of Tuberculosis

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Lecture 1 of 6.

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‘Captain of Death’

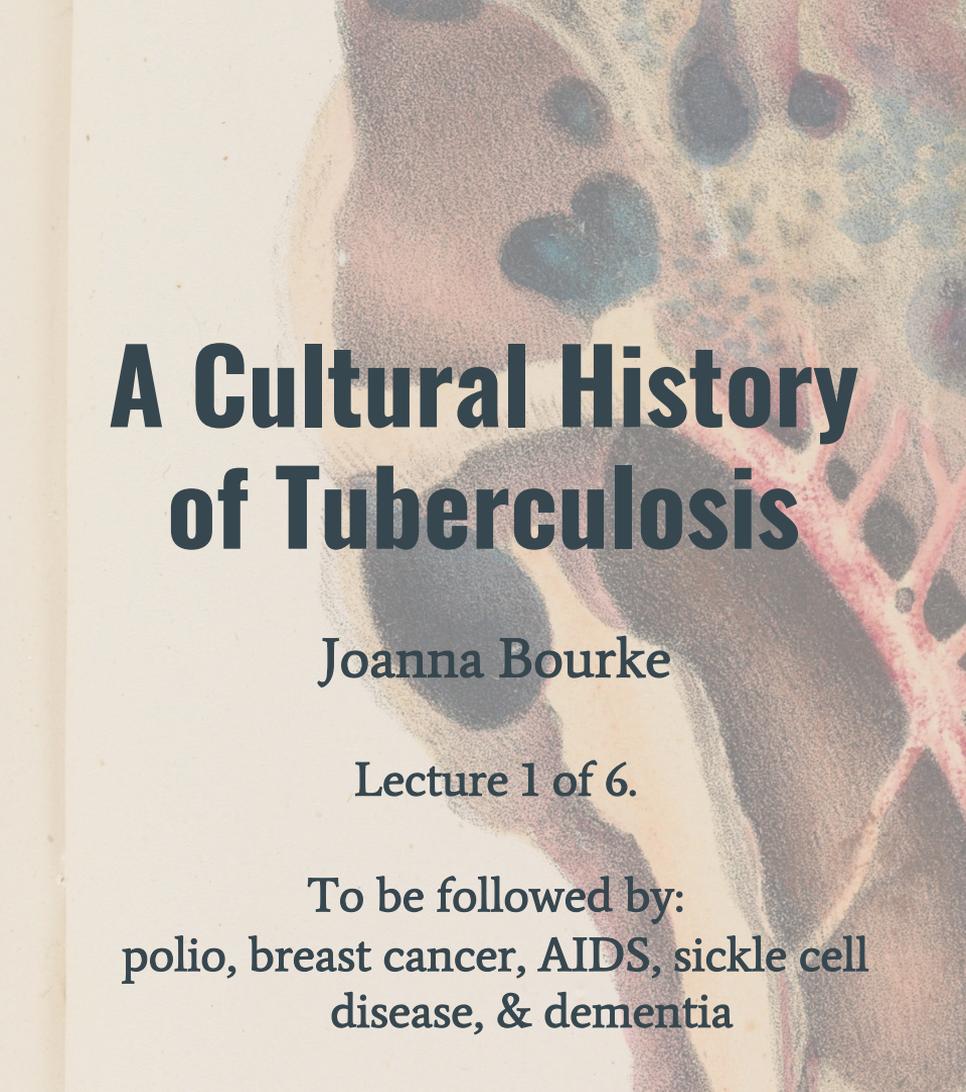
‘white plague’

‘wasting disease’

‘consumption’

(killed 1 in every 8 people;  
greatest single killer of men;  
2<sup>nd</sup> greatest killer of women)





# A Cultural History of Tuberculosis

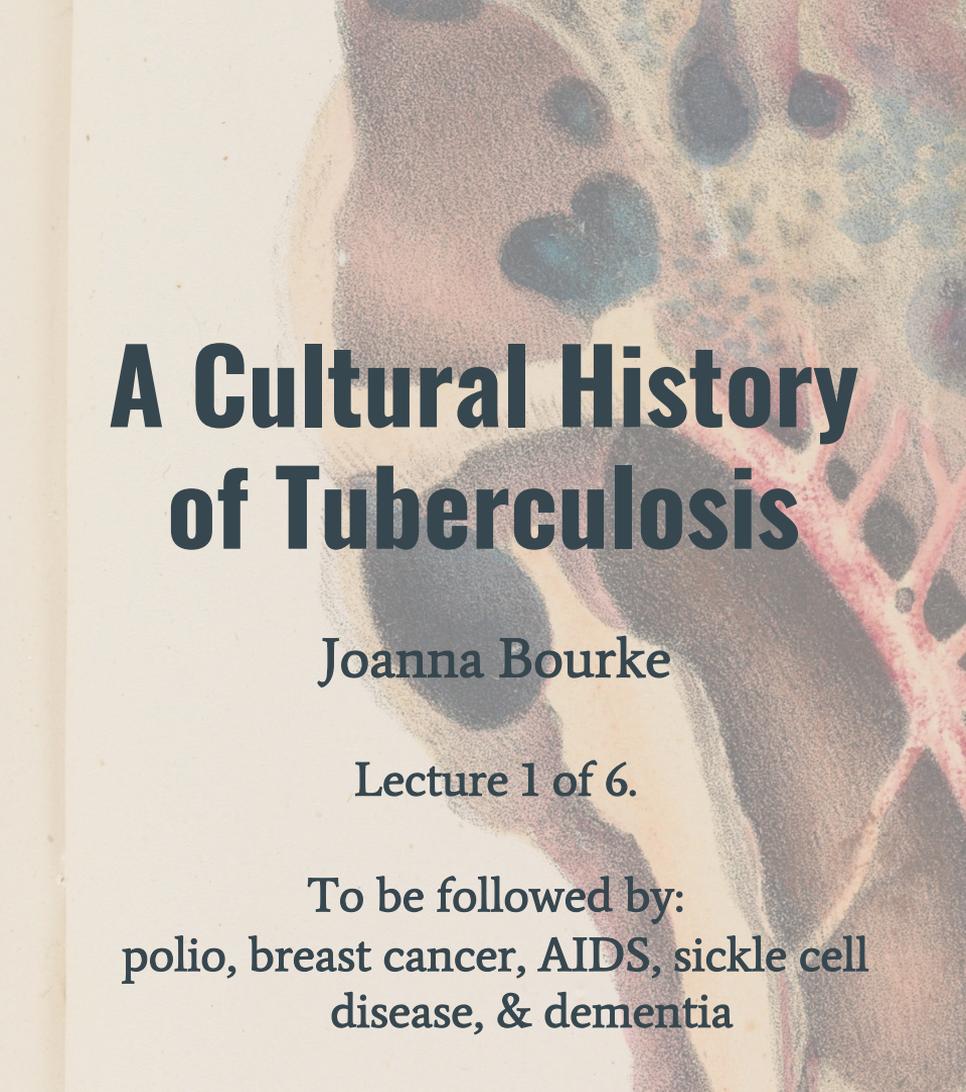
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In the early years of the  
twentieth century,  
Ireland had the 4th highest  
mortality rate from pulmonary  
tuberculosis in the world,  
exceeded only by Hungary,  
Austria, and Serbia.

