

# Who Do You Say I Am?

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[The Varieties of Temporal Experience: Travels in Philosophical, Historical, and Ethnographic Time by Michael Jackson \[Columbia University Press, 9780231186001\]](#)

What does it mean to live in time, between the unforeseeable and the irreversible? In *The Varieties of Temporal Experience*, Michael Jackson

demonstrates the significance of a phenomenology of time for ethnography, philosophy, and history through a multifaceted consideration of the gap between our cultural representations of temporality and the bewildering multiplicity of our experience of being-in-time.

Jackson explores temporality in a subjective mode as a form of literary anthropology. The first part of the book tells the story of John Joseph Pawelka, whose 1910 escape from prison and subsequent disappearance became one of New Zealand's great unsolved mysteries, discussing what it reveals about the interplay of popular stories, hidden histories, and media narratives in constructing allegories of national and moral identity. In the second, Jackson reflects on journeys up and down the islands of New Zealand, touching on the ways that personal stories are interwoven with social and historical events. Throughout this groundbreaking book, Jackson juxtaposes philosophy, history, and ethnography in an attempt to do justice to the extraordinary variety of temporal experience, at the same time exploring the ethical and existential quandaries that arise from the complexity of lived time.

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Excerpt: In 2016 I attended an anthropology conference in the UK to give a plenary address on "The Varieties of Temporal Experience." The conference organizers hoped that the theme—Footprints and Futures: The Time of Anthropology—would "provide a forum for critical reflection on time, temporality and chronicity as these play out in different settings." This hope was realized for me in a way I could not have anticipated. Although I had no personal connection with Northumberland, it was near enough to Yorkshire for me to feel that I had come back to the place my grandfather left no years ago, seeing no future for himself in England and taking a chance of a new life in New Zealand.

Fred Longbottom was born in an industrial suburb of Halifax in 1877 and went to work in the mills when he was ten. Only two other kinds of gainful employment were open to him—the army or the police. He joined the West Riding Constabulary only to quit when ordered to baton charge mill workers striking for safer working conditions and better pay. When a friend announced that he was immigrating to New Zealand, Fred followed suit. He arrived in Wellington, New Zealand, in 1906, was persuaded to give policing another go, and spent the rest of his life in a small Taranaki town

where he alone could determine how he would do his job. In the years after his retirement in 1943, I became a beneficiary of his stories, absorbing his values and often feeling that I was a child of his times as well as my own.

Unlike Alfred Schutz, who writes that "the world of predecessors is by definition over and done with" and "has no open horizon toward the future," I have always felt that my grandfather's world and mine are coterminous and that whatever I do in my life is connected to what he sought to do in his. This feeling that my lifetime overlaps with his may explain why I am drawn to people who work with their hands, why I atavistically affiliate myself with labor rather than capital, and why I believe that sound ethnography is less a matter of philosophical acumen than of social skills in the field and care and craft in writing.

On a walking tour through Durham, my guide was a man who left school at 16 to "go down the pit." After the miners' strike of 1984-1985, a series of pit closures put Joe and tens of thousands of other miners out of work. In 1983, Britain had 174 working mines; by 2009 only 6 remained, and Joe did not hesitate to draw comparisons between the blighted economies and depressed mining towns of northeast England and indigenous communities in the Global South—places of unemployment, drink, hard drugs, and enduring bitterness against those who had conspired to destroy traditional livelihoods. Joe found a new lease of life by resuming his education and was now researching a PhD in the mining village where he grew up. "I'm not much good at theory," he told me. "It's a bit of a stumbling block, really, because what I'm interested in is the experience of these men, from the years they worked in the pits, and the raw deals they've had in life." I told Joe that if theory (whatever that may be) helps in this task, then well and good; if it doesn't, if it just serves to create an effect or lend authority to one's writing, then to hell with it. "Can I quote you on that?" Joe asked.

