

THE ASHGATE
RESEARCH COMPANION *to*
ANTHROPOLOGY



Edited by

**PAMELA J. STEWART
AND ANDREW J. STRATHERN**

THE ASHGATE RESEARCH COMPANION TO ANTHROPOLOGY

This is a rich source of anthropological approaches to significant social and cultural issues across the globe. The subject matter is topical, the contributors are scholars of renown and the analyses are informed by detailed empirical inquiry. The collection is a valuable resource for scholars, teachers, students and general readers.

David Trigger, University of Queensland, Australia

The editors and authors are to be congratulated for this compelling companion to research in what it means to be human. Twenty anthropologists provide rich synopses of anthropology's intellectual heritage in their critical appraisals of key concepts long central to the discipline – belief systems, ritual, magic, sacrifice, myth, gender, war, violence, globalisation, language change and loss, indigenous knowledge and so on. More than the sum of its parts, this volume situates anthropological research as absolutely essential to understanding humanity's past, present and possible futures.

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The Ashgate Research Companion to Anthropology

Edited by

PAMELA J. STEWART and ANDREW J. STRATHERN

both at the University of Pittsburgh, USA

ASHGATE

Contents

<i>Lists of Figures and Tables</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>Notes on Contributors</i>	<i>ix</i>
 Introduction <i>Andrew J. Strathern and Pamela J. Stewart</i>	 1
PART RELIGION, EXPERIENCE AND CHANGE	
1 Healing <i>Geoffrey Samuel</i>	15
2 Embodiment, Performance and Healing <i>Anne Sigfrid Grønseth</i>	33
3 Mortuary Rituals <i>Satsuki Kawano</i>	53
PART II RITUAL, MYTH AND CREATIVITY	
4 Anthropology, Dreams and Creativity <i>Katie Glaskin</i>	71
5 Sacrifice <i>Kathryn McClymond</i>	85
6 Charisma and Myth <i>Raphael Falco</i>	99
PART III WORK, PLAY AND GENDER	
7 Secular Rituals <i>Margit Warburg</i>	127
8 Anthropology of Sport <i>John W. Traphagan</i>	145
9 Gender <i>Victoria Goddard</i>	161
10 Gender and Space <i>Susan Rasmussen</i>	187

PART IV STUDIES OF WORLD RELIGIONS

- | | | |
|----|---|-----|
| 11 | Christianity: An (In-)Constant Companion?
<i>Simon Coleman</i> | 209 |
| 12 | On Muslims and the Navigation of Religiosity: Notes on the
Anthropology of Islam
<i>David W. Montgomery</i> | 227 |

PART V PERSPECTIVES ON VIOLENCE AND GLOBALIZATION

- | | | |
|----|---|-----|
| 13 | Ethnographies of Political Violence
<i>Sami Hermez</i> | 257 |
| 14 | Warfare and Ritual in Anthropology
<i>Bryan K. Hanks</i> | 273 |
| 15 | Globalization and Its Contradictions
<i>Thomas Hylland Eriksen</i> | 293 |

PART VI EMERGENT THEMES

- | | | |
|----|---|-----|
| 16 | Languages in Change
<i>Jonathan D. Hill and Juan Luis Rodriguez</i> | 317 |
| 17 | Indigenous Knowledge
<i>Paul Sillitoe</i> | 343 |
| 18 | Philosophy in Anthropology
<i>Nigel Rapport</i> | 369 |
| 19 | Anthropology and the <i>Iliad</i>
<i>Margo Kitts</i> | 389 |
| 20 | Disaster Anthropology
<i>Pamela J. Stewart and Andrew J. Strathern</i> | 411 |
| | <i>Index</i> | 423 |

Lists of Figures and Tables

Cover image: Dolls on sale at city flea market, Osaka, Japan, June 2014,
Stewart/Strathern Archive

Figures

8.1	Defining sport	147
14.1	Map of Eurasia detailing the conventional distribution of Iron Age cultural groups	276
14.2	Eurasian Iron Age chronology by region	277
14.3	Key warfare technologies and related social and culture historical changes	283
14.4	Aerial photo of Solntse II cemetery with view towards south showing fenced contemporary Muslim cemetery and Bronze Age and Iron Age kurgans to the west	286
14.5	Plan of Solntse II cemetery	287
16.1	Visualization of the language histories approach to multilingual discursive areas in Lowland South America	334
17.1	The duck-rabbit	346
18.1	My name is Rickey Hirsch	373

Tables

7.1	A grouping of the four-fold categories proposed by Moore and Myerhoff (1977: 21)	135
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Introduction

Andrew J. Strathern and Pamela J. Stewart

The idea for this volume came to us some years ago. Our aim was to produce a set of synoptic studies of topics in socio-cultural anthropology that would combine the expression of personal perspectives with some general coverage of significant themes. We approached scholars whose work was known to us and we broached a broad range of themes that could be handled. In practice, contributions on all of these could not be secured, but a substantial coverage has nevertheless been achieved. The intention is, then, to be informative, illustrative, and pertinent without a goal of encyclopedic scope. Our contributors have provided us with thoughtful and fruitful ways of thinking about numbers of contemporary and long-standing arenas of work where both established and more recent researchers are engaged.

Anthropology has expanded greatly over time in terms of the diversity of topics in which its practitioners engage. Nevertheless, many broad themes and topics remain at the heart of anthropological thought, and even with new topical arenas classic problems of analysis remain the same, for example, how to understand both order and change, diversity and continuity, and conflict and co-operation in the reproduction of social life. While the domain of the social, and sociality, also remains central to our discipline the intersection of the social with the psychological and individual aspects of life is an enduring underlying concern. As well, the adherence to ethnographic methods of exposition and enquiry provides a strong ongoing current or flow of thought that influences theorizing. (See our arguments regarding fieldwork and theory in Stewart and Strathern 2014b.)

In this Introduction we will make in turn a few comments on our contributors' topics, and then, as a supplement, discuss further some arenas that could not be covered in the essays themselves.

One set of chapters centers on issues to do with religion and ritual. There has been a rapid expansion of interest in ritual practices since these have been given a central place in discussions on religion. At the same time it is recognized that religion and ritual are not isomorphic terms, hence the category of secular rituals as discussed by Margit Warburg in this volume. "Ritual" has in some ways come to replace "belief" as a central focus of interest for theory, signaling a shift to embodied practice and away from mentalist explanations in anthropological thinking in general. Work by Roy Rappaport (1999) and Catherine Bell (1997) has influenced this transition, as also has the work of Thomas Csordas (e.g. 1994) and Manuel Vasquez (2011). Work in this vein of embodiment theory is well exemplified in the present volume in the chapters by Geoffrey Samuel and by Anne Sigfrid Grønseth. Samuel takes the approach a step further with a thoughtful consideration of how healing practices, including ones we are accustomed to think of as shamanic, actually do have effects on patients' bodies. Grønseth examines the bodily effects of migration and displacement on Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka working in a fish processing factory in the north of Norway. Safe from immediate danger, these refugees nevertheless found it hard to achieve "peace

at heart” and difficult to adjust to interactions with Norwegian biomedical physicians. Grønseth also interestingly describes how these Tamil migrants flourished better when they were able to move to a locality nearer to their co-ethnics in Oslo and were less enclaved as a minority, indicating the importance of emplacement. Studies of this kind bring up in critical ways the question of efficacy in medical treatment, involving levels of confidence in the medical practitioners and contrasts between curing and healing of the kind that are frequently broached and explored in medical anthropology studies. In general, within the sphere of studies of shamanistic practices and of cross-cultural healing practices, issues of efficacy have recently come to the fore (see, e.g., Stewart and Strathern 2014a and a series of studies in the *Journal of Ritual Studies* 24(1) 2010). Shamanic healing has been made a major focus in such studies because of its dramatic performance aspects implicating multi-sensorial experience and a heightened deployment of imaginative resources. As well, the complexities and ambivalences in the shaman’s role in politics have provided a further point of attention (e.g. Riboli and Torri 2013). One thing is clear. Embodiment theory has contributed crucially to a trend to look at the actual physical effects of healing practices as distinct from their forms of “symbolic logic.” Symbolism, performance, and performativity all run together in the synergistic consideration of efficacy, transcending the implicit mentalism of theories that placed all effects outside of biomedicine into the category of “the placebo” (see also Strathern and Stewart 2010a).

Creativity and change in ritual patterns are themes that are congruent with questions of efficacy. Studies of creativity emphasize fluidity, adaptation, imagination and re-creation of sources of power through ritual performance. Charismatic Christian practices provide an exemplary case in which leading performers develop and highlight ways of singing and praying that entail strong affect and move their congregations in highly ritualized ways. Contributors to a recent issue of the *Journal of Ritual Studies* have explored this type of theme (*Journal of Ritual Studies* 28(2) 2014). We ourselves have examined the importance of the concept of performance in ritual studies in our book *Ritual* (Stewart and Strathern 2014a).

In a less dramatic fashion, the study of change in ritual practices has provided insight into broader social changes. Satsuki Kawano’s paper takes up this narrative in her chapter for this volume on changing mortuary practices around the world. She highlights a shift to choice in mortuary rites that is a part of the development of individuality. For Japan, she also identifies the importance of studying generational cohorts who experience differential forces of change in accordance with shifts in family patterns of residence and employment. Where there is no family member available to take on the role of keeping up a memorial shrine, people may choose to scatter the ashes of the deceased in a particular location as an alternative practice.

