



INTRODUCTION TO MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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WHAT IS MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY?

Autonomous discipline emerged at the end of the 1970s, which aims to investigate the processes through which biological, political-economic and socio-cultural phenomena determine each other.

BIOMEDICINE AS A SPECIFIC ETHNO-MEDICINE

- bio-physical dimension as an exclusive aspect of a disease/illness
- disease, illness or sickness?
- DISEASE VS ILLNESS
- DISEASE: measurable pathological condition of the body
- ILLNESS: feeling of not feeling normal and healthy
- ILLNESS= culture-related
- CURING VS HEALING



PROS AND CONS

- PROS - considering biomedicine as a cultural knowledge;
- CONS - the distinction between illness and disease falls victim of the same dichotomy it aspired to overcome

THE ANALYSIS OF SICKNESS

- How medical knowledge and pathologies are produced?
- social processes as determinants of what counts as a medical problem
- From the individual to the social sphere
- economic, social and political forces EMBEDDED in the “sickness”
- LIMIT: What about the DISEASE?

WHAT ABOUT THE BODY?

Nancy Scheper Hughes and Margaret Lock (1987),
“The mindful body: a prolegomenon to
future work in medical anthropology”.
Medical Anthropology Quarterly.



WHAT IS THE BODY?

- Biological VS cultural
- The body as a social product
- somatic experiences and social discourses
- illness as a technique of the body
- product of social processes and producer of meanings

ILLNESS AS SOCIAL SUFFERING

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTi_hAdwsR0