As we continued on our way, I was reflecting on the difficulty of writing narrative prose that, while philosophically engaged, avoided the kinds of alienating abstraction and systematizing that tend to render thought sufficient unto itself.

As if he had read my mind, Joe led me across the road to a pub called the Cole Pitts whose painted sign depicted a bucolic landscape with a Galloway pony hauling a coal wagon out of a mine and agricultural workers at harvest in an Elysian field. The pub was at the end of a row of houses built for middle-class buyers, and its name had nothing to do with coalpits but derived from the owners' surnames. "It's typical of how the bourgeoisie fashion 'their' heritage out of images that properly belong to those they oppress and exploit," Joe said. "I sometimes think that their power is as hollow as the wealth they hold and hoard and that they must constantly draw on the vitality of the underclass to give it meaning."

I now followed Joe down an alley where you could still see the coalholes, with their wooden shutters, built into the brick walls behind the row houses. Joe explained that the miners would get a "free" portion of coal, even though it was deducted from their wages, and he imitated the action of a coal man, heaving a sack onto his shoulder from the tray of a truck, and tipping it into the coalhole. I had a sudden flashback to the coal man in my home town, grubby with coal dust, wearing a leather jerkin, and going through the same motions in the shed at my grandparent's house, and remembered filling the coal scuttle, lugging it into the kitchen, and setting it down beside the coal range.

Joe described the system that bonded the miners to the mine owners. If you broke your bond and attempted to relocate to a mine where the wages or working conditions were better, the owners could evict you from your house. If you shopped anywhere other than the Tommy shop owned by the mining company, you could be evicted. If you stirred up trouble, you'd be evicted, or would have to work for three months without pay. "How a miner's family survived under these conditions does not bear thinking about." But I was thinking not of debt bondage but of the bonds that connect us to others across space and time, transcending age, gender, history, culture, and even death. As we walked on toward the Miners' Hall in North Road, built in the 1870s from pennies donated by the two hundred thousand miners in the Northumberland-Durham area, Joe talked of the double binds that came of trying to improve your lot. "If you became

an overseer," Joe said, "you'd be materially better off, but in escaping the twelve-hour shifts at the coalface, you lost the respect of the miners; you were no longer one of them, nor were you any better off in their eyes than the owners whose stooge and instrument you had become." This is what my grandfather experienced when he joined the police force, I thought, and this betrayal of my origins is something I too experience.

The stone gates on Red Hill were topped by stone sculptures of miners, and on our right were white statues of the founding fathers of the Durham Miners Association (1869). All were dressed like owners. Ahead was an impressive red brick building, with the forthcoming miners' gala advertised on a big banner hanging from its high windows. Harry explained that the miners had been determined to negotiate on a level playing field. Their building would have to be as grand as any that the owners lived in; their dress and demeanor had to be equal to that of their adversaries; the toilets and facilities in the building had to be the best money could buy. No doffing caps or touching forelocks here. No one would look down on, or look up to, anyone.

Joe now showed me the memorial to the eighty-one miners who died in a gas explosion in the Easington Colliery in 1951. There were wagons filled with coal, and a miner, his back to a derailed wagon, the heels of his boots (with broken toes) dug into the ground, hoisting the iron wagon and its load of coal back onto the track. What happened to men who broke their backs and destroyed their bodies toiling underground? I wondered. Only ten minutes before we had passed the old workhouse, where the destitute and broken were doomed to eke out their days in meaningless work. So shameful was it to wind up in the workhouse that badly behaved children were admonished, "You'll end up in the workhouse if you go on like that." I was struck, in Joe's account, as I had been as a boy listening to my grandfather's stories, by the fact that upward mobility was seldom contemplated, and you lived in dread of downward mobility even though you already occupied the lowest rung on the social ladder.

