



Medical Anthropology and the World System

Hans A. Baer, Merrill Singer, Ida Susser

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Medical anthropology is one of the youngest and most dynamic of anthropology's various subdisciplines. Critical medical anthropology has evolved into one of the major perspectives through which faculty and students study the field. It examines health-related issues in precapitalist indigenous and state societies, capitalist societies, and postrevolutionary of socialist-oriented societies. While critical medical anthropology draws heavily on neo-Marxian, critical, and world systems theoretical perspectives, it attempts to incorporate the theoretical contributions of other systems in medical anthropology, including biocultural or medical ecology, ethnomedical approaches, cultural constructivism, poststructuralism, and postmodernism. This is the first textbook to incorporate this perspective.

The first part of the book is a discussion of the central concepts in, and the development and scope of, medical anthropology, as well as the critical perspective employed. The second part explores health and the environment, as well as the social origins of specific health problems. A third part highlights the diversity of medical systems in different societies, and a fourth part argues for a merger of theory and social action.

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