

EPISODE 3

CLASSICAL DILEMMAS OF HEALTH & HEALING

What is Medical Anthropology?



LIA LEE

source: NY TIMES

MOVIE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WEEK 3 BY ANDREW ASHLEY

HOTEL SALVATION (2017, dir. Shubbashush)
and
RED BEARD (1965, dir. Kurosawa)

CULTURAL COMPETENCY

Cultural competence is the ability to understand and interact effectively with people from other cultures.

To have multicultural competence, you need:

A basic understanding of your own culture. (It's difficult to understand another's culture if you aren't familiar with your own.)

A willingness to learn about the cultural practices and worldview of others.

A positive attitude toward cultural differences and a readiness to accept and respect those differences.

Empathy is key.

Putting the text into perspective:

What elements of the Lee family's healthcare journey are familiar to all healthcare consumers?

What feelings might be universal to all in this story independently of cultural differences and why? (e.g. fear, shame, exhaustion, vulnerability, frustration etc).

EMOTIONS AND HEALTH

Emotional health is an important part of overall health. When you are emotionally healthy, you are in control of your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Hence, you're able to cope with life's challenges. You can keep problems in perspective and bounce back from setbacks (resiliency.)

Health and healing work in multidimensional aesthetic modes, and their efficacy lies in changing the sensibilities of the patient. Different aspects of healing are directed to activate the senses, physically shifting your perception of them (ex. pain management, talk therapy, etc.)

Consider how sensory perceptions and emotions are closely interconnected with embodiment. For this reason they should be taken into account in understanding different varieties of healing practices within and outside of Western biomedicine.

Take a closer look at pathways of healing that engage senses (ex. aromatherapy.) It will help you further explore the connections between perception, emotion, meaning and bodily symptoms all which are involved in various cultural settings and diverse kinds of treatments (spiritual, medical, religious, etc.)

Consider how Western biomedicine along with that of ritual, traditional medicine and faith-healing can help illuminate differences and similarities in distinct paradigms of body, health, and healing.

(Ex. Music Therapy)



THIS PICTURE IS OF A MAN IN MERCY MEDICAL CENTER IN MERCED, CALIFORNIA, BEING VISIT BY A HMONG SHAMAN WHO PERFORMED A HEALING PROCESS ON HIM AND SUMMONED THE MAN'S LOST SOUL (HOTO CREDIT (WILSON, A DOCTOR FOR DISEASE, A SHAMAN FOR THE SOUL, 2009)

SPIRIT CATCHES YOU AND YOU FALL DOWN- A. FADDIMAN KEY TAKE AWAYS

- The application of cultural competency can improve health outcomes for patient and family.
- Not understanding the culture of a patient can create anguish for patient and their family.

Critical Questions

- "What is more important the life or the soul?" - Sukey Waller
- Neil Ernst says, "I felt it was important for these Hmongs to understand that there were certain elements of medicine that we understood better than they did and that there were certain rules they had to follow with their kids' lives." Why didn't this message get through to the Lees? If you were Neil, would you feel this way too?
- How would you define "cultural broker?" (May Ying)
- How might this book have been different if it had been written by a Hmong? A doctor? An anthropologist?