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Sommario/riassunto

"After the COVID-19 pandemic, vaccination has become synonymous with an opaque biopower that legislates compulsory immunization at a distance. Contemporary illness narratives have become outlets for distrust, misinformation, reckless denialism, and selfish noncompliance. In *The Smallpox Report*, Fuson Wang rewinds this contemporary impasse between physician and patient back to the Romantic-era origins of vaccination. The book offers a literary-historical account of smallpox vaccination, contending that the disease's eventual eradication in 1980 was as much a triumph of the literary imagination as it was an achievement of medical Enlightenment science. Wang traces our modern, pandemic-era crisis of vaccine hesitancy back to Edward Jenner's publication of his treatise on vaccination in 1798, the first rumblings of an anti-vaccination movement, and vaccination's formative literary history that included authors such as William Wordsworth, William Blake, John Keats, Mary Shelley, and Arthur Conan Doyle. The book concludes with a re-examination of the current deeply polarized and polarizing public discourse about vaccines in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. By recovering the surprisingly literary genres of Romantic-era medical writing, *The Smallpox Report* models a new literary historical perspective on our own crises of vaccine refusal."--