(the “Irish disease”)



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*'Why is Tuberculosis so Common in Ireland?'*

(asked physician John Byers)

Boggy, damp land?

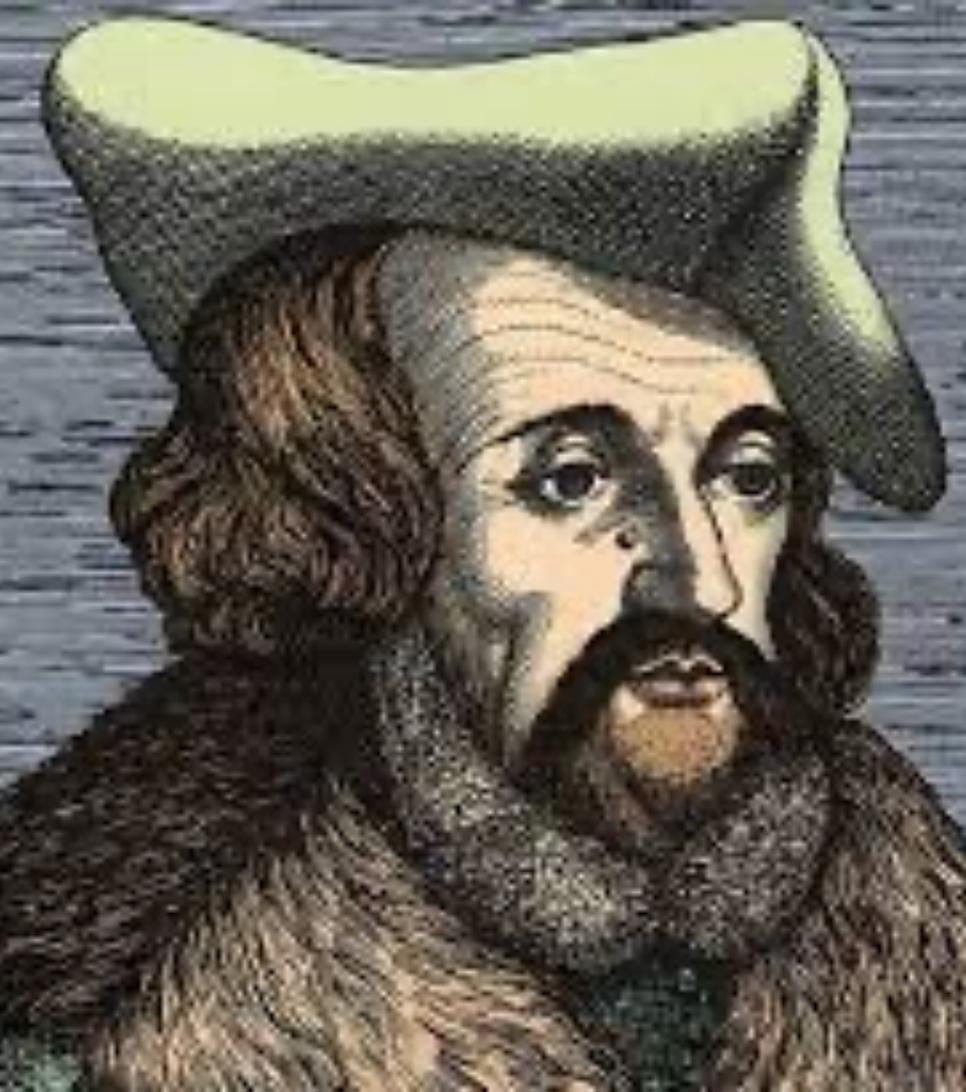
Emigration?

'Race'?

Uneducated population?

Unsanitary and morally dubious habits?

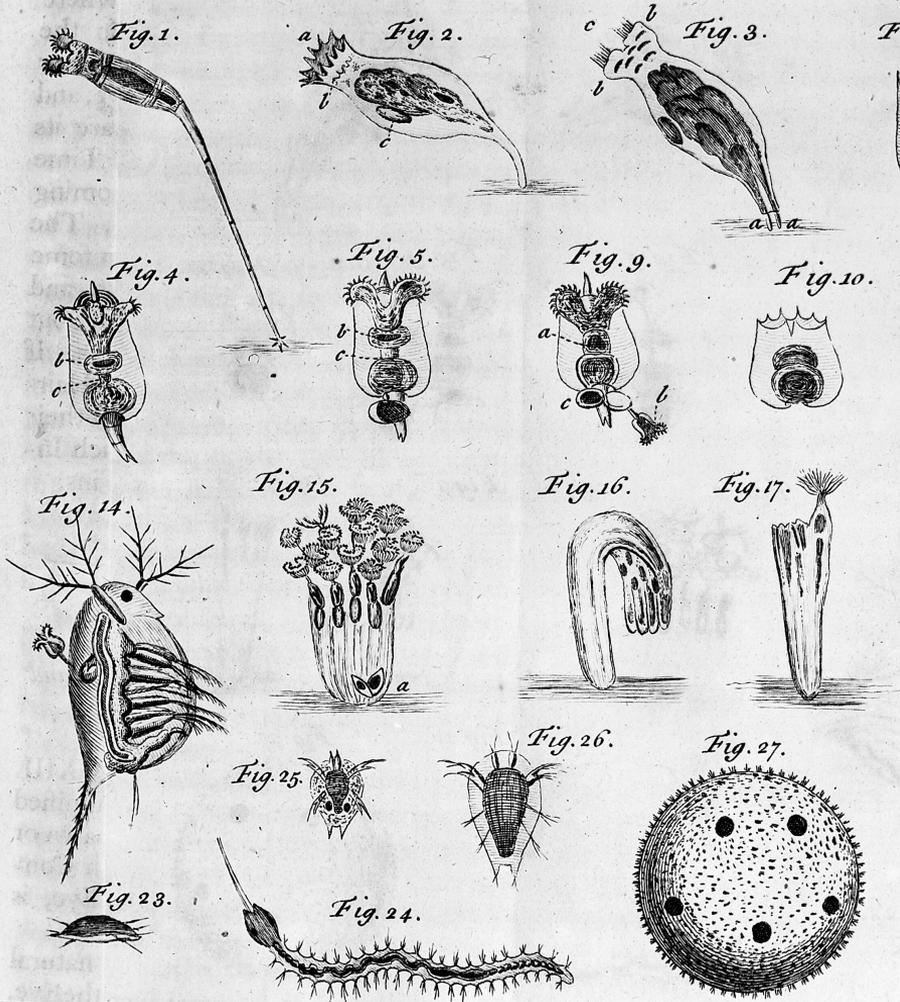




Hieronimus Fracastorius:

The contagious nature of  
'phthisis' was not due to  
'occult properties'  
but was carried through the air.