Elsewhere in the world we ourselves have noticed a shift toward cremation. In parts of Scotland, for example, cremation seems to have become the norm. Memorial sites can hold the ashes in the same way as is done for a body that is buried, but there is inevitably a sense of greater transformation concomitant with the death itself and abnegation of the traditional Christian notion of the resurrection of the flesh. Christian thinkers themselves have been at pains to struggle with the notion of resurrection and to metaphorize it so that it gains a broader spiritual meaning (see Williams 2000). At the level of individual choice, it is interesting that cremation gives flexibility to the distribution of bodily remains. We have observed a context in Scotland in which a daughter came to make a prayer and place flowers at an improvised site on her father’s farm-land where his ashes had been spread. The remains had been reclaimed from a collective context and re-settled back in the individual land-holding of the deceased.

Perhaps the most striking example of ritual innovation that we have encountered has been afforded to us by our acquaintance with the activities of the large Tzu Chi Buddhist

NGO based in Hualien city in Taiwan. Tzu Chi maintains a number of well-run hospitals and they developed a way of dealing with a shortage of cadavers for medical students to use in their training. Instead of anonymizing the use of cadavers they re-personalized it in ritualized form. They offered hospice care for adherents who were prepared on their death to offer their bodies for students to use in anatomy courses, and they required the students to greet the patients and their relatives and pay ritualized respect to them. After the death and the use of the body the bodies were repaired and cremated, and the ashes were divided by agreement, one set going to a jar held with others in a Buddhist shrine within the hospital complex. The persons whose bodies were used in this way were described as the “silent mentors” of the students. The ideology behind the practice was that after death the person no longer needs the body to achieve their next form, so the body can be released for this new purpose. The ideology contradicts traditional Han notions regarding ancestors and the proper handling of burials, but the program has had considerable success and this not least because in another sense it adheres to the important value of respect towards persons, including the dead. Buddhist specialists are also recognized as having roles to do with the handling of death in general, so the silent mentor practices fit generally with this fact.

Creativity as a theme intersects with the topic of the chapter by Katie Glaskin. As with all of our authors, and in accordance with our overall idea for the volume, Glaskin takes as her inspiration her own fieldwork with Aboriginal people in the northwest of Australia, among whom classic ideas regarding spirit beings and emplacement of these in the environment are maintained. In addition, though, there is a special association between dreaming seen as a capacity, not just a phenomenon, and as facilitating discoveries of methods of healing or how to heal sick persons, as well as the recognition of types of sorcery actions. This kind of multiple enchaining of experience with knowledge is found widely in Pacific Island societies, and is attended to in the chapters for Roger Lohmann’s edited volume *Dream Travelers* to which we contributed an essay on Papua New Guinea Highlands materials (Lohmann 2003). One of the things we found striking in one Highlands case, that of the Wiru of Pangia, was that the standard response for the origin of many innovative acts would be described as a result of seeing it in a dream (*pulere enanea*), whereas in the Mount Hagen area the standard phrase was *noman-nt wingnditim*, “the mind invented it.” In all these Highlands cases the advent of Christianity brought on crises of imagination about the cosmos which resulted in an incorporation of dreams into new religious contexts. The most consistent overall feature here is that in all of these cultures dreams are regarded as significant occurrences requiring exegesis, discussion, and often action, especially where dead kinsfolk appear in dreams and pass on messages about hidden aspects of reality requiring sacrifices to avert misfortune.

Sacrifice itself is a major theme in the anthropological imagination. We asked Kathryn McClymond to provide for our readers her own perspective on this monumental topic. She points out, and argues vigorously, that there has been too much emphasis on sacrifice as involving the ritual killing of animals, and not enough on the fact that several items of a vegetable kind are employed in many systems. Her comments may lead us to consider further why such an emphasis on animal sacrifice may have arisen, and we may suggest that this could be because an iconic feature is the *exchange* aspect of sacrifice, in which one life is offered in substitution or compensation for another. We have explained this aspect in the edited volume on *Exchange and Sacrifice* (Stewart and Strathern 2008). McClymond’s treatment, however, is a salutary reminder of the kinds of ethnographic bias that tend to grow up over time surrounding themes on which classic pronouncements have been made—such as on sacrifice, for example.

Another contributor whom we invited specifically because of the special perspective he could offer was Raphael Falco, because of his work on myth and charisma. As with sacrifice, many discussions on myth seem to turn awkwardly on issues of definition. A major

observation Falco makes is that myths may rely on charismatic force for their survival, and this force may need to be renewed over time. Myth is therefore not static, but dynamic (cf. Stewart and Strathern 2002a). He goes on, partly drawing on our own observations on the Duna people of the New Guinea Highlands to remark that the same holds for rituals. While people may need to claim that rituals are simply inherited from the past, actually innovations constantly occur. Certainly this is so. Moreover, people themselves are quite well aware of this process. The idea is not necessarily that a myth, or a ritual, should be exactly repeated over time, but that it should enable its narrators or practitioners to tie into powers of the cosmos.

The idea of the “cosmos” that we deploy here has the further potential to dissolve, at least in part, a distinction between secular and religious rituals. We asked Margit Warburg for a chapter on secular rituals, following the work of Moore and Myerhoff (1977). In part, this followed from a special issue of the *Journal of Ritual Studies* on civic rituals (*Journal of Ritual Studies* 23(2) 2009). Warburg skillfully covers a whole range of rituals that are significant and are outside of the domain of established or formal religion. This is quite in accordance with standard ritual theory, in which “ritual” is not isomorphic with “religion.” The studies she cites creatively extend the category of ritual to phenomena such as tourism or dieting, often seen as kinds of rituals of passage. Warburg rightly points out that the “ritual” aspect may be greater or lesser in these activities. In theoretical terms the way this can be further clarified is by use of Catherine Bell’s term “ritualization” (Bell 1997: 81–2). Activities become ritualized as they articulate certain values and become more fixed as expressions of those values.

There is a further overlap here with John Traphagan’s study of the anthropology of sport. Games in general, as rule-bound universes of action, and spectator-sports in particular, are subject to processes of ritualization. Recognition of the force of this point has been brought greatly to our own consciousness as we have watched, first, a series of sumo-wrestling championships in Japan and, second, television coverage in Japan of the FIFA football championship context in Brazil, during April–June 2014. With sumo, the ritual aspect is perfectly obvious and consciously expressed, since the referee behaves rather like a priest. With football, the spontaneous ritualization of fan behavior makes the ritualized aspects of the game quite evident in terms of the identification of supporters with their national team and the embodied reification of the nation that follows from this identification. (The emotional charge of this identification was well exemplified by Germany’s win over Argentina in the final, and the subsequent declaration that this was the first win recorded by a reunified Germany.) Traphagan makes a quieter set of points about Little League baseball in Japan and the inculcation of father-son values through sport, thus bringing to the fore the gendered aspects of sports traditions.

Victoria Goddard and Susan Rasmussen have supplied firm descriptions and analysis of gendered relations in different social contexts. Here again, we invited the authors to follow their own inclinations and expertise. Goddard provides an expert review centered on economic anthropology and work relations, in an approach that fits well with the study of contemporary industrialized contexts. Rasmussen takes us to her field area among the Tuareg of Northern Mali, discussing gendered spaces and changes in gendered roles in artistic theatrical performances. Gender and space are classic themes, stemming in part from work by Pierre Bourdieu (1977) and Henrietta Moore (1996). Rasmussen shows us that the gendering of space changes with overall changes in power relations in the society and how this is exemplified in theatrical productions. This theme has also been very prominent in the literature on the New Guinea Highlands. Early treatment tended to see the gendering of space in ritual and everyday contexts as diagnostic of gendered hierarchy or antagonism. We ourselves (e.g. Stewart and Strathern 1999) argued instead for seeing much of the

division as actually collaborative rather than conflictual. This point has some resonance with Goddard's discussions on the gendered meanings of labor, and on the mistake of supposing that affective labor can be distinguished clearly from industrial labor (a re-read of the older contrast between pre-capitalist and capitalist modes of production). In the New Guinea Highlands *all* types of labor were seen as affective as well as instrumental, and the products of labor such as pigs as wealth items were seen as embodying both aspects of values. Labor itself thus becomes a kind of performance.

Two chapters deal with major world religions, Christianity (Simon Coleman) and Islam (David Montgomery), or rather with anthropological approaches to their contemporary cross-cultural and ethnographic study. Coleman highlights the gradually growing interest in the study of Christianity, recognizing that such study now uncovers much variation as well as similarities between cases. Coleman reflects on the ways that forms of Christianity have changed notions of personhood, and also how the dramatic phenomena of charismatic worship have tended to overshadow studies of mainstream Christian denominations. He engages also with the question of rupture and change, on which we have ourselves argued for a complex view that continuity and change are always intermingled even though the Christian rhetoric of conversion often stresses rupture (e.g. Strathern and Stewart 2009). In his thoughtful chapter on Islam, David Montgomery argues that the focus should be ethnographic and local, looking at the lives of Muslim people in different places without assigning them all to a monolithic category of Islam. Many works support his point, including monographs we have published in our Ritual Studies and Medical Anthropology series (e.g. Stewart and Strathern 2005a, Cochrane 2013, MacPhee 2012).

The separate question of how Islamic doctrines and ideas have been co-opted into cultures of revolutionary violence would require a different survey of materials and would inevitably take us beyond religion into politics and economics.

Sami Hermez's chapter on armed conflict in Lebanon takes us into the general field of the study of violence which overlaps with our remark above. (We have published a set of views about religion and violence earlier, Stewart and Strathern 2013, Strathern and Stewart 2013, and see also Stewart and Strathern 2002b.)

Hermez's work emerges out of his intense involvement with the phenomenon of violence in his own experience in Lebanon. He questions what meaning we should give to the term violence and what meanings do people themselves give to actions that are labeled as violent. He discusses the existential phenomenon of living with violence and the senses of risk and precarity that go with this. We have ourselves recently worked to go beyond the ethnography of violence by focusing on processes of peace-making and on concepts of peace that go with these processes, and the question of risk and the wish to obviate risk are important in this context (see Strathern and Stewart 2011a).