It was strange returning to the conference after my time with Joe. I had been drawn back into my own prehistory, to be sure, but I had also become painfully aware of the problem of reconciling lived experience with the abstractions and interpretations to which academics dedicate so much time and energy. Like George Orwell, I had an aversion to stuffing one's sentences with extra syllables, using "pretentious diction" (as if "Latin or Greek words are grander than Saxon ones") and creating an inflated style in which "a mass of Latin words falls upon the facts like soft snow, blurring the outlines and covering up the details." In many human societies classical, formal, or respect languages coexist with plebeian, vernacular, or demotic forms, and these linguistic codes correspond to important social distinctions between classes, age groups, and kinship categories. After the Norman conquest, French became the language of the ruling elite, and in due course Latin became the official language of monasteries and universities. We are still haunted by this division, even though the English language is hybrid. Every sentence we speak or write involves words that belong to the discourse of those in power and words borrowed from the lifeworlds of the powerless.

Though our choice of language reflects the audience we seek to reach, the people we want to impress, and the social group we aspire to belong to, it is important to remember that all language implies a gap between the speaker and the experiences of which he speaks. For Theodor Adorno, reification is a form of forgetting. When Orwell remembers, as I did in Durham, how a coal man would deliver coal, he observes that "it is only very rarely, when I make a definite mental effort, that I connect this coal with that far-off labour in the mines. It is just 'coal'—something that I have got to have; black stuff that arrives mysteriously from nowhere in particular, like manna except you have to pay for it. You could quite easily drive a car right across the north of England and never once remember that hundreds of feet below the road you are on the miners are hacking at the coal. Yet in a sense it is the miners who are driving your car forward." Though these lines were written in 1937, the same forgetfulness informs our lives today. We

rarely connect the privileges and pleasures of our middle-class lives with the deprivation and suffering of the countless individuals whose names we will never know, whose lifeworlds we will never enter, yet whose toil is the very condition, historically and presently, of the possibility of our own existence. Moreover, just as Orwell's coal seemed to arrive mysteriously from nowhere, so we erroneously assume that our lives unfold within the bookends of birth and death, beginning *ab nihilo*, at the moment of our conception, and ending with our last breath. It is necessary to be reminded, as I was during my days in Durham, that we inherit history not simply as acquired knowledge but as vital matter, so that we live the lives of those who came before us in the same way that we shape the lives of those who will come after us. Our distance from forebears and successors is as relative as the distance between ourselves and our contemporaries. It is never absolute. We may like to think that our time is discontinuous with theirs and that our home spaces are ours alone, but we also exist in the penumbra of their time and their places. Although Alfred Schutz insisted that only people "within the reach of my direct experience" can be said to share with me "a community of space and a community of time," I prefer the view I encountered in Maori New Zealand, Aboriginal Australia, and West Africa—that our face-to-face encounters may be experientially less meaningful than the felt presence of predecessors, successors, and contemporaries. Thus one's own life is always set in the matrix of life itself, the lineage to which one belongs, the name one carries and will pass on, the blessings one receives from one's ancestors and strives to bestow on one's children, so that every good deed is praised for bringing credit to one's clan and not oneself.

These observations touch on the phenomenon that Freud refers to as "the uncanny" (*Unheimlich*): that occasional and unnerving sense of not being at home in the world in which one has made one's home. Like the experience of *déjà vu*, something or someone strange feels strangely familiar, or something or someone familiar suddenly feels alien. In this respect, the uncanny echoes what Saint Augustine called *falsae memoriae*, and the English

physician A. L. Wigan described as a "sentiment of pre-existence."

The emotion of the uncanny is, as Freud says, one of ambivalence, since one does not know whether a truth has been revealed or one's mind has been deceived. This is what occurs in bereavement. A loved one is dead and buried, yet her voice is still heard and her presence felt, despite her physical absence and the knowledge that she has gone forever. It is the same with the phenomenon of phantom limb pain when, following an amputation, a person will continue to feel the presence of his missing limb even though the evidence of his eyes tells him it is not there. The cortex misreads signals from the sites of the amputations.