Animalcules

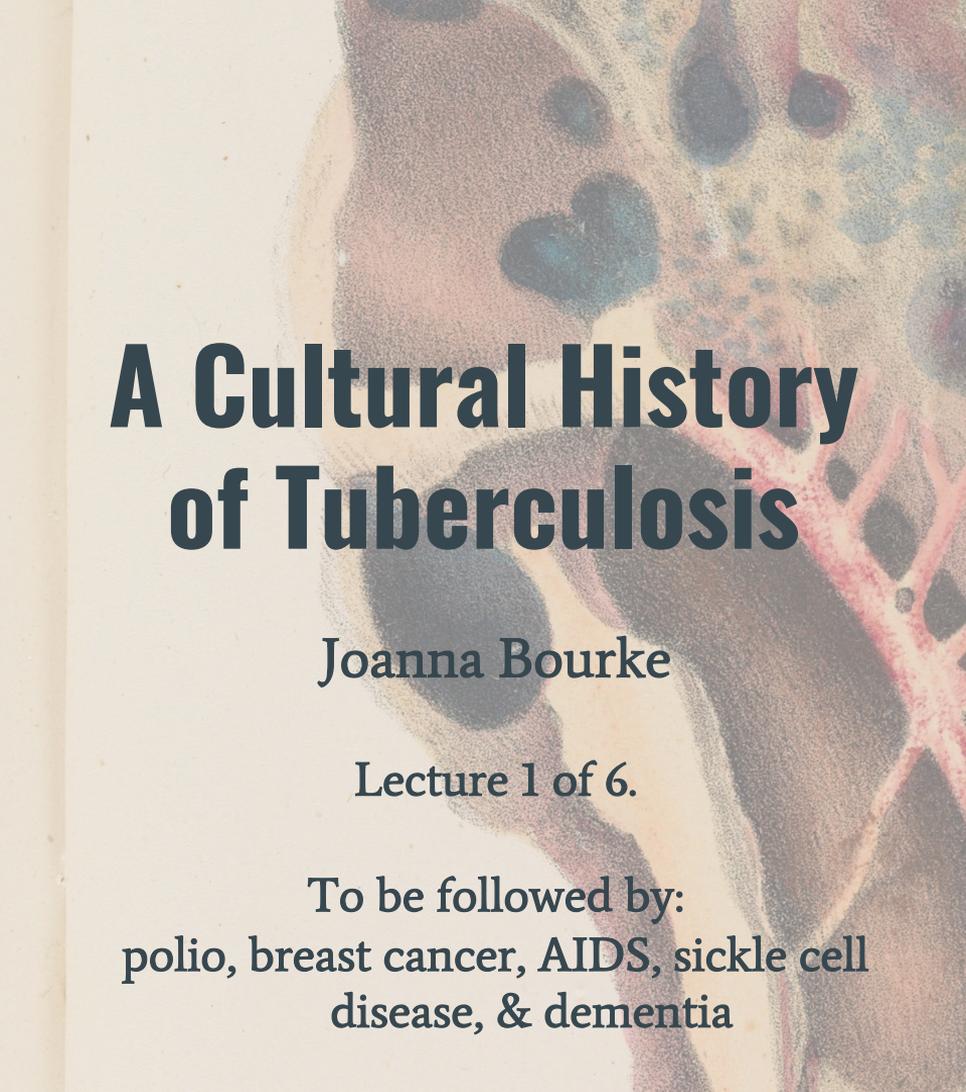


Late C17th/early C18th:

caused by tiny 'animalcula'







# A Cultural History of Tuberculosis

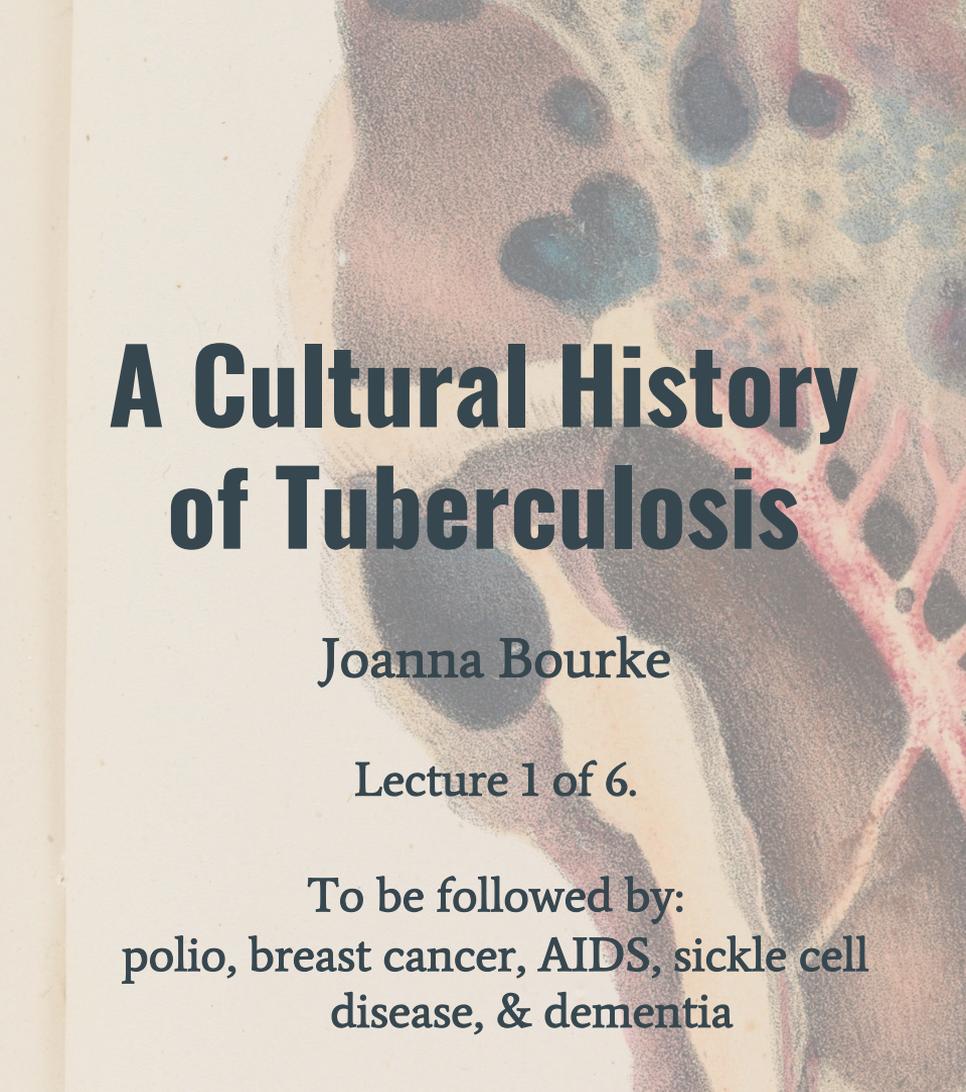
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*Culture*  
gives meaning to  
*nature*