Violence, or the possibility of it as a persistent factor in human social relations, is a topic that can intersect with many other domains of life, particularly when violent actions coalesce into armed conflicts between groups. Bryan Hanks, in an examination of archaeological data from Iron Age sites in Eurasia, notes the recognition by scholars of the evidence for warfare and the importance of warrior-hood. This phenomenon was probably connected with developments in metal technology, competition for resources, and the possible emergence of leading lineages exercising power and hierarchy as well as control over the labor of captives held as slaves and used in the construction of burial monuments. The significance of sacrifices of animals, of grave goods reflecting wealth and representations of the natural world is a crucial issue in this context, allied to the explanation of sacrifice as a general topic in Kathryn McClymond's chapter in the present volume. Human and animal sacrifices may themselves be seen, from an observer's perspective, as violent acts, but their purpose must be understood as belonging to an overall cosmology. In this scheme of things, such sacrifices

may be seen as ritual investments designed to help the reproduction of both power and fertility in the land tied, as Hanks observes, to the symbolic construction of the special *places* where elaborate burials were impressive markers in the landscape.

In general such markers probably fixed, at least for periods of time, a certain state of local political power, geared to cyclicities of war and peace and perhaps tied in with ideas of fertility and renewal as well as with, concomitantly, conspicuous expenditure, destructions of wealth comparable to the Kwakiutl potlatches through which rank was achieved among North West Coast Native Americans. Looked at this way, warfare becomes a part of a wider cosmology linked to the intensification of power in particular places and subject also to historical fluctuations and vicissitudes. Funerary sacrifices would thus be attempts to place a stamp of fixity and legitimization on a state of play in regional dynamics.

Hanks seeks to address topics that link archaeological findings, and interpretations with insights from cultural anthropology. Analyses that cross boundaries in this way can prove to be creative ways of pushing theory forward. When we planned this volume we had expected to receive another contribution to theories of the relationship between culture and violence by Christian Kordt Højbjerg, then of Copenhagen University. Højbjerg had carried out detailed research among the Loma of Guinea in West Africa on ritual traditions characterized by secret practices and on how the upholders of these traditions had resisted persecution by national authorities. Taking an innovative line in his analysis, Højbjerg sought to take into account not only historical factors but also “determinants associated with the cognitive-psychological and relational aspects of an existing cultural practice” (Højbjerg 2007: 5), centered on the indigenous concept of *sale*, ritual power. After political independence from the colonial power, France, was gained in 1958 the new state government in Guinea embarked on a violent purge of indigenous religion as a part of a supposed attempt to create a kind of modern national integration in a “demystification campaign” (Højbjerg 2007: 46) against ritual secrecy. In the event secrecy and the *sale* ideas that went with it prevailed in spite of state practices of violence and desecration—or possibly in part because of them. The cognitive means of this persistence provides novel dimensions of the analysis.

We had invited Højbjerg to provide us with a contribution spanning resistance, ritual continuity, and state violence in postcolonial situations. Sadly, as time went on, we learned that he was ill and his contribution would be delayed, then in April 2014 that he had succumbed to his illness without being able to address his topic. At the time of his death he held the position of Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology, Archaeology and Linguistics, Aarhus University, in Denmark, having been Associate Professor in Copenhagen from 2004 to 2009. He had done fieldwork in Guinea, Liberia, and Senegal, and was affiliated with the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle, Germany. We honor his memory here.

Another context into which studies of violence need to be set is that of conflict studies generally, since not all conflicts lead to overt physical violence, hence the current dual focus on peace and conflict studies (see Strathern and Stewart 2011a). A major context in which issues of conflict emerge is that of globalization. Thomas Hylland Eriksen, whose work is well known in many spheres of anthropology, has provided us with an integrative chapter in which he uses a new field study of his to delineate conflicts over globalization processes in Gladstone, a town of some 30,000 people in Queensland, Australia, long used as a port for the transport of coal. Intensifying industrialization has led over time to protests, in particular about a plan to dredge the harbor that was executed in 2011–2013, causing protests about noise and environmental changes among the population. Eriksen’s study is surely mirrored in so many other places where concerns for sustainability and heritage conflict with industrial priorities or government plans. Wind farms in Scotland are a case in point, although, unlike coal mines, such farms are promoted as producing “clean energy.”

Who benefits? Or who benefits most and who suffers most? These are relevant questions to pose. (See, e.g., Strathern and Stewart 2010b: 28.)

The important general topic that is involved here is social justice, which also implicates issues of discrimination. While pointing out this topic it is important to remember the question of reflexivity in academic work, that is, the contexts of experience in which one's own daily work is carried out. Many arenas can be included here but one in which we as editors of this volume are currently writing on and encourage others to write on is ageism. Senior persons may be treated wrongly in the workplace, and this is also true in academia when the practitioners of ageism denigrate the scholarly work of seniors, denying them resources or removing resources such as space, and excluding them from decision-making arenas such as committees or searches for new appointees. One rhetorical trope that is often deployed here is the labelling of work as "old-fashioned" as opposed to "progressive." Those who employ this method of attack do so as a means of concealing their own personal and political agendas in pursuit of power and patronage.

A further set of papers are the result of our editorial pinpointing of major themes of interest both to ourselves and the discipline at large. One of these chapters, by Jonathan Hill, and Juan Luis Rodriguez, looks at the problem of social change from the viewpoint of language studies in Lowlands South America. Language is obviously a huge arena of importance in socio-cultural study, as the relatively recent emergence of linguistic anthropology testifies (see, e.g., Duranti 1997). Language intersects with ritual (Stewart and Strathern 2014a), with politics (Duranti 1994), with cognition (Bloch 1998, 2012), indeed with every feature of social life. Hill and Rodriguez provide their readers with an innovative dimension of study, on how languages change but also on how people maintain or create identities through language usages. Study of the Watunna people reveals how they used a small specialist genre of ritual discourse to remember lessons of conflict learned from their colonial history. Language being a flexible "cultural tool" (cf. Dan Everett's book title, Everett 2012), local political leaders in South America developed practices that combined their cosmological knowledge with Western-style political discourse. Hill and Rodriguez's chapter is rich with possible parallels between South America and Pacific Islanders' discursive strategies. (See, e.g., the studies in Stewart and Strathern 2005b, and our contribution in Rumsey and Niles 2011, also Duranti 1994, 1997, and Brenneis and Myers 1984.)

There is a further overlap here with Paul Sillitoe's chapter on indigenous knowledge (IK). Sillitoe is a major expert on this arena of study and his very detailed work on the Wola people of the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea gives him authority to speak on the topic. Interestingly, however, he has used the topic as a platform for critical reflections. He rightly points out that "IK is the stuff of anthropology." So why, he asks, has interest in it declined? One answer he gives is that much important "knowledge" that people have is not held consciously and is hard to establish, so the question of what is IK arises. (Surely, the same point must arise in relation to Pierre Bourdieu's famous concept of the *habitus*, Bourdieu 1977.) A proportion of IK, however, is certainly held at the conscious level and is highly pertinent to development issues. Sillitoe rightly insists that we should work with indigenous collaborators—and in practice this is what anthropologists have almost always done, as for example we ourselves have done with persons of knowledge among the Duna people. Moreover, the "knowledge" of the environment that people convey to us, deeply imbued with ideas of the cosmos and spirit entities, is precisely the kind that indicates a potential attitude of resistance against destructive acts by developers and therefore shows that IK is a politically active category. Sillitoe himself offers a thoughtful set of reflections on "development" and concludes wryly that IK studies can be both supportive of development and subversive of it, which can help to explain why it has come to occupy an ambiguous niche. As anthropologists ourselves who have spent much time trying to understand

what people's own knowledge constitutes, we remain supportive of the IK view of what ethnography should encompass without suggesting that it is everything, since to do so would be to privilege knowledge in the way that the ethno-scientists did when they defined cultural knowledge as what is needed to know in order to behave appropriately in any given context.

Sillitoe's chapter captures many intriguing dilemmas of anthropological work today, such as how do we view the question of development (see also Stewart and Strathern 2005c) and how do we rate the cultural knowledge of the people we study in relation to our own (if we are not studying our own group—and however that may be defined). Such broad issues, ultimately philosophical or general in their import, tend to lie just below the surface of much anthropological writing, if not on the surface itself. One such general issue is the question of the category of the "individual" which turns up endlessly in debates about the universality of the terms we employ in our analyses. Other terms are "person," "kinship," and "marriage," "group," "descent," "religion," and many others. Nigel Rapport has supplied us in this volume with a boldly stated position on the individual, arguing that the capacity to interpret events and make sense in life is (in his words) an "individually embodied facility." This potentiality, however, he at once notes, is played out in very different ways in different cultural contexts and in different regimes of power. Rapport goes on to argue that his starting point also implies that as anthropologists we should have a liberal or cosmopolitan mission, and should investigate how universal capacities are related to individual realizations. In accordance with this vision and in line with the established interest in life-histories as a part of the ethnographic endeavor, Rapport proceeds with an account of a particular life history narrative from a Jewish Romanian born in Bucharest who made his way to Canada via Israel through a number of sufferings. His story, then, is one of survival from hardship and a final arrival at a more congenial social context of friendship. Rapport implies in his narrative the worth of human personhood as a universal value. Herein lies, then, the locus of a humanistic vision of life. This is a bold way to cut through both cultural relativism and sociological determinism.

