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Dava, Doktor, and Dua: Anthropology of practiced medicine in India

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Abstract

The paper explicates "practiced medicine" as an operative cross-cultural analytic concept by locating it within previous major developments and directions of study within anthropological studies of medicine in India, and medical anthropology more generally. Practiced medicine in India, for example, allows us to see better how India manages not only multiple traditional and modern medical approaches, languages, therapeutic regimens, and materia medica, but it also leads us to a sustained moral, social and material criticism from within. The study of such diversity leads to a loosely shared, and ethnographically attestable, cultural reasoning, practice and practical ethos across the traditional and modern medical worlds. Also appearing before us are the usually hidden cultural assumptions, negotiations and compromises of diverse Indian medical practitioners, and the strengths and weaknesses of modern medicine under "normal" and "disastrous" situations in contemporary India. As India today

grapples with issues of availability, affordability, equity, and distributive justice in medical care, its practiced medicine raises issues of "critical consciousness" for modern (and traditional), state supported medicine.



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Keywords

India; traditional approaches; cultural assumptions

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