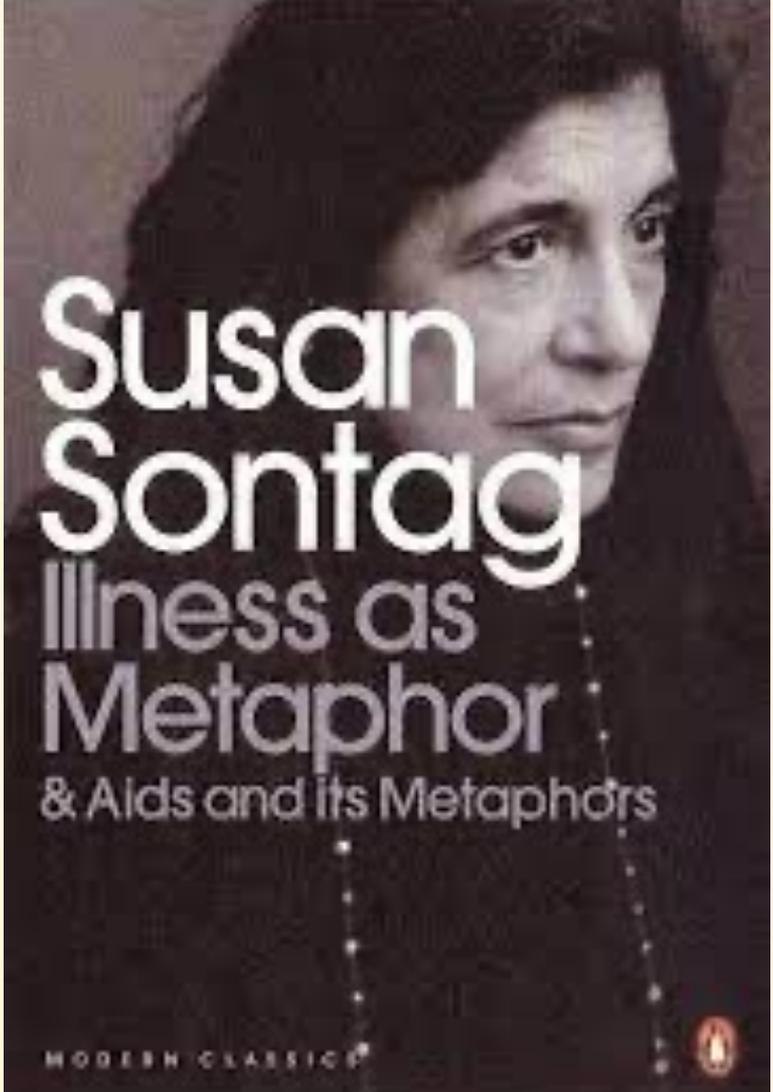


# A Cultural History of Tuberculosis

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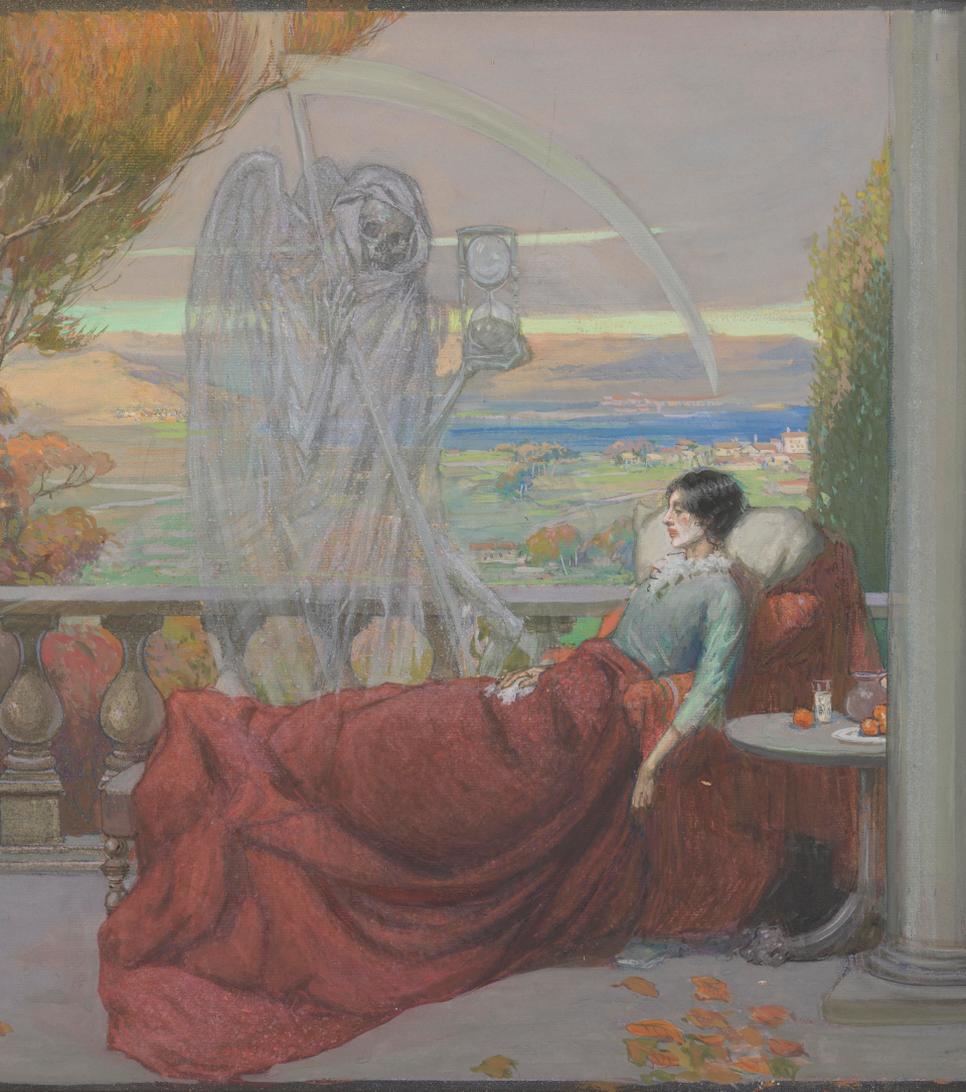
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Susan  
Sontag  
Illness as  
Metaphor  
& Aids and its Metaphors

MODERN CLASSICS

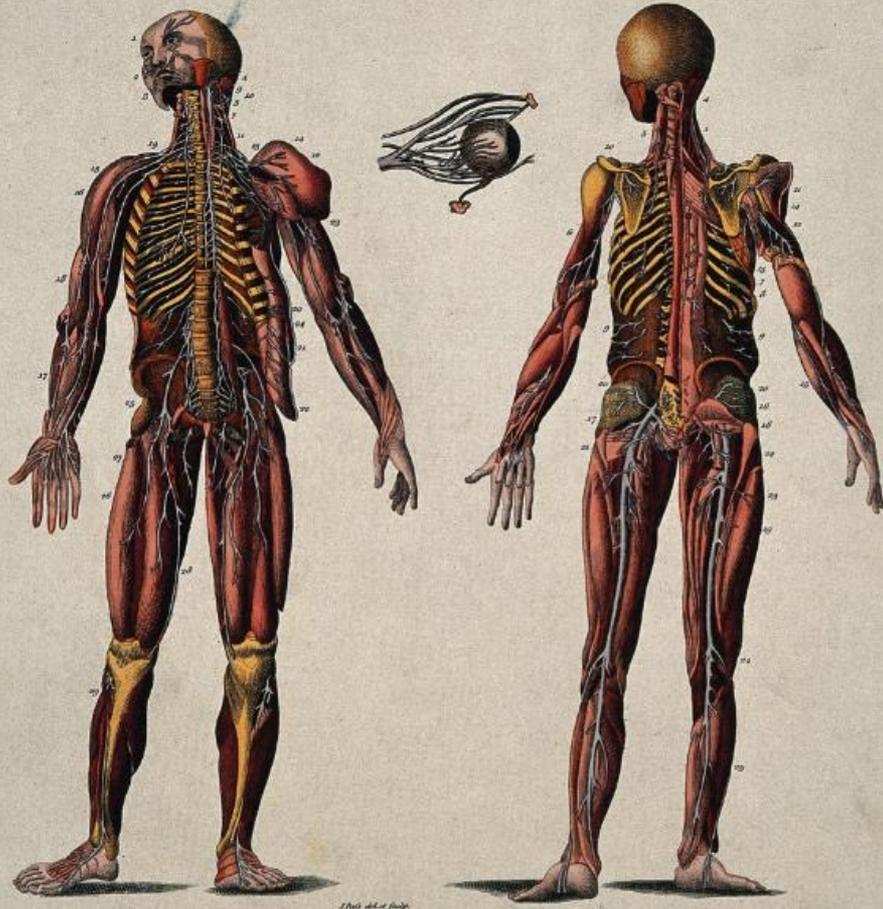




Middle-class, female  
consumptives:

transformed into supremely  
aesthetic,

passive, and spiritual creatures.



