



Intolerant Bodies (Johns Hopkins Biographies of Disease)

Warwick Anderson, Ian R. Mackay

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Autoimmune diseases, which affect 5 to 10 percent of the population, are as unpredictable in their course as they are paradoxical in their cause. They produce persistent suffering as they follow a drawn-out, often lifelong, pattern of remission and recurrence. Multiple sclerosis, lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, and type 1 diabetes—the diseases considered in this book—are but a handful of the conditions that can develop when the immune system goes awry.

Intolerant Bodies is a unique collaboration between Ian Mackay, one of the prominent founders of clinical immunology, and Warwick Anderson, a leading historian of twentieth-century biomedical science. The authors narrate the changing scientific understanding of the cause of autoimmunity and explore the significance of having a disease in which one's body turns on itself. The book unfolds as a biography of a relatively new concept of pathogenesis, one that was accepted only in the 1950s.

In their description of the onset, symptoms, and course of autoimmune diseases, Anderson and Mackay quote from the writings of Charles Dickens, Edgar Allan Poe, Joseph Heller, Flannery O'Connor, and other famous people who commented on or grappled with autoimmune disease. The authors also assess the work of the dedicated researchers and physicians who have struggled to understand the mysteries of autoimmunity. Connecting laboratory research, clinical medicine, social theory, and lived experience, *Intolerant Bodies* reveals how doctors and patients have come to terms, often reluctantly, with this novel and puzzling mechanism of disease causation.

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