

A Note on the Text

How to Have Theory in an Epidemic chronicles cultural, intellectual, and political engagements with AIDS/HIV over nearly two decades. Many chapters were originally written and published to address problems, events, or issues at particular points in the epidemic's evolution. In revising them to form a coherent intellectual narrative, I have nevertheless tried to preserve a strong sense of the occasions and imperatives that first shaped their composition. Even when material is largely new, I have tried to invoke and be true to the contemporary context of the events and issues described. Chapter 2, for example, examines evolving conceptions of gender in AIDS discourse from 1981 to 1988; although written in the mid-1990s, the chapter's critique is based less on hindsight than on the struggles surrounding knowledge and action that were taking shape throughout that first decade of crisis.

The term *AIDS* in this book refers to the AIDS epidemic as a broad social and cultural crisis; the terms *HIV disease* and *AIDS and HIV infection* are used interchangeably to mean the broad clinical spectrum of HIV-related conditions from asymptomatic infection to the specific diseases presently used to define AIDS (I use *AIDS* to mean the inclusive medical spectrum only if this sense is clear in context). I also use *AIDS/HIV* rather than *HIV/AIDS* to preserve continuity with earlier alphabetical listings.