The disease actively stimulated

the creative powers

of *male* consumptives.

(Brunonianism)





Lord Byron (1820s):

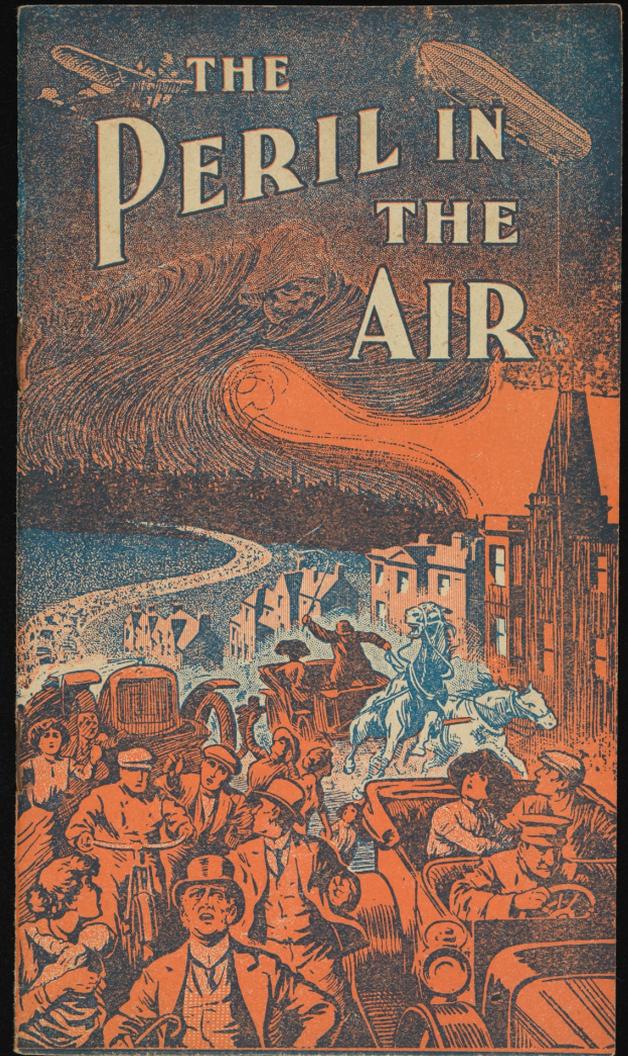
‘I look pale – I should like to die  
of a consumption...  
Because the ladies would all say,  
“Look at that poor Byron,  
how interesting he looks  
in dying”’.

# A Cultural History of Tuberculosis

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Women's bodies  
were the 'soil'  
that harboured disease.

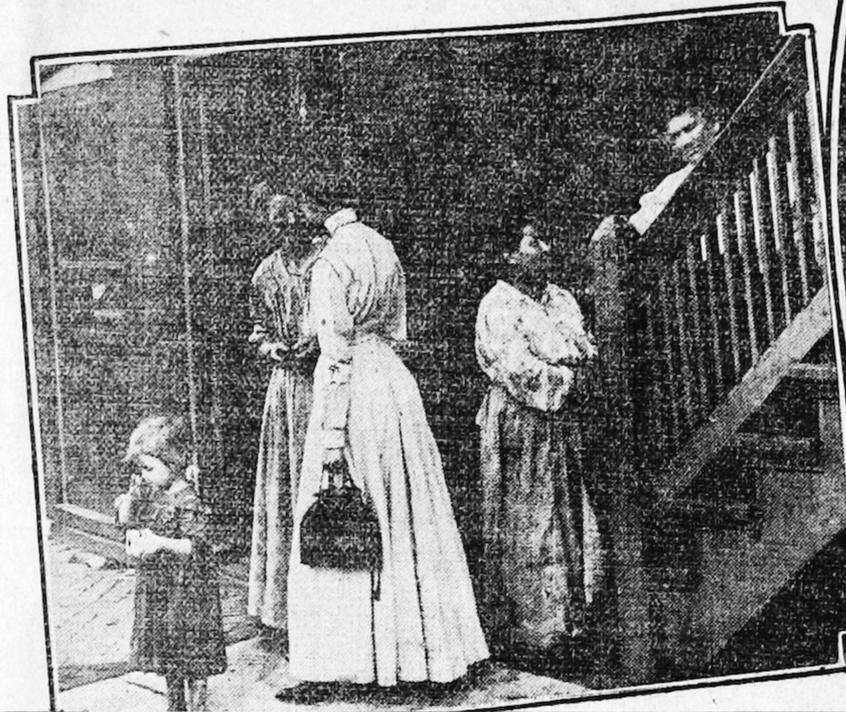


# THE BATTLE IN THE WHITE PLAGUE'S LAIR



How the  
Nurse of  
the Double  
Red Cross  
Hunts  
Through  
the City's

Slums Helping  
Victims of Tuber-  
culosis in Their Fight  
for Life.







*Theories:*

‘Culture’

