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"Researching the Ebola Reservoir with the Heuristic of the Fetish in Guinea"

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The unprecedented character of the 2013–2016 epidemic of Ebola in West Africa paved the way for a wave of investigations into the reservoir of the disease. A novel economy of health projects arose, which employed Guinean professionals to sample animals and fortify a hypothesis: that the disease spilled over from a bat. Through exploring virology research and its dangers in post-Ebola Guinea, I argue that the hypothesis of a bat reservoir has taken on a heuristic role that can be compared to the way that a fetish polarizes relations between the people who manipulate and fear this idea. (Abstract)

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