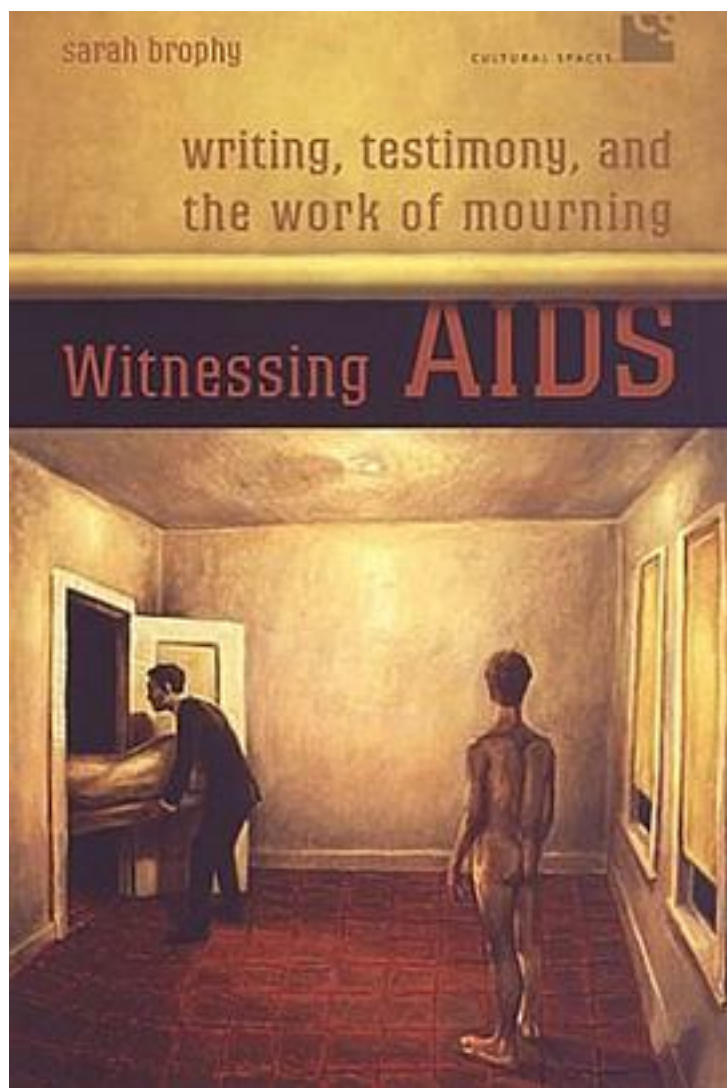


Witnessing AIDS



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出版者:

出版时间:2004-3

装帧:

isbn:9780802085672

Witnessing AIDS addresses testimonial literature produced in response to the AIDS pandemic, focusing on texts by four individuals: filmmaker, painter, activist, and writer Derek Jarman; writer Jamaica Kincaid; anthropologist and media theorist Eric Michaels; and journalist Amy Hoffman. Sarah Brophy outlines the critical framework for interpreting the emphasis on unresolved grief in the emerging body of work. Brophy challenges the tendency to treat AIDS testimonial literature as a genre particular to gay men. By examining Kincaid's and Hoffman's memoirs, in conjunction with the diaries of Michaels and Jarman, Brophy expands the territory of mourning beyond one group of people, an exercise that Brophy feels is important -- as well as fundamental -- to understanding the depth of personal grief and the ways we respond to grief in literature. In a clear and accessible style, Witnessing AIDS illustrates how memoirs and diaries are used as self-theorizing documents that approach personal testimony as an intervention in cultural memory. The aim of Brophy's work is to develop a framework for reading, one that begins to grasp the significance of unresolved grief in AIDS, its effect upon testimonial writing, and to engage rather than deflect. Visceral investment in the mundane intimacies of illness, death, and grief resituates a number of critical debates at new and provocative intersections as the strategy for understanding continues.

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