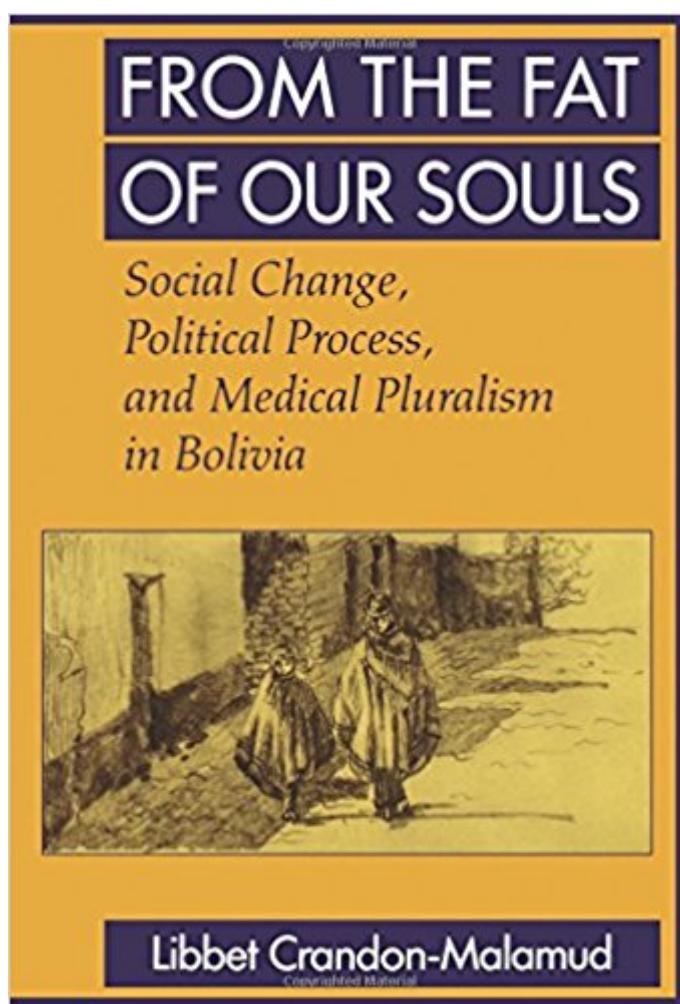


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From The Fat Of Our Souls: Social Change, Political Process, And Medical Pluralism In Bolivia (Comparative Studies Of Health Systems And Medical Care)





Synopsis

From the Fat of Our Souls offers a revealing new perspective on medicine, and the reasons for choosing or combining indigenous and cosmopolitan medical systems, in the Andean highlands. Closely observing the dialogue that surrounds medicine and medical care among Indians and Mestizos, Catholics and Protestants, peasants and professionals in the rural town of Kachitu, Libbet Crandon-Malamud finds that medical choice is based not on medical efficacy but on political concerns. Through the primary resource of medicine, people have access to secondary resources, the principal one being social mobility. This investigation of medical pluralism is also a history of class formation and the fluidity of both medical theory and social identity in highland Bolivia, and it is told through the often heartrending, often hilarious stories of the people who live there.

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"Crandon-Malamud uses the self-reflexive voice of the 'new ethnography' (but with greater political conviction and more humanity) in tandem with traditional empirical tools such as informant surveys. . . . Its most important message is that medicine "everywhere--not just in Kachitu--is a means to effect change, to represent and reconstruct the world in accordance with one's own vision."--Lynn M. Morgan, "Medical Anthropology Quarterly

Libbet Crandon-Malamud is Associate Professor of Anthropology at Columbia University and

Libbet Crandon de Malamud died of cancer before she could fulfill her full destiny as an anthropologist, but she left us with her seminal and influential work, "The Fat of Our Souls." She spent several years in the Altiplano, where she honed her theory of social capital and medical pluralism. An unusually diligent observer, she sought above all else to document the experience of being an anthropologist honestly and completely. She left us with a work that should be viewed as a first step to understanding the complexity of Andean life in the 20th century, as well as being a primer in the science of field anthropology.

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