SERIES FOREWORD

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Medical Anthropology: Health, Inequality, and Social Justice aims to capture the diversity of contemporary medical anthropological research and writing. The beauty of ethnography is its capacity, through storytelling, to make sense of suffering as a social experience, and to set it in context. Central to our focus in this series, therefore, is the way in which social structures, political and economic systems and ideologies shape the likelihood and impact of infections, injuries, bodily ruptures and disease, chronic conditions and disability, treatment and care, social repair, and death.

Health and illness are social facts; the circumstances of the maintenance and loss of health are always and everywhere shaped by structural, local, and global relations. Social formations and relations, culture, economy, and political organization, as much as ecology, shape the variance of illness, disability, and disadvantage. The authors of the monographs in this series are concerned centrally with health and illness, healing practices, and access to care, but in each case they highlight the importance of such differences in context as expressed and experienced at individual, household, and wider levels: health risks and outcomes of social structure and household economy, health systems factors, and national and global politics and economics all shape people's lives. In their accounts of health, inequality, and social justice, the authors move across social circumstances, health conditions, and geography, and their intersections and interactions, to demonstrate how individuals, communities, and states manage assaults on people's health and well-being.

As medical anthropologists have long illustrated, the relationships of social context and health status are complex. In addressing these questions, the authors in this series showcase the theoretical sophistication, methodological rigor, and empirical richness of the field while expanding a map of illness, social interaction, and institutional life to illustrate the effects of material conditions and social meanings in troubling and surprising ways. The books reflect medical anthropology as a constantly changing field of scholarship, drawing on diverse research in residential and virtual communities, clinics and laboratories, emergency care, and public health settings; with service providers, individual healers, and households; and with social bodies, human bodies, and biologies. While medical anthropology once concentrated on systems of healing, particular diseases, and embodied experiences, today the field has expanded to include environmental disaster, war, science, technology, faith, gender-based violence, and forced

migration. Curiosity about the body and its vicissitudes remains a pivot of our work, but our concerns are with the location of bodies in social life, and with how social structures, temporal imperatives, and shifting exigencies shape life courses. This dynamic field reflects an ethics of the discipline to address these pressing issues of our time.

Globalization has contributed to the complexity of influences on health outcomes; it (re)produces social and economic relations that institutionalize poverty, unequal conditions of everyday life and work, and environments in which diseases grow or subside. Globalization patterns the movement and relations of peoples, technologies, knowledge, programs, and treatments; it shapes differences in health experience and outcomes across space; it informs and amplifies inequalities at individual and country levels. Global forces and local inequalities compound and constantly load on individuals to have impact on their physical and mental health and on their households and communities. At the same time, as the subtitle of this series indicates, we are concerned with questions of social exclusion and inclusion, social justice, and social repair—again, both globally and in local settings. The books will challenge readers not only to reflect on sickness and suffering, deficit, and despair but also on resistance and restitution—on how people respond to injustices and evade the fault lines that might seem to predetermine life outcomes. The aim is to widen the frame within which we conceptualize embodiment and suffering.

Dvera I. Saxton's *The Devil's Fruit* captures this focus on the social, economic, and political production of inequality and injustice in the United States. The title (*La fruta del diablo* in Spanish) refers to the strawberries that break the backs and spirits of underpaid, unsupported, and unregulated migrant food workers. Hunched over matted rows, these workers plant, weed, and harvest fruit for the growers, grower-shippers, and massive multinational corporations that supply some 30 percent of the world's (super)market. The year-round availability, variety, quality and affordability of these strawberries, and blackberries and raspberries, for consumers in the United States and globally, depends on synthetic fertilizer, toxic pesticides, and poorly paid labor. The result is a production system that is both brutal and potentially lethal.

The Devil's Fruit is unapologetic and inspiring. Drawing on her work in the fertile Pájaro and Salinas Valleys, stretching south from San Jose and along the central coast of California, Saxton describes the horrendous conditions in which people live and work. But in this devilishness there is also positive action. In this book, as in her life's work, Saxton troubles, riles, and chafes at the inequalities in this market system and its indifference toward those who work in it. She writes of her outrage with the system and pays close attention to the working conditions and the cost to people's health, well-being, and survival: cardiometabolic disease, depression and anxiety, long-term degenerative conditions, and still-

births. She shows also how engaged and activist ethnographic ethics, methods, and approaches can be used to support activist laborers. Saxton argues that her engagement as an activist anthropologist comes from a place of care. Her anthropological practice is through caring labor, sometimes the most prosaic, in people's everyday lives and their work in social movements for environmental health and justice. This is not dramatic, flamboyant or game-changing care work, but sustained and deeply committed support to others in their own fights for justice and in their everyday life.

The Devil's Fruit provides a model for a new anthropology committed to questioning and disrupting the ideologies, policies, systems, and structures that perpetuate inequalities and responding and reacting to the problems with which anthropologists are confronted in the field. Saxton asks, "What forms can activist research in medical anthropology take?" She unfolds the ways in which anthropological approaches, methods, and relationships work to reveal injustices. But she also provides us with a way to meld activism into our work as anthropologists and our everyday lives, and thus captures an ethics of practice in engaging with our research participants, and collaborators. In *The Devil's Fruit*, Saxton offers us sparkling prose, powerful ethnography, and passionate analysis, but also—and most important—provides us with a powerful model for how we might work at a time of profound inequality and upheaval.