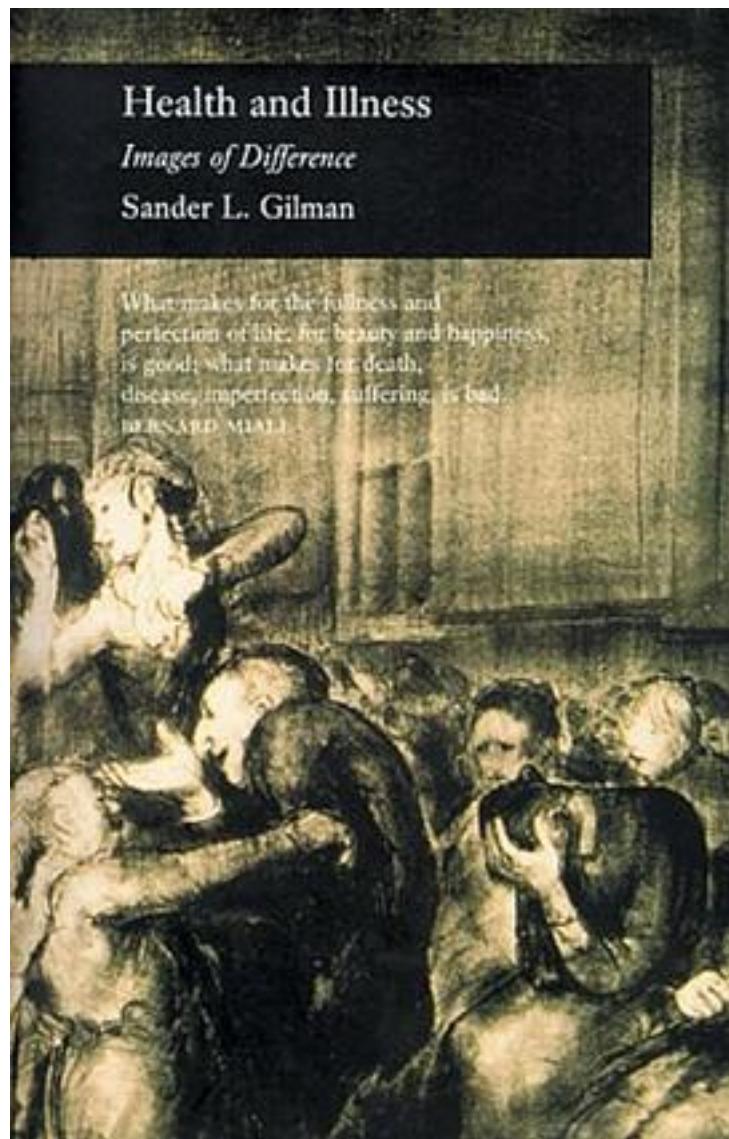


Health and Illness



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著者: Bury, Mike

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Health and illness underpin our everyday existence. Health allows us to live full lives and to function as social beings; illness disrupts our lives, sometimes seriously. But health not only affects individuals, it also impacts upon society as a whole. Medical breakthroughs and scandals, health scares and health service problems all vie for the attention of politicians and public alike.

Michael Bury provides a lively introduction to the sociology of health and illness for students approaching the topic for the first time. Drawing on classic writings and up-to-date research, he discusses the conceptualization and patterning of health and illness in contemporary society. He highlights a range of factors, such as gender, age, ethnicity and class, which influence the occurrence and distribution of illness over time. The book then focuses on debates about the body, the role of health services and the politics of health policy. In conclusion, Bury argues that we must take a dynamic view of health and illness as processes that are shaped by social circumstances and altering perceptions.

This short introduction will be essential reading for all students studying the sociology of health as part of their degree programme.

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目录:

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