

# Reaktion Books Rights Information

## ALLERGY

The History of a Modern Malady

Mark Jackson

**'We have needed this book. Mark Jackson has complied, utilizing an astonishingly broad erudition and a lively sense of what victims, regular and alternative medical personnel, and other players were trying to do as they became more and more important in twentieth-century medicine, health and society. This is a volume that will become standard and will set a standard.'**

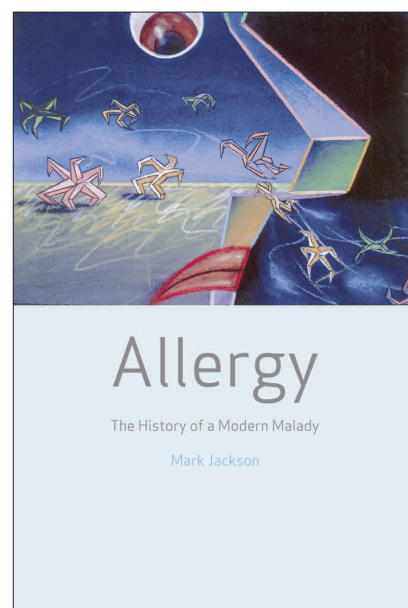
John Burnham, Medical Heritage Center,  
The Ohio State University

Allergy truly is a modern malady. Only one hundred years ago, the term 'allergy' was unknown, and diseases subsequently identified as allergic in nature, such as asthma, hayfever, eczema, and food intolerance, were routinely considered to be rare, non-fatal conditions primarily afflicting the cultured and civilized classes of Western society.

By the closing decade of the twentieth century, however, allergy had acquired greater medical, political, socio-economic, and cultural significance. Increasingly perceived by clinicians, the media and the public as widespread and potentially fatal conditions, allergies became a distinct clinical specialism, generated new diagnostic and therapeutic strategies, and, in the process, created a lucrative market for international pharmaceutical, cosmetic and food industries.

Charting entirely new territory in the social history of medicine, Mark Jackson's book offers critical insights not only into the emergence of new categories of illness in the modern period but also into the historical geography of disease. In doing so, it presents a new perspective on the history of health, medicine, and the environment and provides a challenging commentary on the global politics, economics, and ideologies of health care in the civilized and industrialized modern world.

Mark Jackson is Professor of the History of Medicine and Director of the Centre for Medical History at the University of Exeter. He is the author of many books including *New-Born Child Murder: Women, Illegitimacy and the Courts in Eighteenth-Century England* (1996), and *The Borderland of Imbecility: Medicine, Society and the Fabrication of the Feeble Mind in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (2000).



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# Critical Praise for Allergy

The History of a Modern Malady

Mark Jackson

‘meticulously researched and written’ –*The Independent*

‘a fascinating in-depth study of allergies’ –*The Irish Times*

‘meticulously researched . . . Jackson’s fascinating study is undoubtedly an important contribution to the social history of medicine.’ –*The Guardian*

‘an excellent reference work for the physician and historian’  
–*Times Higher Education Supplement*

‘an important book because Jackson achieves a goal broadly shared, but infrequently realised, by current historians of medicine: to integrate biological and cultural events and to synchronise scientific change and social forces in a perceptive analysis . . . [a] fine book.’ *The Lancet*

‘The book provides a perceptive insight into the historical development of allergy, indicating how thinking changes. It gives fascinating vignettes of key researchers involved in the history of allergy and contains some interesting anecdotes about their lives . . . Jackson’s succinct and clearly written book is aimed at the informed lay reader. He admirably avoids using jargon and scientific terminology, and gives fascinating insight into the rise in allergic diseases and how this is linked to our modern lifestyle. I recommend this book, which helps us to understand the relationship between health and the environment, and explains why modern living can be detrimental to our health.’ –*Nature*

‘[a] wide ranging work . . . Jackson illustrates his arguments with delightful reference to the culture and popular media of the day . . . This book is a remarkable scholarly work that should serve as an exemplar of its genre.’  
– *British Medical Journal*

‘Jackson’s writing is precise and scholarly, and . . . it is clear that the author is a consummate historian . . . it provides a rich medical and social narrative, suitable for anyone with a penchant for medical history and curiosity about the roots of this still enigmatic modern-day scourge.’  
– *New England Journal of Medicine*

‘With this history of allergy, Mark Jackson has completed an ambitious project for which he was uniquely equipped, being both a practising doctor and a historian . . . Jackson has probably come as close as is possible to writing a global history of allergy. He provides the general reader with a fascinating story and all the historical and scientific elements of the allergy nexus . . . Still more important, he has brought proof that the cultural history of a malady can succeed in offering more definite conclusions than a scientific one.’ – *Medical History*