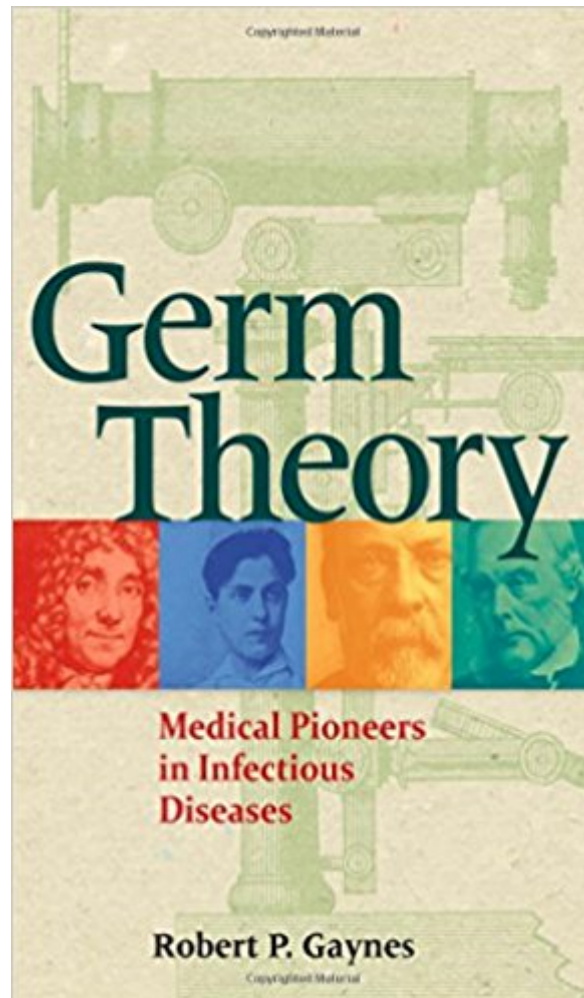




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# Germ Theory: Medical Pioneers In Infectious Diseases



## Synopsis

From Hippocrates to Lillian Wald— the stories of scientists whose work changed the way we think about and treat infection. Describes the genesis of the germ theory of disease by a dozen seminal thinkers such as Jenner, Lister, and Ehrlich. Presents the “inside stories” of these pioneers’ struggles to have their work accepted, which can inform strategies for tackling current crises in infectious diseases and motivate and support today’s scientists. Relevant to anyone interested in microbiology, infectious disease, or how medical discoveries shape our modern understanding

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Germ Theory is a delightful and fascinating read for everyone interested in the remarkable history of medicine’s battle against communicable disease. I thoroughly enjoyed it and highly recommend it.” Robert C. Moellering, Jr., MD, Shields Warren-Mallinckrodt Professor of Medical Research, Harvard Medical School

Robert Gaynes has written a wonderful, accessible history of germ theory. He does this by relating the lives and discoveries of 12 people who were instrumental in the development of the understanding of the role of germs in our health. To us, the notion that the health of large beings like us could be dramatically affected by microscopic entities seems obvious, but it was anything but, until relatively recently. As Gaynes informs us in a captivating way, the people that were responsible

for the greatest advances in this development were brilliant but also very human. Progress was generally due to amazing insight, but at times it was also due to terribly hard work or luck (the chances that a mold would have anti-bacterial benefits are about 3 in 1,000). Gaynes does an excellent job of illustrating the context of each discovery by helping us understand what the general views were during each era and why each insight was so difficult to achieve. I have had no medical training and nearly no chemistry, but I had no trouble understanding. For those who have read Dunham's book *Journey Through Genius*, this book shares the same general structure. It is a superb effort and I highly recommend it to a general audience.

As a non-infectious disease epidemiologist interested in the causes of birth defects, I had not paid much attention to the history of infectious diseases. I have read both *Germ Theory* and *Microbe Hunters* (yes, for the first time recently.) I have enjoyed them very much. The pace of discovery of important things for medicine is spellbinding. The role of clear thinking chemists is evident--Pasteur was a chemist. The early non-believers no matter how important the discovery or how solid the data continues to this day. These human themes also come through in Foege's *House on Fire*. *Microbe Hunters* seems very modern and of course *Germ Theory* is modern. I agree with one reviewer that both should be read by all medical students and perhaps would be a good graduation gift to high school students interested in science.

I agree with the other reviewers that this is a 5 star book. It is very informative, very interesting, and very well-written. As a Kindle book, it is clean, with few errors. But if I spend over \$20 for a Kindle edition of a book, I darned well expect it to have page numbers. It doesn't. I'd take a star off for the lack of page numbers, but, of course, that isn't the author's fault.

Perfect!

Although I find this book very useful as an Infection Prevention Nurse... I think it would have a somewhat narrow appeal. For some, it would not be the easiest of reads. The book came quicker than expected and in the condition stated. Overall I personally am happy with the purchase, but again, I'm not sure the book would appeal to the masses.

This is a superb book, extremely well written and readable by all. It is not just for doctors or others with medical knowledge. It can be enjoyed by all who are interested in medical history. Gaynes has

done an excellent job of bringing the pioneers to life. I particularly loved his chapter on Semmelweis. I use this book in teaching undergraduates about medical history and it is very successful. Would recommend all to read who are interested in how the germ theory of disease came to be in the 19th century and who was instrumental in its elucidation.

For anyone curious about the medical pioneers in history, this book is a must read. Superbly researched and comprehensive, this captivating book was hard to put down once I started reading. Germ Theory chronologically examines the great medical pioneers in infectious diseases, some famous in popular culture, and others whose influence may not be as well known. The reader gets a rich and detailed look at these historic people and their important work, as well as the context of their contributions in history. I particularly enjoyed the chapters on Edward Jenner, and Alexander Fleming. I knew the discovery of penicillin by Fleming was an accident, but to read about the actual details of how it eventually came to market was fascinating. I highly recommend this book. You will definitely learn a lot and enjoy it, as I did.

Remarkably well written! Extremely informative! The personalities of the men and women are traced in this chronology of the discoveries relating to infectious disease. One need not have formal medical training to follow the order of events. I found it exciting to feel the "AH HA" moment of each individual as they made their contribution to the germ theory. Indulge yourself! Enjoy and then recommend it to others.

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