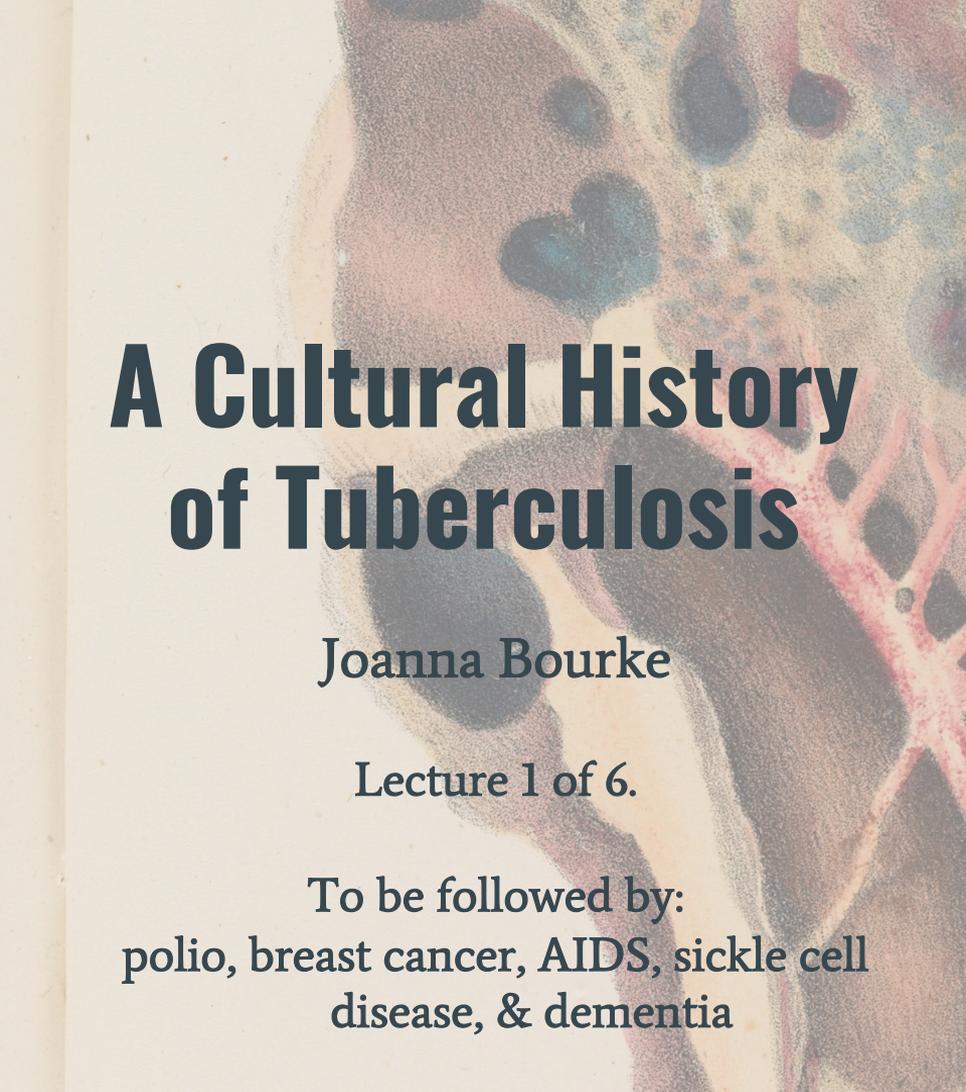
‘Virgin soil’

‘Racial weakness’



FEDERATION ASSOCIATION FOR THE RELIEF AND CONTROL OF TUBERCULOSIS

TRAVELING TUBERCULOSIS EXHIBIT



# A Cultural History of Tuberculosis

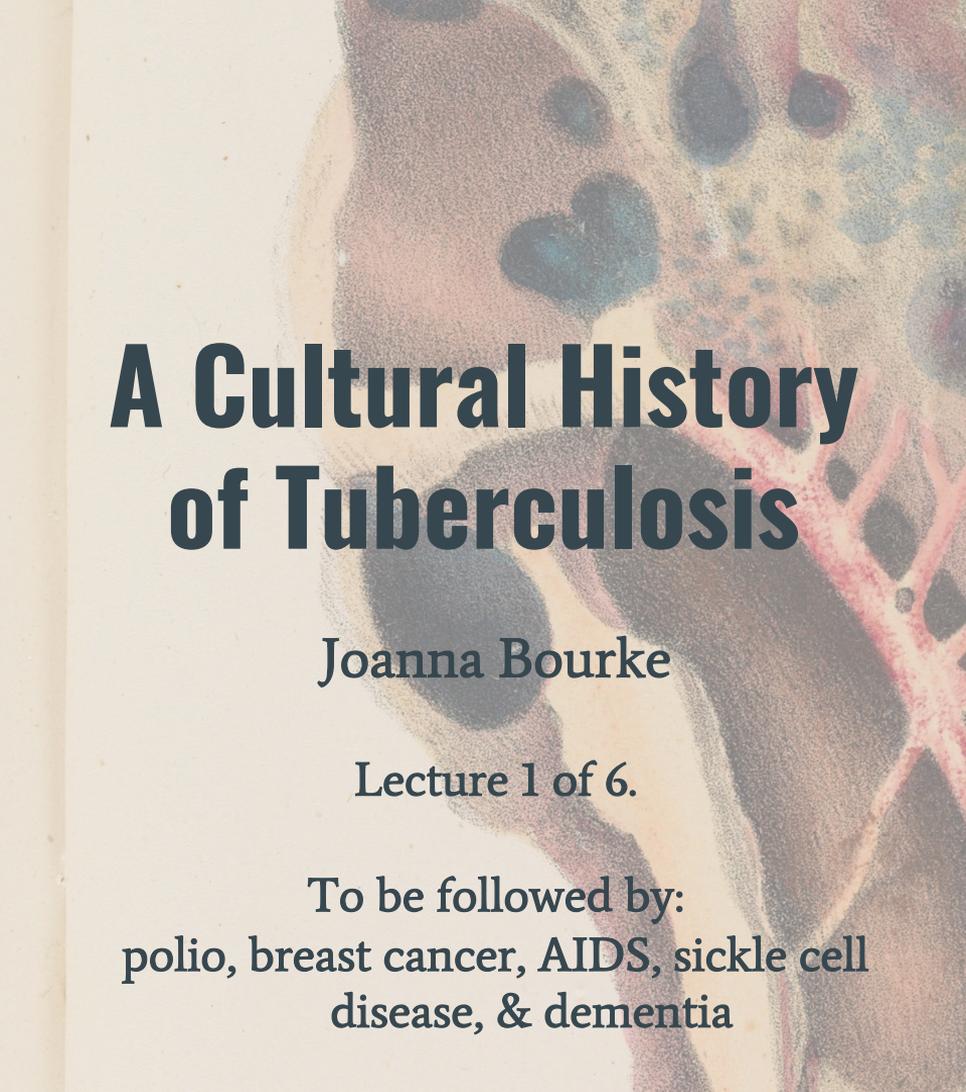
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Lecture 1 of 6.

To be followed by:  
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disease, & dementia

‘Virgin soil’ theories:

problematic



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Lecture 1 of 6.

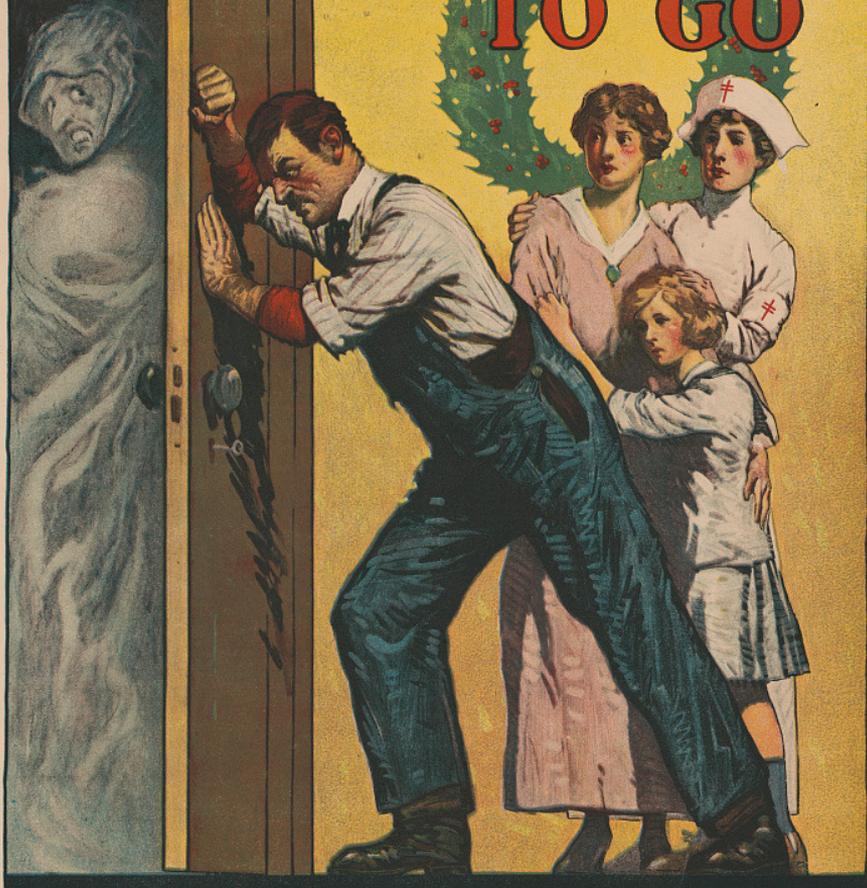
To be followed by:  
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The ‘elegance of immunological  
determinism’;