The vision of humanism, or a human-centered view of life, which is a long-standing part of anthropological discourse, can in some ways be traced back to the legacy of ancient Greece and Rome. Even as the place of the linguistic study of Greek and Latin has declined as a part of school curricula, the academic interest in the analysis of these ancient cultures has in some ways resurged. All manner of anthropological topics have been brought to bear—kinship, adoption, succession, gender relations, religion and ritual, theater and its origins, the emotions and ideas of the body, sacred sites such as Delphi—all these and many more have been made the subjects of vigorous studies based equally on scholarship and anthropological comparisons (see, e.g., Stewart and Strathern 2014a: 25). These developments deserve to be given more recognition in anthropology as a whole. After all, we owe our discipline's name to the Greek language, so the "study of human beings" has a venerable basis. In the present volume this stream of scholarship is represented by the notable work of Margo Kitts, whose writings have expanded beyond their original context in the study of Homer's *Iliad* to a general investigation of violence, ritual, and religion. In the present volume she returns to her work on Homer's *Iliad*, and presents us with a rich analysis that brings together analytically the topic of oral traditions, approaches from archaeology, social dynamics, ritual, and scenes of oath-taking and sacrifice. Kitts's chapter illustrates both the richness of materials in ancient texts and the fruitfulness of applying anthropological concepts to their interpretations. Her exposition stands as an excellent example of how we can learn much by applying anthropological ideas to the analysis of past societies. Her study both finds its place in a long lineage of work stemming from the Classics and entering into anthropology from its beginnings in the nineteenth century, and also stands as an example of how each generation of scholarship can bring new insights to the study of well-established topics.

Many significant arenas of work in anthropology could not be accommodated within the present volume. Originally we identified a very large number of themes. Those we have presented here are wide-ranging enough and many of them overlap and interpenetrate, giving an inter-textual aspect to the text. We mention here a few that were a part of our original conspectus but for various reasons could not be realized. Medical anthropology comes first to mind, in part because we have ourselves contributed an ethnographically oriented text book to it (Strathern and Stewart 2010a). Medical anthropology has become a tremendous growth area of the discipline, offering theoretical and comparative considerations and a host of practical applications in cross-cultural medicine. It is notably informed also by broad philosophical concerns as in the work of Margaret Lock and collaborators (Lock and Gordon 1988, Lock and Nguyen 2010). Body/mind categorizations are at its heart also. The contributions to this volume of Samuel and of Grønseth cover some of these themes. Critical medical anthropology is another important branch (e.g. Singer 2009; Strathern and Stewart 2010a: 213–18). Interfaces between anthropology, cognitive science, and neuroscience are further opening up on the issue of healing.

Visual anthropology is another major arena, encompassing ethnographic film, media studies, the use of the Internet in general, and in particular its appropriation by indigenous people in pursuing their aims of self-determination. Kyra Landzelius's edited volume *Native on the Net* (Landzelius 2006) provides a broad array of materials on this theme. We have ourselves observed in Taiwan the enthusiastic embrace of the Internet for political activism and the popularity of a TV channel for the indigenous, non-Han, minority groups. In New Zealand, TV is also an important outlet for the Maori people.

Another major arena which is a part of anthropology's central history is the topic of kinship. Kinship studies suffered a certain set-back for a while owing to their great concentration on the technicalities of kin terminologies. This concentration, of course, derived from the early days of the discipline with the work of Lewis Henry Morgan, J.F. McLennan, and many others who sought in the evidence of kin terms to find the evolution of human kinship systems. Another controversy arose over the questions of whether kin terms refer primarily to nuclear kin based on the immediate family or reflect broad social classifications. This controversy was never fully put to rest. Kin term specialists in American cultural anthropology promoted the idea of primary term types and rules of extension. However, from the 1970s onward, practice theory has tended to take over as a focus rather than the quasi-textual study of lexemic terms. Our own recent textbook *Kinship in Action* (Strathern and Stewart 2011b) seeks to integrate the study of many classical themes in kinship analysis around the concept of action. This approach does not depend on taking a particular stand on the question of kinship as classification. Rather, we suggest that whatever the basic classifications are, how they operate in practice reveals what the social roles of kinship are. Classification and practice interact in these spheres. At the same time, there is ample cross-cultural evidence for the significance of primary kin terms derived from ties of procreation.

A major arena in theorizing which has also made a comeback in transformed ways is material culture. Museums are primary places of deposit of material culture as "artifacts," and critical and innovatory studies of the roles of museums form one stream of renewed interest (e.g. Kidd 2014). We would emphasize from our own experiences around the world with examining museum holdings on the Pacific region that traditional collections may still provide stimulating bases for analyses and interpretations. (An excellent example is the George Brown collection at the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka, Japan.) In addition, however, interest in materiality as an analytical construct and in questions of the consumption of material goods have been integrated with the original study of material culture (see, e.g., Miller 2012).

Another major arena is the study of migration and displacement. Migration studies became popular in the anthropology of mobility from at least the 1970s onward. The focus of migration studies was on labor migration, and for Pacific Island places the transportation of workers from their homes to other or distant locations was an early colonial phenomenon with many consequences, including the development of vernacular forms of lingua franca based on English, French, and indigenous languages.

Such an emergence of new language forms goes with change and transformation in existing languages. Language death and revitalization are significant topics linked to change throughout the world (see, e.g., Crystal 2000, Kulick 1992, Grenoble and Whaley 2006, Meek 2010). Our work on vernacular Scots and Ulster Scots in Scotland and Ireland over many years has pointed to the vibrancy and connectivity with history and politics of such issues, as well as making us aware of the deep wells of creativity that survive in vernacular forms (see, e.g., Begg 2012).

Migration studies fed naturally into studies that later were subsumed under the category of globalization, and the inequities of the capitalist “world system.” Since populations often remained in places to which they migrated but retained ties with their home arenas, diaspora studies flowed from this fact, applying equally to Third World and metropolitan societies. Colonization and diaspora studies also interpenetrate. Forced relocations and displacements resulting from wars or natural disasters, together with questions of refugees, refugee camps, famine, and asylum engulf major sections of populations around the world. South Sudan provides an example from 2014 onward.

Another sphere of human experience which has gained international attention and concern is the sphere of environmental disasters. Following our fieldwork over several years in Taiwan among indigenous Austronesian speakers who have been affected by typhoons we have been working to develop the new and important field of “Disaster Anthropology” and are discovering colleagues around the world with parallel interests. The final chapter in this volume deals with this topic in further detail.

We end this Introduction with reference to one of the guiding principles that has underlain our work together in Anthropology: a concern for the continuing productive relationship between fieldwork and theory. Fieldwork and theory are historically and personally intertwined and give life to each other. If this thought were expressed in the Melpa language of the Mount Hagen people of Papua New Guinea, fieldwork and theory would be said to be paired as a *rakl*, bound together in alliance. Within the alliance we see long-term, detailed fieldwork as providing the dynamism within this overall dialectic. Fieldwork challenges, and initiates new conversation with current theory. That is why for us, it remains the essential touchstone and inspiration for our ongoing work in anthropology. The contributions we have been fortunate to garner from colleagues in this volume subscribe, as we see it, to this same philosophy, which we have expressed in our book *Working in the Field* (Stewart and Strathern 2014b).

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PART I

Religion, Experience and Change

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Healing

Geoffrey Samuel

Introduction

Healing, which I use in this chapter as a generic term for practices intended to relieve pain, restore damage or deterioration, or assist in the attainment of the best possible functioning of the human organism (Alter 1999), has been a major preoccupation within virtually all societies studied by anthropologists. Yet while practices and ideas concerning healing have been noted from the early days of anthropology, their study took place for many years in a curiously oblique manner. Anthropologists looked at systems of thought relating to healing, and at magical, ritual or shamanic practices intended to bring about healing. Healing itself, however, as a practice that might bring about genuine results in the real world, remained largely out of focus until the development of medical anthropology in the 1980s. This was because the organic effects of healing were seen as the concern of medicine, not of anthropology, and the medical science of the times did not take these healing practices seriously. This was particularly so in relation to those modes of healing which were not based on pharmacological substances or other material procedures: shamanic healing, spirit healing and the like. Such practices, generally classed as magic, religion or ritual, are the primary focus in this chapter, since it is here that anthropological analysis has had the most to contribute. As we will see, these modes of healing point to aspects of the healing process that are (or at any rate should be) also significant for biomedical practice.

Today, biomedicine has come to dominate state and public medical provision throughout the world, and the development of 'evidence-based medicine' has reinforced its claims to a privileged status as the sole source of valid knowledge about healing. Anthropologists are however now far more willing to challenge that privileged status. This change is the result of a shift in popular consciousness in regard to healing practices, a shift to which the discipline of anthropology itself has contributed to a significant degree. Most Western societies today live in a situation of *de facto* medical pluralism. Large parts of the general population today accept without much demur the idea that biomedicine has no monopoly on healing. While the degree to which non-Western and other 'alternative' medical systems have received official recognition and legitimation varies from country to country, the idea that Ayurveda, Tibetan or Chinese traditional medicine, herbalism, homeopathy, yoga, various forms of visualisation, spirit healing, *reiki* and even more exotic practices may play a useful part in the healing process has been widely accepted among all sectors of the population. This has created a climate to which anthropology, among other disciplines, has responded.

At the time when the basic approaches of contemporary social and cultural anthropology were being developed, however, the period from the 1920s to the 1950s, such tolerance of alternative healing was much less prevalent among educated society. The anthropologists of that time lived in a world where non-Western modes of healing, especially those of

small-scale, technologically simple societies, were routinely disparaged as primitive and meaningless. Biomedical science, the academic discipline that derived from and supported the growth of modern medicine, had little interest in these healing practices, regarding them as useless at best, if not actually damaging to patients. Shamans were regarded as examples of psychopathology, and if indigenous populations were willing to employ their services, this only demonstrated their ignorance and naivety. At most, pre-modern medicine might have discovered a few herbal remedies with some genuine pharmacological effects, and in this sense might be regarded as a crude precursor to the achievements of biomedical science. Even the complex and sophisticated medical practices of the Islamic world, India, Tibet and China were routinely regarded as of little or no practical value.

