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Abstract: Reviews the books '*AIDS* and the *Body Politic* : Biomedicine and Sexual Difference,' by Catherine Waldby, and '*AIDS* , Drugs and Prevention: Perspectives on Individual and Community Action,' edited by Tim Rhodes and Richard Hartnoll.

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***AIDS* and the *Body Politic* : Biomedicine and Sexual Difference**

by Catherine Waldby Routledge ISBN 0415141303 paperback \$18.95, 279 pp.

***AIDS* , Drugs and Prevention: Perspectives on Individual and Community Action**

edited by Tim Rhodes and Richard Hartnoll Routledge ISBN 0415102049 paperback \$26.50, 180 pp.

An amazing array of literature has emerged from the *AIDS* epidemic. Ranging from the fictive to the prescriptive, the mainstream to the underground, its purpose has been to influence and inform select populations the world over. Two recent books on *AIDS* offer readers some provocative thoughts on the ever changing *AIDS* cultural, social, and political milieu.

In *AIDS* and the *Body Politic* : Biomedicine and Sexual Difference, author Catherine Waldby immediately sets the tone for her original presentation. "The violence of biomedical practice in the field of *AIDS* is the concern of this book." Waldby spends the remainder of the book showing how biomedical knowledge, because of its influence by culture, is "contaminated by everyday, conservative assumptions about the meaning of sexual difference."

Waldby proceeds to make her point by a close and thorough examination of the current biomedical discourse surrounding HIV and *AIDS* . A dissection of the 'imaginary' anatomical *body* --which metaphorically represents "an anatomisation of culture, a rendering of concepts of social order into anatomical terms," is just an introduction to the world of biomedical metaphor and power organization.

Attacking the credibility of both immunological and epidemiological representations of infected *bodies* , Waldby exposes the way cultural and political concepts are intertwined with biomedical presentations of bodily functions. The micro-anatomy of immunology is thus shown to be "dependent on concepts of sexual identity and sexual difference." In a similar way, Waldby goes on to show how the macro-anatomy of epidemiology represents "the optimum regulation of sexed *bodies* ." Anyone interested in the power relations of the biomedical discourse surrounding HIV and *AIDS* will find Waldby's book refreshing.

AIDS , Drugs and Prevention: Perspectives on Individual and Community Action dares readers (and policy makers) to expand their thinking about the interactions between populations at risk for HIV and **AIDS** , and their respective communities. Most of the articles present original research on individual and community interplay among a broad spectrum of drug users. Editors Tim Rhodes and Richard Hartnoll present works that will challenge one's assumptions about the behavior of drug users, and offer innovative suggestions for future policy, theory, and practice.

Like Waldby, Rhodes and Hartnoll remind the reader that no medical practices are free from society's influences. In his introductory article, Rhodes points out that although individual interventions have previously been successful, it is time for a change. "This book indicates that the challenge for all HIV prevention research and intervention is to recognize that there is often as much a need for community and political change as there is for individual behaviour change." The last five articles in the book present novel ethnographic and epidemiologic research which shows the value in using new thinking to evaluate the dynamics of drug user communities. Indeed, the influence of `drug using networks' illustrates one way future interventions can introduce safer practices into that community.

The apprehension of new ideas is never easy and it won't be for readers picking up either of these challenging texts. However, the committed reader that chooses either book will find that they are glad they did.

PHOTO (BLACK & WHITE): **AIDS BODY POLITIC**

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By Barbara Bond

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