reactions against the ‘economic  
determinism’ of Marxist traditions;

and the ideological/psychological  
satisfactions of deflecting attention  
*from* the impact of colonialism  
*to* an ‘innate’, morally neutral biologism.

# THE NEXT TO GO



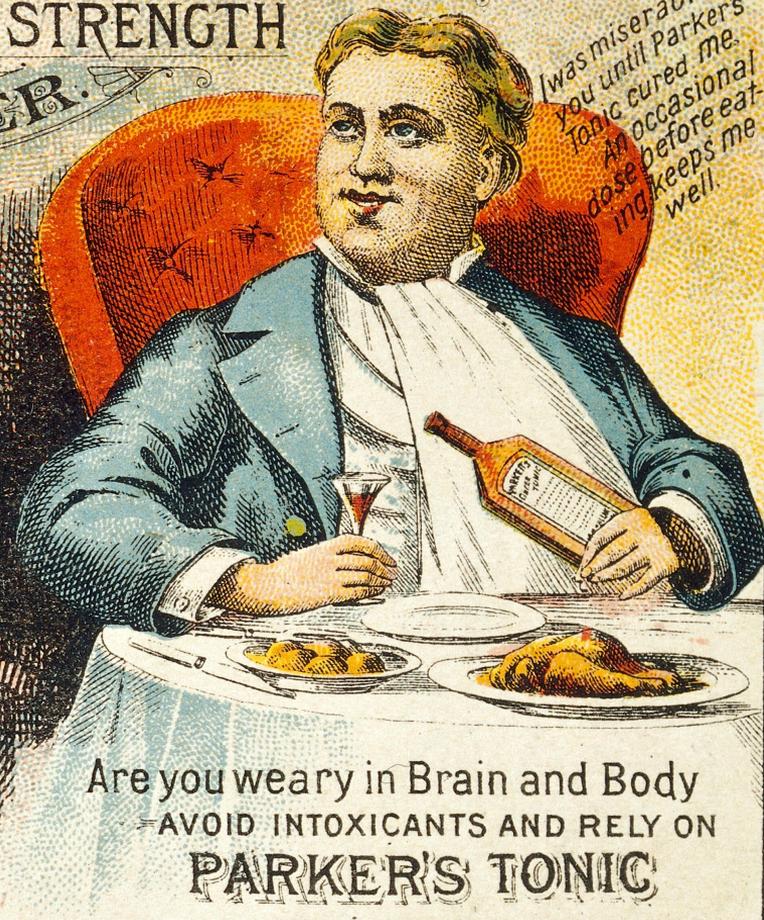
Stigma

**FIGHT TUBERCULOSIS!**

# PARKER'S TONIC

THE GREAT HEALTH AND STRENGTH

RESTORER.



CURES COUGHS,  
CONSUMPTION,  
ASTHMA.

BY REJUVENATING  
THE BLOOD.

Are you weary in Brain and Body  
—AVOID INTOXICANTS AND RELY ON  
**PARKER'S TONIC**

# A Cultural History of Tuberculosis

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Lecture 1 of 6.

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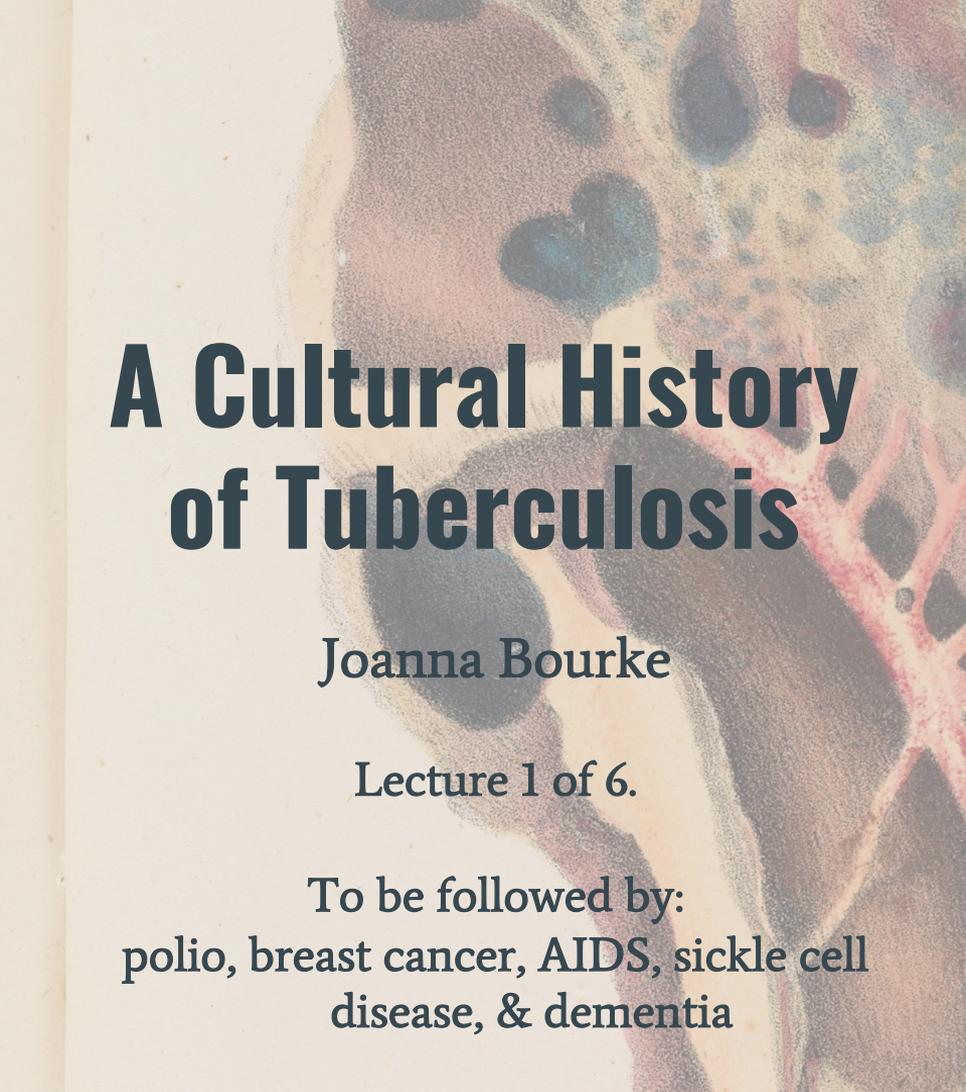
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ROYAL LONDON HOSPITAL ARCHIVES



ROYAL LONDON HOSPITAL ARCHIVES



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In the 1920s, 3/4s of patients died  
within five years of being  
institutionalised.