Before being too dismissive of such attitudes, we should appreciate that in the mid-twentieth century the overall picture of illness had been recently and dramatically transformed for much of the Western world. This had come about through the provision of safe water supply, proper sanitary arrangements, hygiene both in medical and hospital practice and in daily life, the growth of vaccination and inoculation against common infectious diseases, and the development of the first generations of antibiotic drugs, such as the sulfonamides, introduced in the mid-1930s, and penicillin, in the early 1940s. The germ theory of disease provided a convincing theoretical basis for the spectacular success of these new procedures. The introduction of effective anaesthesia and antiseptic procedures had transformed surgery, and the relief of pain had become part of everyday life. If the populations of advanced Western societies today take much of this for granted, at the time it was a huge achievement in terms of human wellbeing. This transformation in people's experience of illness and pain also facilitated and was encouraged by the progressive secularisation of Western society over the same period, which itself involved a massive loss of faith in the reality of the spirit world. Initial approaches within anthropology to healing need to be seen against this background. Scholars such as Edward Evans-Pritchard, Bronislaw Malinowski and Sergei Shirokogoroff were both products of their own time, and struggling themselves to make sense of practices which they had been taught to regard as being of very little value, and as based on modes of thinking that were intrinsically non-rational.

By the early twenty-first century, the secularisation of society has come to seem much less total and irreversible than it did, and the achievements of biomedicine have also become more open to question. Today we are as likely to see the large pharmaceutical companies, with their questionable trade practices and their deliberate manipulation of biomedical research to support their sales strategies, pushing dubious products that may often do more harm than good onto those who do not need them, as an expression of the malign dominance of large corporations over contemporary society (Healy 2012; Goldacre 2012). Biomedicine itself, especially in the highly commercialised and privatised forms prevalent in countries without effective state health systems, can seem an increasingly suspect enterprise, at best distributing its benefits selectively to those who are most able to afford them, at worst encouraging excessive and harmful levels of medical intervention. The overuse and inappropriate use of pharmaceuticals, and the consequent growth of drug-resistant strains of bacteria, is reversing many of the positive achievements of the past in the area of public health. Nevertheless, however justified the criticisms of biomedicine and the pharmaceutical industry today, the structures of evidence-based medicine, now routinely subverted by Big Pharma to promote problematic products, or employed by national medical associations as a protectionist strategy against competing forms of healing, were undoubtedly intended by their originators as positive interventions aimed at the public benefit. The new approaches to the anthropology of healing that developed from the 1980s onwards are situated within this academic and social context; the work of scholars such as Arthur Kleinman, Margaret Lock or Emily Martin are interventions within this much more complex and contested field.

The general perspective from which this chapter is written may be summarised as follows: biomedical science, with its focus on the material and physiological levels, provides a productive and valid explanation of part of the healing process, but that explanation is not complete or exhaustive. As research on the so-called placebo effect and related phenomena demonstrates, much of the healing process is independent of therapeutic interventions at the physical level, relating more to the ability of the organism to mobilise its own healing resources (e.g. Moerman 2002; Moerman and Jonas 2002; Wilce 2003; Samuel 2006a, 2006b). This process, which in many cases is as or more significant than any therapeutic intervention, appears to involve both body and mind, both conscious and unconscious factors, and is critically associated with issues of subjective meaning. This is where anthropology and related disciplines of social and cultural analysis have a vital role to play in the understanding of healing. These disciplines are able to critique and deconstruct biomedical assertions regarding the centrality of therapeutic interventions on the physical level and the insignificance of other ('subjective', social, cultural) aspects of the healing process, and to work towards an understanding of how these other aspects may be more effectively mobilised to facilitate healing.

The significance of medical anthropology is certainly not limited to this area. One might point in particular to the critical and very important work done by medical anthropologists on the political economy of medicine and healing, and so on the actual ability of populations around the world to access healing resources. However, I would suggest that the area of culture and meaning, and its linkage to the healing process, is where medical anthropology has a unique role to play in the understanding of healing.

Precursors and Foundations

As the historical contextualisation with which I began might suggest, initial approaches to healing practices within the small-scale, non-Western societies where most early anthropology was located took the form of rationalist deconstructions of those practices, of explanations of why native populations undertook practices that almost by definition did not or could not work. In those days, anthropologists had, in effect, to choose between seeing the world in the terms of the native populations they were studying, or in those of the modern industrial societies of the West. In practice, 'going native' was not a serious career option. Even if anthropologists might have a genuine sympathy for the worlds they studied, they knew better than to admit it in their publications. Here the *locus classicus* is doubtless Edward Evans-Pritchard's *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (Evans-Pritchard 1937), but one can also see a similar strategy of explaining away in Bronislaw Malinowski's *Magic, Science and Religion* (Malinowski 1954). The foundations of this mode of argument can be found in the work on magic of Sir James Fraser, with its analysis of the logic of similarity and contagion, and his predecessors.

Evans-Pritchard's approach in *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* focused on the logic of explanation in African responses to misfortune. It was premised on the assumption that while Zande ideas about witchcraft, the oracles, the 'witch-doctors' and magic formed a coherent system, the underlying concepts were not and could not be true. Thus when the Zande fed a (presumably poisonous) substance to a chicken, waited to see if it would die, and interpreted the chicken's living or dying as an answer to a specific question, such as whether witchcraft was present, Evans-Pritchard took it for granted that whether the chicken lived or died could not have any actual relationship with the question asked. The system of ideas was self-evidently false, and Evans-Pritchard's analysis concerned how

it was that the Zande continued to accept a system of ideas based upon false premises. Since the responses of the oracle could have no relationship to the question, and could only be explained by factors such as the strength with which the poison was prepared or the health of the chicken, the results of the oracle would necessarily be inconsistent: how was it that the Zande did not realise this?

Evans-Pritchard's answer, as is well known, was to point to processes of 'secondary elaboration' that explained away apparent inconsistencies. If the same question were asked on more than one occasion, for example, and different answers were obtained, this was the result of witchcraft interfering with the oracle, of taboos being broken, errors in the management of the oracle and so on (Evans-Pritchard 1937: 330). Evans-Pritchard's analysis is one of the classic texts of British social anthropology, and was influential in the subsequent development of the sociology of knowledge and the philosophy of science, since it became evident that similar processes could be observed in many systems of knowledge, including Western science itself. Thus Evans-Pritchard's work became significant in the context of the so-called rationality debate within British philosophy (Winch 1964; Wilson 1970; Horton and Finnegan 1973; Hollis and Lukes 1982). From the point of view of understanding healing, however, it provided effective support for the rationalist deconstruction of non-Western systems of thought. Evans-Pritchard certainly helped to explain why non-Western healing practices might continue in use despite their not being efficacious, but he was fundamentally uninterested in considering whether and how they might actually have some real effects.

Malinowski's analysis in *Magic, Science and Religion* (Malinowski 1954), while more psychological in its orientation, was equally unconcerned with the effectiveness of magical healing practices. Malinowski was quite interested in the effects of magical ritual in promoting confidence in situations of uncertainty, and also (particularly in his later study of agricultural magic, *Coral Gardens*, Malinowski 1935), in magical ritual's logical and linguistic form, but he was not interested in magic's possible efficacy. As Siegfried Nadel put it in an essay on Malinowski:

Withal, naturally, the powers 'beyond the normal' promised by magic are only an illusion, if one reinforced by spurious successes and by the general human reluctance to abandon cherished and comforting beliefs. But though magic is akin to 'wish-fulfilment' and 'day-dreaming' it is not of the stuff that dreams are made of. It shows in activity; it encourages and permits action where a dispassionate assessment of conditions might leave no scope for rational effort. (Nadel 1957: 195)

However an alternative and more sociological approach to magical healing had already been prefigured in the work of Émile Durkheim, since the concept of 'collective effervescence' in Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* clearly implies that ritual (and so magic, as a form of ritual) can have a positive effect on the social group (Durkheim 1965; Buehler 2012). 'Collective effervescence' had a mixed reception, but the idea was picked up by other authors, most notably perhaps by the Russian anthropologist Sergei Mikhailovich Shirokogoroff, who spelled out the possible sociological implications with remarkable prescience in the 1920s. In a short paper from 1923 Shirokogoroff presented the elements of his 'general theory of shamanism', in other words of shamanic practice among the Tungus people of Siberia (the people among whom the term 'shaman' itself originated). There are a number of fascinating things about Shirokogoroff's treatment, but I begin with his concluding comment:

The theory of ghosts or spirits, their relations to men are only the forms that in the mind of the shamanist generalize all the phenomena of normal and pathological psychic life. The shaman and shamanism are the organs and system regulating these

phenomena and have for their principal concern the hygienic and preventive quality, par excellence. (Shirokogoroff 1923: 249)

Shirokogoroff's vocabulary of 'psychic hygiene' reads oddly today, but in fact his argument was posed at both the psychological and the sociological level, and it focused primarily on what the shaman is doing in relation to the community (or what the community is doing to and for itself through recourse to the shaman) rather than on the shaman's personal mental or psychological state. Earlier in the same article he noted that:

The nervous and psychical maladies which are commonly found among the Tungus Tribes wax and wane. The normal life of the clan becomes interrupted and, during periods of increase, nutrition and natality are reduced, mortality increased, and the very existence of the clan threatened ... Within the clan maladies of this kind are stopped just in the nick of time, when all harmful ghosts, being possessed by some person of the clan, are submitted to the 'master'. Such a 'master' is the shaman who becomes, if the analogy be allowed, the 'safety valve' of the clan. ... Shamanism as a preventative is a kind of clan self-defence and an apparent aspect of its biological functions. (Shirokogoroff 1923: 247 and 248)

Thus Shirokogoroff suggested that the shaman acted as a kind of emergency mechanism, which came into action primarily in times of crisis. The specific technique that the shaman used was a secondary question, although it was certainly one in which Shirokogoroff was interested. The key issue was that the shaman was able to deal with crises in the community, crises that manifested in psychological forms but which clearly also, for Shirokogoroff, had sociological and biological implications. The shaman was not the dominant figure of the clan's religious life, but he came into play in specific situations where his particular skills were needed. Put in other words, Shirokogoroff saw the shaman as a community therapist – or, more accurately perhaps, as part of the way in which the community healed itself. The approach was in fact very similar to that which Victor Turner was to take some 40 years later to the analysis of Ndembu divination in Southern Africa, in *Revelation and Divination* and *Drums of Affliction* (Turner 1968, 1975).

