

Cultural Anthropology - IV. THREE THEORETICAL APPROACHES IN MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

”Medical anthropology is one of the most rapidly growing areas of research in anthropology”.
Havilland

Medical anthropologists now study WBM (Contemporary Western Biomedicine) as a cultural system intimately bound to Western values. Thus, the current meaning of the term ethnomedicine encompasses health systems everywhere. The health care system comprises all components present in a society related to health, including knowledge about the origins, causes and treatments of disease, therapeutic techniques, its practitioners, and the roles, standards and agents in interaction in this scenario.

This lecture presents a selection of findings from this subfield.

- A. The first major theoretical approach to understanding health systems emphasizes the importance of the environment in shaping health problems and how they spread.
- B. The second highlights symbols and meaning in people’s expression of suffering and healing practices.
- C. The third points to the need to look at structural factors (political, economic, media) as the underlying causes of health problems and examines Western biomedicine as a cultural institution.

SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Monaghan, J., Just, P., *Social & Cultural Anthropology – A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2000
2. Erickson Th., Nielson, F., *A history of Anthropology*, 2001, Pluto Press
3. Havilland, W., *Cultural Anthropology*, University of Vermont, 2002
4. Gabriela-Mariana Luca (coord.), *Water and Body Fluids. Anthology of Essays*, Eurobit, 2016
5. Gabriela-Mariana Luca, *Corpul uman in-semne si coduri. Mic compendiu de antropologie culturala*, Solness/, Timișoara, 2011,

6. *Parents 'Bodies, Children's Bodies. From Conception to Education*, 2013, Editura „Victor Babeș”, Colecția ”Manifestări științifice”, ISBN 978-606-8456-17-1, e-book, 327 p., editori: Gabriela Mariana Luca & Jérôme Thomas

***What is Medical Anthropology? www.medanthro.net/about/about-medical-anthropology/ online, 2020