The death rate of people discharged  
from sanatoria was no lower than  
among those treated in the community.





## *'Heroic surgery':*

Pneumothorax (collapsing a lung by injecting it with oxygen or nitrogen)

Thoracoplasty (removing ribs from the chest wall)

Lobectomy (excising one of the lobes of the lung)

Pneumonectomy (removing lung altogether)



# A Cultural History of Tuberculosis

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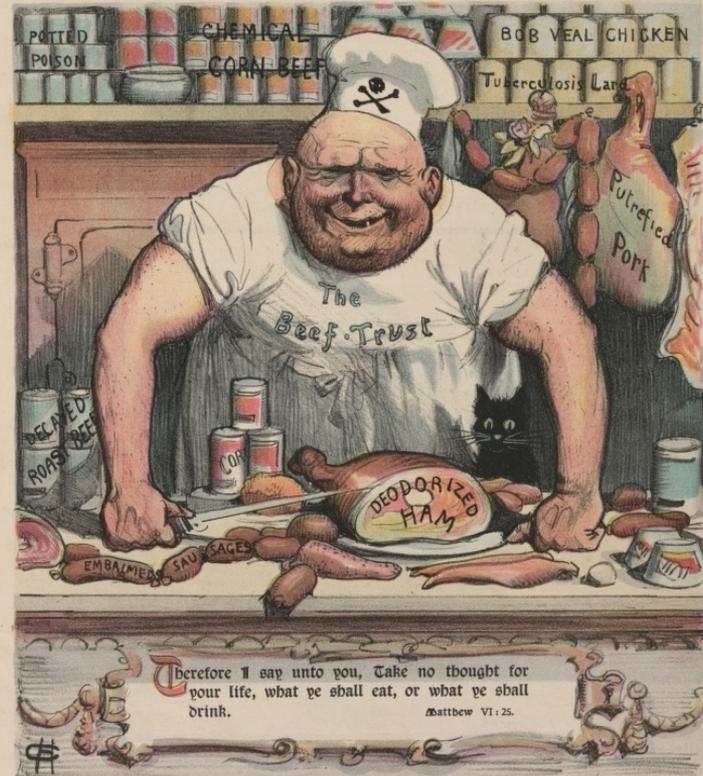
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Please  
**DON'T  
SPIT**



SPITTING SPREADS DISEASE

HELP BANISH **TUBERCULOSIS**

CHEST X-RAY IS FREE — and compulsory



Issued by THE VICTORIAN TUBERCULOSIS ASSOCIATION — 406 LONSDALE ST., MELBOURNE C.I.

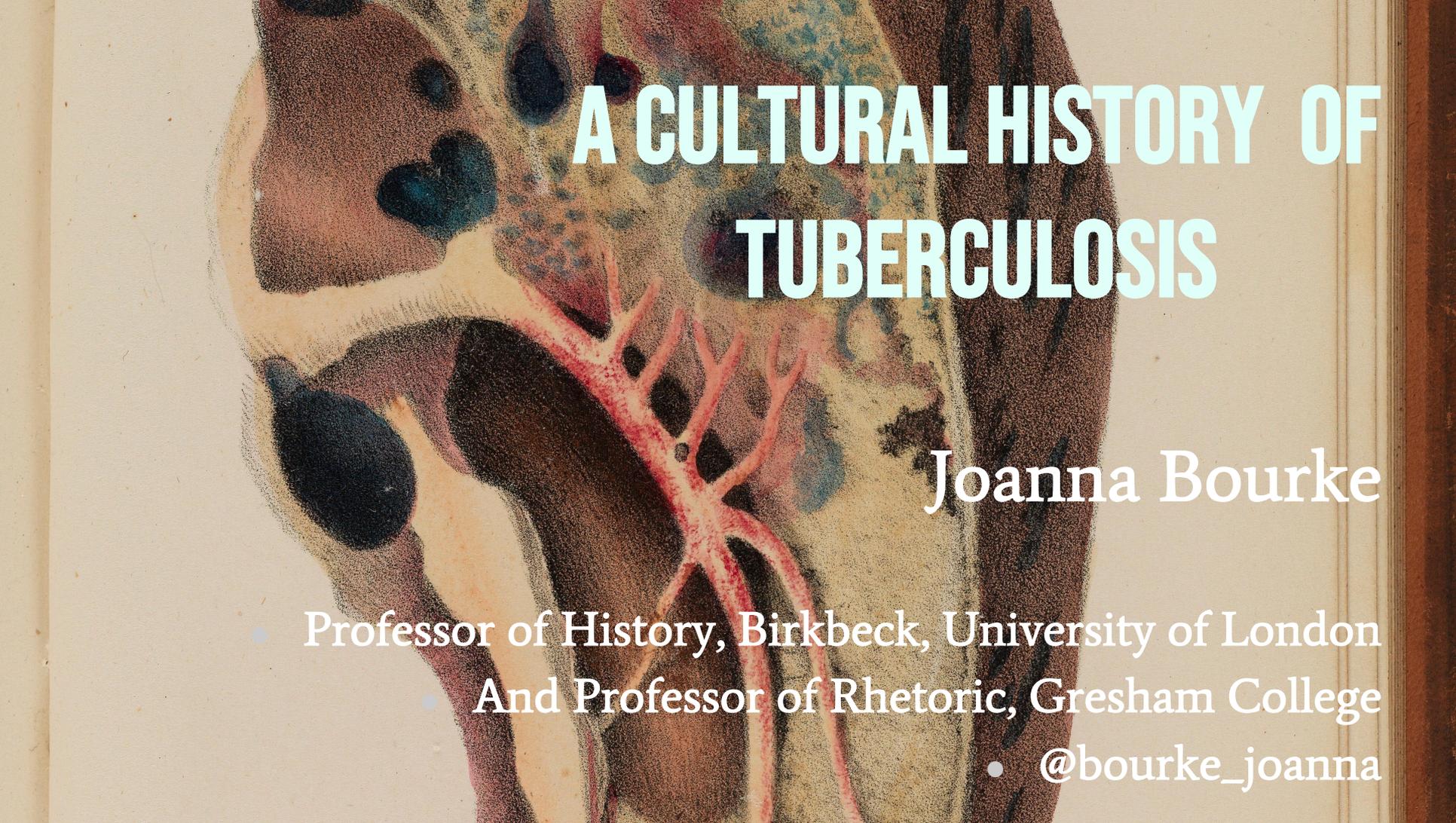
404 61

# 'Kissing Can Be Dangerous'

The Public Health Campaigns to Prevent and Control  
Tuberculosis in Western Australia, 1900 – 1960



Criena Fitzgerald

An anatomical illustration of a human torso, showing internal organs and a prominent red branching structure, possibly representing the respiratory or circulatory system. The illustration is rendered in a classic, detailed style with various colors like brown, blue, and red.

# A CULTURAL HISTORY OF TUBERCULOSIS

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