Shirokogoroff's approach was very much the exception in anthropological writing of its time. The vast majority of anthropologists shared the conviction that the spirit-healing practices they observed could not work in their own terms (they presumably regarded herbal healing as potentially valid, if theoretically uninteresting). This is not to say that other currents of thought were not present within Europe, as with the work of Henri Bergson,¹ or, most conspicuously as far as anthropology was concerned, that of Lucien Lévy-Bruhl. Evans-Pritchard, in his later years at least, took Lévy-Bruhl's work seriously, and indeed suggested that the participatory mode of thought that Lévy-Bruhl describes was frequently present in the modern European society of his time as well. However he was no more receptive than in the 1930s to seeing 'participatory' and 'mystical' modes of thought as having useful intellectual content (Evans-Pritchard 1965: 78–99; see also Greenwood 2009: 29–43).

By the time I began studying anthropology at Cambridge in the late 1960s, Lévy-Bruhl was no longer read, and Shirokogoroff was nearly forgotten. However, when Victor Turner developed a similar approach to Shirokogoroff's, he was taken much more seriously, in part because he came from the most sociological end of the discipline, the famed Manchester School

1 Bergson's work had as far as I know little effect on British anthropology in the 1920s and 1930s, but the neo-Bergsonian approaches of the 1970s and 1980s constitute an important resource for the rethinking of anthropological theory today (cf. Watson 1998; Samuel 2009).

directed by Max Gluckman. In the 1960s Max Gluckman and Edmund Leach represented opposite poles in British anthropology (cf. Kuper 1973; Tambiah 2002). But while Leach intellectualised magic away, in this respect following on Evans-Pritchard's Azande work, the Manchester School approach allowed Turner in effect to see 'effervescence' as being canalised and directed to serve a social purpose, in much the same way as Shirokogoroff had proposed.

Turner argued that the diviner, who is consulted as the result of an individual illness or misfortune, uses his or her visionary techniques to arrive at a ritual prescription that heals the psychic and social conflicts within the community – in the Ndembu case, typically a small village. More specifically, the Ndembu diviner can diagnose that the illness is the result of a particular ancestral spirit, acting in a particular mode, and this leads to the performance of a specific ritual, in which a specific group of people will take part (Turner 1968: 25–51). Turner assumed, and tried to demonstrate through symbolic analysis, that the ritual facilitated group healing both at the sociological and at the psychological level (Turner 1968, 1970).² In some cases, the diviner may diagnose the presence of sorcery, a result which in Turner's analysis is a way of legitimising a *de facto* break up of the village into opposed factions, one of which will then go off and set up a separate village elsewhere.

What Turner added to Shirokogoroff's work was a brilliant analysis of how the ritual brought the job about, focused on the operation of 'symbols' which brought together moral and physical aspects of human experience and made them seem natural (see especially Turner 1968, 1970). His successors, scholars such as Bruce Kapferer (1979, 1997) and Suzette Heald (1999), developed this mode of analysis further, and gave it more psychological depth and political edge.

The key point in Turner's analysis was the role of symbolic objects and their imagery to manipulate both individual and collective emotion for socially positive ends. Here it is best to avoid getting too caught up in Turner's somewhat idiosyncratic use of the term 'symbol', later deconstructed by Dan Sperber and others (e.g. Sperber 1975). It is more useful to focus on the process Turner was describing, in which objects such as the *mudyi* tree, with its white sap connecting to milk, motherhood, the matrilineage and the social order, or the *mukula* tree with its red sap, connecting to death, circumcision and masculinity, formed building blocks of the ritual, conveying messages to the ritual participants. Sperber had a point when he criticised Turner on the grounds that the various indigenous interpretations of the symbols were part of what had to be explained, rather than constituting an explanation in their own right. However, by rejecting the whole idea of symbolic meaning and moving to a frame of analysis in which the most significant thing about 'symbolism' was to be precisely its meaninglessness, Sperber lost the vital link between ritual, individual emotion and social morality to which Turner's work pointed. Sperber and his followers, such as Pascal Boyer and Harvey Whitehouse, started a school of so-called cognitive anthropology which, like structuralism at its worst,³ seemed to lose any interest in what the 'symbols' being analysed were actually doing in the social world, regarding them instead as indications of abstract and pan-human intellectual processes. The project of uncovering such processes is not necessarily invalid in its own terms, but it easily leads to a renunciation of cultural and social anthropology as a discipline that has anything real to say about how society operates.

2 In this respect Turner's analyses of ritual build on and take for granted the sociological argument presented in his first major work on the Ndembu, *Schism and Continuity in an African Society* (Turner 1957), a point often missed when they have been taken up outside anthropology.

3 It should be noted that Lévi-Strauss himself, as Bateson pointed out, saw the logic of myth precisely as a window to the 'reasons of the heart' (Bateson 1973: 112).

Evans-Pritchard's deconstructions of Zande thought took place in a wider intellectual context in which the breakdown of Newtonian physics heralded by the theories of special and general relativity and the development of quantum theory were beginning to penetrate to the general educated public. Evans-Pritchard, as far as I know, never referred explicitly to this collapse of classical physics in his work. *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic* (Evans-Pritchard 1937) was, however, as noted above, to become a significant contributor to what was later known as the 'rationality debate' within philosophy, which was in many ways a response to the new physics. The effects of the breakdown of Newtonian science and the new approaches to the philosophy of science are evident in the work of Robin Horton (Horton 1967a, 1967b, 1993; Horton and Finnegan 1973). Horton was aware of and influenced by Turner's early analyses. Horton's own work was notable in that it both took African traditional thought seriously in its own terms and argued for its validity as a mode of thinking. An important element here was Horton's stress on the personalistic nature of African thought.⁴ Horton was not directly interested in healing, but his argument that spirits could be theoretical entities on the same basis as the theoretical entities of Western science, along with Turner's more social and psychological analysis of ritual healing, opened the way for a serious consideration of the role of spirits in the healing process:

To say of the traditional African thinking that he is interested in supernatural rather than natural causes makes little more sense ... than to say of the physicist that he is interested in nuclear rather than natural causes. In fact, both are making use of theory to transcend the limited vision of natural causes provided by common sense. (Horton 1967a: 54)

Here Horton in effect turned Evans-Pritchard's arguments, and their appropriation in the rationality debate as the basis of a critique of Western science, on their head. He was aware that background assumptions both structure intellectual thought and limit what can be thought within any given system, African or Western. However, rather than using this as an argument to deconstruct African thought and Western science, Horton argued that *both* systems of thought were valid approaches to the world. This position allowed for the acceptance of parallel but different sciences, each with its own partial efficacy and validity, a position that was also very compatible with parallel developments in the philosophy of science (e.g. Kuhn 1970; Munevar 1981, 1984; Samuel 1990).

Horton did not claim a total parity between African traditional thought and Western science here. In fact he accepted, in general terms, Karl Popper's distinction between 'closed' and 'open' systems of thought, and explored the reasons why 'open' systems developed in the West (natural science being of course Popper's primary example) (Horton 1967b). However, his work marked an important step towards taking traditional modes of healing seriously.

If the structural functionalism of the Gluckman school was to develop one of the major contributions to the understanding of healing in anthropology, another was to come from Claude Lévi-Strauss, the central figure of the structuralist school in anthropology. Lévi-Straussian structuralism within British anthropology tended to become a set of formal procedures for the analysis of fieldwork data, but Lévi-Strauss himself was less limited in his interests, and was particularly interested in how the healing process worked. He explored this theme in two remarkable papers, both originally published in 1949, 'The Sorcerer and His Magic' and 'The Effectiveness of Symbols' (Lévi-Strauss 1963a, 1963b). The second of

4 On the contrast between 'personalistic' and 'naturalistic' idioms in medical anthropology, cf. Foster 1976; Teerink 1995; Samuel 2010.

these papers led to another important thread in the later analysis of healing practices, which had important parallels to Turner's work. Here the image of the body, the patient's internal sense of her or his physiological identity, was understood as part of the healing process, taking us considerably further into the physical meaning of symbols than did Turner. Lévi-Strauss treated the imagery of the shaman's chants as operating directly on the mind and body of the patient, here a woman undergoing a difficult childbirth, assisting her to relax her body and allow the child to be born.

Lévi-Strauss's analysis was schematic and in some respects problematic, as Joel Sherzer (1989) and Michael Taussig (1992) among others pointed out. However, as Carol Laderman noted (1987), the problematic aspects of Lévi-Strauss's analysis can be reformulated, and they do not detract from the highly productive insight of his work. As I have argued elsewhere, such a reformulation would provide for a more active and creative role for the person being healed, in which the imagery is less a series of directives to be followed in a mechanical manner than an opportunity to mobilise the mind-body's own ability to respond positively to the situation of crisis (Samuel 2005: 232–3; 2010).

Lévi-Strauss's work had the potential to break down the *cordon sanitaire* that had developed between anthropology and biology, but it took many years before that potential began to become reality. The alliance between evolutionary biology and the New Right in the 1970s and early 1980s, which led to a polarisation in the USA and elsewhere between a minority of anthropologists who adopted the new evolutionary approaches and a majority who rejected them outright, did not help the situation. Many of the more creative minds in anthropology rejected the whole attempt to build connections with biology, retreating into literary and humanistic approaches to the discipline. The introduction of the body into the anthropological study of healing was thus a slow process. However the development of the new sub-discipline of medical anthropology in the 1980s, to a significant degree through the work of biomedical practitioners such as Arthur Kleinman who had turned to anthropology in order to develop a critical perspective on biomedical practice, began to change the situation. The relatively easy access to funding for medical anthropology also helped this to become a growth area within anthropology as a whole.

Medical Anthropology

The new approach was exemplified in works such as Kleinman's *Patients and Healers in the Context of Culture* and *The Illness Narratives* (Kleinman 1980, 1988). These works, and other writings of the first generation of medical anthropologists, stressed the difference between the biomedically-defined entity ('disease') and the patient's experience of 'illness', often grounded in 'folk models' which, unlike the biomedical disease entity, often include strong elements of moral and personal meaning. Consequently, effective healing needed to respond to the patient's illness as well as to the biomedical disease. Thus eliciting and making sense of the narrative the patient constructs around the illness, and of the explanatory models implicit in that narrative, became a key process for medical anthropologists. However, as is clear from the final chapter of *Patients and Healers* (Kleinman 1980: 311–74, earlier published separately as Kleinman and Sung 1979), Kleinman's work continued to assume that, in effect, the biomedical analysis was correct. In this chapter Kleinman asked why it was that the indigenous practitioners he studied in his Taiwanese research project were able to heal successfully. The answer, essentially, was because most of the patients were not seriously ill, in biomedical terms, in the first place. Of the 100 cases he followed 90 per cent were suffering from:

(1) non-life-threatening, chronic diseases in which management of psychological and social problems relating to the illness were the chief concerns of clinical management; (2) minimal, self-limiting diseases; and (3) somatization [i.e. physical symptoms which Kleinman regarded as expressions of an underlying psychological disorder]. The last group accounted for almost 50 per cent of cases. The overwhelming majority of these cases were satisfied with the indigenous care they received and believed it to be at least partially effective. However, most cases with severe acute diseases in this sample were not satisfied with indigenous care and did not believe it to be effective. (Kleinman 1980: 330–31)

‘Therapeutic efficacy’ for the minor disorders which indigenous practitioners could heal was ‘principally a function of the treatment of the psychosocial and cultural aspects of the disease’ (1980: 361).

Kleinman’s main, and very significant, practical concern was to emphasise the need, both in Taiwan and in other medical contexts, for the practitioner to respond to and treat the illness as well as the disease. Good doctors, he argued, had always done this, but the professional training of modern Western practitioners was making it increasingly difficult for them to do so (1980: 363). This concern with what has been lost in modern Western medicine continues to be a major theme within medical anthropology, for example in Adams, Schrempf and Craig’s call to recognise how the sensibility of traditional Tibetan medicine (*sowa rigpa*) goes beyond that of Western biomedicine to recognise the need for healing to operate at all levels, not just the organic (Adams, Schrempf and Craig 2011). Analytically, though, Kleinman’s model was not much different from Evans-Pritchard’s. The Taiwanese *tang-ki* (spirit-mediums or shamans) might help the patient, but they did not really deal with the underlying organic problem.

Subsequent scholars in this tradition, such as Thomas Csordas, equally tended to assume that the ‘healing’ brought about by indigenous healers was limited if not illusory. Csordas explained the success of a charismatic healer in terms of a ‘margin of disability’. The sick person unable to move a limb, or claiming to be blind, actually had some ability to move or to see, but was not sufficiently motivated to do so until the ritual procedures of the healer created a situation in which it became appropriate and worthwhile (Csordas 1997: 71–2).

Csordas emphasised the importance of what he refers to as the ‘somatic mode of attention’, a mode of bodily self-awareness which he argued was largely unrecognised in North American culture, where the body was experienced as sensations and the constructive role of body imagery in shaping those ‘sensations’ was neglected (Csordas 1997: 67–70; 2002: 241–59). It was the healer’s ability to manipulate and bring about changes in this mode of attention that was at the basis of successful charismatic healing. As I have noted elsewhere, Csordas’s model was essentially that of an equilibrium (constituted by the established way in which the body is perceived, the *habitus* in Bourdieu’s vocabulary) punctuated by episodes of change brought about by the healer (Samuel 2010: 13). In this respect his approach was close to that of Turner, who also saw the ritual process as providing an opportunity for the ill person to undergo change and transformation. Csordas’s work brings us closer to a sense of the body as experienced, but for him, as for Kleinman, the biomedical diagnosis remains primary, and symbolic healing can bring about change in the physical body to a very limited degree.

An important step onwards was being taken at around the same time in the writings of a group of medical anthropologists influenced by a different series of influences, the growing body of work in science and technology studies stimulated by the approaches of Bruno Latour and others, and related work in the feminist critique of science by Donna Haraway. Important examples here are Emily Martin, Margaret Lock and Annemarie Mol, all of whom

turned to examine the practices through which biomedicine itself produced its authoritative understandings of human pathology (e.g. Martin 2001, 2007; Lock 1993, 2013; Mol 2002; Mol and Berg 1994). In their analyses, and in parallel work in the sociology of medical knowledge (e.g. Featherstone and Atkinson 2012), the biomedical categories themselves began to become less solid, and the ways by which a biomedical diagnosis is constituted were themselves brought under the analytic gaze. Martin in particular had a strong focus on the specific ways in which the distinction between mind and body, and the primacy of the material level, was constructed and rigidified in biomedical thought and in science more generally (Martin 1998, 2000). This move to examine the creation of biomedical knowledge was important, because in undermining the epistemological authority of the scientific framework, it became possible to see the relationship between biomedicine and non-biomedical healing in a very different light.

What this work made increasingly clear was that biomedical knowledge was not simply a product of objective scientific processes. The processes by which it came into being constituted specific bodies of biomedical knowledge, whereas other, equally scientific and objective processes, had they received similar levels of support from state and industry, might have yielded quite other forms of knowledge. This can be seen clearly in the elaborate randomised double-blind protocols currently used for testing pharmaceuticals and other medical treatments. These procedures were introduced for sound biomedical reasons, in order to generate criteria for the choice and use of pharmaceuticals and the best distribution of limited resources. The protocols, and the meta-analyses created by combining results from numerous randomised controlled trials (RCTs) conducted according to them, were long regarded as the gold standard of reliable and objective biomedical knowledge. The extent to which the results of these protocols have been biased and distorted by the commercial interests of pharmaceutical companies is gradually becoming clear (Healy 2012; Goldacre 2012). Results showing problematic side effects are routinely suppressed, full records of trials not made available, and so on. However, leaving all this aside, what is less recognised is the extent to which, even if the protocols were applied properly, they would shape the knowledge they produce (Moerman 2002).

Thus, the whole concept of a randomised trial is dependent on a pre-existing biomedical definition of the condition, since it requires that one can define a large sample of patients each of whom can be regarded as having the *same* disease or medical condition. Even leaving aside the unavoidable degree of subjectivity in defining many conditions, the patients are of course not the same in other respects, however carefully samples are matched. The procedure also requires that the same treatment be given consistently, which makes it impossible to apply the RCT procedure properly to therapeutical traditions such as Tibetan medicine, where the drugs used may be changed every few days in response to changes in the patient's condition (Adams 2002; see also Craig 2012). In any case, since Tibetan remedies (like many other traditional pharmacological remedies) consist of compounds of different herbs or mineral products, none of them entirely consistent in their composition, and RCTs are typically carried out on single chemical constituents in isolation, the application of Tibetan remedies under RCT conditions generally bears little resemblance to their use in Tibetan clinical practice. Traditional Chinese medicine faces analogous problems, since a prescription is typically a mixture of ingredients designed for the individual patient, contradicting the whole idea of a sample of patients with the 'same' condition to whom the RCT protocol could be applied.

Similar difficulties occur with many non-biomedical systems of healing, especially those that differ far more than Chinese or Tibetan medicine from the general framework of biomedical practice. The traditional Chinese or Tibetan doctor is, after all, still engaged in providing a pharmacologically active remedy to an illness seen in organic or quasi-organic

terms. Many modes of healing do not have this form. Consider acupuncture, for example. Since the double blind procedure requires that the physicians administering the remedies are themselves not aware of whether a particular pill is genuine or placebo, RCTs cannot be applied properly to a procedure such as acupuncture, where the therapist has to be aware of whether the procedure is being applied properly or not.⁵

In these and other ways, even under ideal conditions, the RCT does not select the best therapy out of the range of all possible therapies. It selects the best therapy out of a set of procedures that has been artificially narrowed and distorted by the demands of the RCT, demands that exclude all kinds of therapies not because they are not efficacious but because they cannot be fitted into the Procrustean bed of the RCT.

Meaning in Healing: The Role of the Bodymind

The RCT process, however, has had the virtue of highlighting how much of the healing process cannot in fact be attributed to pharmaceutical remedies and other physical interventions. In the RCT framework, this issue takes the form of the so-called 'placebo effect'. Daniel Moerman has pointed out that the whole concept of a placebo is incoherent and inconsistent (Moerman 2002; Moerman and Jonas 2002) but what is evident is that medical interventions in very many cases affect only a part, often a relatively small part, of the process of healing, and that what Moerman refers to as the 'meaning response' ('the physiological or psychological effects of meaning in the origins or treatment of illness'; Moerman and Jonas 2002: 472) often accounts for as much, or substantially more.

This brings us back to the analyses of Lévi-Strauss, Turner and their anthropological successors, which focus precisely on questions of meaning. A useful bridge here is the role of the immune system, as discussed in James Wilce's edited collection *The Social and Cultural Lives of Immune Systems* (Wilce 2003), particularly the contribution Wilce wrote with Laurie Price, 'Metaphors Our Bodyminds Live By' (Wilce and Price 2003). If one can accept that the metaphorical structure of the narratives, rituals and practices surrounding medical treatment and healing can have a real effect on the immune system, and so on the success of the treatment, physiologically as well as psychologically, then the complex and elaborate healing ritual performances found in many cultures, often incorporating elaborate theatrical sequences, music and dance, begin to look, at least potentially, like sophisticated ways of operating with the meaning response (cf. Samuel 2005: 229–55; 2010; Kapferer 1979, 1983; Laderman 1987, 1991; and many other ethnographic studies). Of course, this does not guarantee that any particular ritual will be effective in any particular situation. In fact, the hallmark of many of these practices tends to be high levels of redundancy, with positive messages being repeated over and over again in many different forms and sensory modalities, presumably so as to maximise the possibilities that they can be used effectively by the patient's body and mind – or perhaps one should say, as do Wilce and Price, 'bodymind'.

The use of 'bodymind' (or 'mindbody') here has the virtue of reminding us that the distinction between body and mind (or body and spirit, soul etc.) has a paradigmatic force for most Western scientists that is certainly not shared by non-Western cultures, or even by

5 There have of course been attempts made to apply RCTs, or something as close as possible to them, to Tibetan medicine and similar traditions, and to acupuncture, in a more realistic manner, but these generally lead to other problems. In any case, once the RCT protocols are not strictly followed, the likelihood of the results being taken seriously by the biomedical establishment becomes very much lower.

many lay people within Western societies. Here again biomedicine tends to take for granted what remains to be proven; the biomedical tendency to treat mental or psychological factors as minor or peripheral in the process of healing reflects a generally unexamined ontology in which mental and psychological factors are regarded as secondary and derivative. This is not the case in many other cultures, where 'subtle body' concepts such as *qi* and *prāṇa* refer explicitly to processes that are intermediate in level between 'mind' and 'body' as conceived of in biomedicine and mainstream Western thought. Such concepts frequently have an important role in relation to healing practices (Samuel and Johnson 2013; Mayor and Micozzi 2011). The current dominance of cognitive neuroscience on the intellectual scene tends to marginalise such ideas and practices, but they arguably deserve to be taken much more seriously as alternative scientific accounts that allow the analyst to grasp, and the therapist to work with, connections and relationships obscured by contemporary biomedicine. In a couple of recent essays, I have argued for the illegitimacy of excluding such concepts on scientific grounds (Samuel 2013a) and I have also described in some detail how they form the basis of a specific Tibetan healing practice, *tsedrup* or 'accomplishment of [control over] life-span' (Samuel 2013b).

If anthropological theory needs to work across the body-mind distinction to make sense of indigenous healing theories and practices, it also needs to transcend the individual-group distinction. Victor Turner saw the significance of this issue, and his own ritual analyses made important steps to integrate the two levels of analysis. It is here that we can begin to understand the significance of the spirits that are so common as explanatory agents in non-Western understandings of illness. The specific heritage of Christianity leads Westerners to see spirits as imagined, and implausible, external entities, but a closer look at the way in which spirit-vocabularies are employed might suggest that they often refer to processes that are internal *and* external, and entrain both body *and* mind, or more accurately the bodymind as a whole (cf. Samuel 1990). The equivalence between spirits, winds, breath and internal currents that can be found in, for example, several East and Southeast Asian understandings of healing also point in this direction (cf. Laderman 1991; Lo and Schroer 2005; Low and Hsu 2007). If we can see the spirits and forces in these various vocabularies as ways of grasping and working with processes of imbalance and breakdown within both the human bodymind and its social and ecological context, then the practices that employ them begin to make as much sense as those of biomedicine, if in a different register and vocabulary. To return to Horton's observation regarding traditional African thought and physics that I cited earlier, both biomedicine and spirit-healing 'are making use of theory to transcend the limited vision of natural causes provided by common sense' (Horton 1967a: 54).

Practices such as the Tibetan *tsedrup* rituals work explicitly across both body-mind and self-other boundaries (cf. Samuel 2012, 2013b). *Tsedrup* is a Buddhist tantric practice and so assumes, at some level, the relativity of our ordinary conceptions of self and other, consciousness and material reality. Ultimately, for Buddhists, reality is unknowable except through the direct insight of a Buddha, but *tsedrup*, like much Tantric ritual, has its own model of reality. This involves the possibility of moving back and forth (Samuel 2012, 2013b) between the everyday reality of the ordinary world and the transformed reality represented by the Tantric mandala. The ordinary world is inhabited by human and non-human entities who can drain or damage the various life-energies within the bodymind, according to idioms of soul-loss and sorcery similar to those found in many societies. The Tantric mandala, however, represents the universe as a pure realm inhabited by Tantric gods and goddesses, who are themselves fractal expressions of the Buddha-nature innate within all phenomena, and whose intrinsic motivation is that of compassion and healing (Samuel 2013b). It thus provides a source from which these drained and damaged energies can be replenished.

Yogic practitioners learn to transform themselves through creative imagination into the central deities of the mandala, and to transform their material and social environment into the pure realm of the deities. The pure essence of the universe (*rāsa* or *amṛta* in Sanskrit, *chüd* or *düdti* in Tibetan) can then be drawn in to restore and supplement the depleted energies of the ordinary body, and also accumulated and transferred to strengthen the health of lay people, for whom large-scale 'life empowerment' (*tsedrup*) rituals are regularly performed. Other, similar rituals (*mendrup*) are used to empower the herbal and mineral medicines used in traditional Tibetan medicine, and this ritual empowerment of medicine is regarded as an important part of the action of the medicines (Craig 2011: 218–28; Blaikie 2013: 7–9). Doctors too may undertake rituals such as the Yuthok Nyingthik empowerments, which are understood as both strengthening their motivation and improving their ability as a doctor.⁶ In the contemporary context, *tsedrup* may also be performed for patients in hospital, as a way of strengthening their life-forces in parallel with biomedical treatment.

The point here is not so much whether *tsedrup*, *tsewang*, *mendrup* and the like are efficacious in biomedical terms. This is a question that it is in any case virtually impossible to test via RCT methodology, for the reasons sketched above among others (Craig 2011). The point is more that unless we are prepared to consider such fluid transactions between patient, doctor, medicine and environment as possible, the question of their efficacy cannot even be meaningfully asked. Yet if the meaning response discussed by Moerman is taken seriously, it indicates the importance of transactions of this kind (Moerman and Jonas 2002; Moerman 2002). There is no good reason why they should be ruled out of court within medicine, especially given that, as the so-called placebo effect indicates, much of the process of healing is not adequately explained by biomedical science.

The transactions and effects postulated by Tantric theory, such as the effect of a Tantric empowerment on the efficacy of a medicine or the diagnostic skill of a doctor, go some way beyond the meaning response as discussed by Moerman. However, from the perspective of post-Newtonian physics, interactions of this kind are hardly inconceivable, even if we are some way at this stage from being able to construct a detailed model of their mechanism (cf. Schwartz, Stapp and Beauregard 2005), and again it seems premature to conclude that they do not and cannot take place.

Cultures such as Tibet, China and India have developed sophisticated bodies of scholarly knowledge that attempt to grasp and to make intellectual sense of the kinds of healing process involved in *tsedrup*. The basic transactions involved have, however, many similarities to healing processes in many cultures, including those of small-scale preliterate societies, that understand illness and healing to be related to spirit-entities, lost soul-substances and similar concepts. Indigenous understandings of such healing techniques are generally more concerned with assisting practitioners to handle the processes involved than in providing a sophisticated intellectual model, but the general point remains, that we are unlikely to get very far in understanding practices such as spirit-healing unless we begin by enlarging our model of the universe to include the possibility of the basic premises according to which they operate.

It seems to me that, if anthropology is to develop a genuinely adequate account of the healing processes that it studies, it is important to start by recognising the complexity of the self, of consciousness and the mind-body process, including their social and biological situatedness. That process will involve moving beyond the comfort zone of much current anthropological thinking, and entering into a substantial dialogue with relevant areas of

6 A number of papers focused on these rituals at a recent Wellcome Trust-supported conference on 'Sacred Transmission in Tibetan Medicine' organised by Mingji Cuomu and Elisabeth Hsu at the University of Oxford, 24–25 May 2014, including presentations by Mingji Cuomu, Lujam Gyal and Sienna Craig.

biomedical science and biology more generally. I am particularly thinking here of areas such as neuroimmunology, neuroendocrinology, and neuroscience more generally, which might give us some real grasp on how Moerman's 'meaning response' is translated into healing. It is, I think, not coincidental that a recurrent and valid concern of the various critiques of neuroscience that have emerged in recent years has been the lack of attention to the social and cultural aspects of the neuroscientific account of consciousness (see e.g. Martin 2000; Choudhury and Slaby 2011). This is precisely the area where anthropology has a great deal to offer. There is room here for a productive encounter.

So far, though, there has been little sign of constructive engagement between anthropology and neuroscience. This is unfortunate, since a dialogue with neuroscience, for all the theoretical naivety and crudity, and the problematic underlying assumptions, of its dominant contemporary versions, offers an opening towards a wider and more inclusive perspective on the whole area of healing. Present day neuroscience is as much the impoverished product of an arbitrary and limiting set of procedures as is the evidence-based medicine resulting from the RCT protocols, but this does not exclude the possibility of a neuroscience that could genuinely incorporate mental and psychic factors, and social and cultural contexts. Such a more complex conceptual structure, which includes emotional, cognitive and physiological components of the mind/body on an equal basis, could provide the basis for a more effective and more adequate model of healing, within which the spirit-vocabularies and other apparently exotic concepts of non-Western thought could be seen as valid and appropriate ways of describing real processes. In such a development, the anthropology of healing would have a central and essential role to play.

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