Walter Benjamin argues that "the presence of the original is the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity," and that the original possesses an aura that a memento or photograph cannot reproduce. By implication, reproductions of the real create the same estrangement and disturbance that an actor feels when simulating steamy passion before a camera. Cognitively, he or she knows this is not real, but nevertheless his or her body becomes really and shamefully aroused. Benjamin's argument might therefore give a phenomenologist pause, for we are often as moved by a reproduction, a false memory, a staged drama, or a fake artwork as we are by a genuine article, a real event, or an independently verified recollection. By the same token, what actually happened in the past may be no less existentially compelling to a person than what he imagined happened, or dimly remembers, or deliberately reinvents in the name of creative license.

This phenomenological emphasis on how the stories we tell, the thoughts we entertain, and the actions we undertake transfigure our experience of reality and ameliorate our lot underpins my approach to religion, history, and cultural anthropology and demands a mode of writing in which "happening truth" and "story truth" are given equal weight, despite the fact that they are seldom congruent.

In using these terms, Tim O'Brien seeks to capture the paradox that war, for example, is "just another name for death, and yet [as] any soldier will tell you, if he tells the truth ... proximity to death brings

with it a corresponding proximity to life. After a firelight, there is always the immense pleasure of aliveness. The trees are alive. The grass, the soil—everything. All around you things are purely living, and you among them, and the aliveness makes you tremble."

My struggle to do justice to both happening truth and story truth explains my fascination with the gap between our cultural representations of temporality and the extraordinary variety of our experience of being-in-time—an issue broached by Edmund Leach fifty-five years ago when he asked how we come to have a verbal category of time at all and how that category links up with our everyday experience.

My own inclination is to bracket out conventional distinctions between history and historicity, history and biography, and history and myth in order to explore in a phenomenological vein the indeterminate relationship between objective and subjective modes of apprehending time consciousness.

While historical inquiry may establish the true identity of Jesus of Nazareth, or the time of his birth and death, it must be remembered that whatever such research brings to light, the truth of Jesus is to be found in the hearts and minds of individual believers, none of who will share exactly the same experience of him. Consider, too, James Joyce's *Ulysses*. The novel chronicles the meanderings, musings, and meetings of Leopold Bloom in the course of a single Dublin day, 16 June 1904. Though Joyce took great pains to ensure that his descriptions of Dublin were historically accurate, the title of his book makes it clear that Bloom's voyages were also mythical. Nowhere is this clearer than in the passage where Bloom ponders the relation between his age and the age of Stephen Dedalus. After convoluted calculations that begin with the fact that "16 years before in 1888 when Bloom was of Stephen's present age Stephen was 6," we are drawn back to the mythical time of Methuselah and to the question of what events might nullify these calculations, namely, "The cessation of existence of both or either, the inauguration of a new era or calendar, the annihilation of the world and consequent

extermination of the human species, inevitable but unpredictable." If culturally or historically specific modes of reckoning identity are always entangled with lived experience and existential aporias, then we may doubt the standpoints of both Marshall Sahlins and Gananath Obeyesekere in their debate over whether cosmological or pragmatic considerations caused Hawaiians to kill Captain James Cook on February 14, 1779, for in such matters it is never a question of either/or but of the relative significance attaching to elements within a constellation of several copresent points of view.

Whereas the historian surveys the past from a detached perspective, analyzing sequences of events, identifying causes and effects, remarking continuities and discontinuities, and constructing precise chronologies, historicity draws attention to our immediate experiences of being-in-time and the way the past, present, and future appear to us. From this phenomenological perspective, temporality connotes both our immediate experience of duration as well as the metaphorical and mundane ways in which we conceptualize that experience. To evoke Walter Benjamin's notion of the now (*jetzeit*), our lives unfold in a force field (*kraftfeld*) wherein traces of the past and anticipations of the future combine and permute in ever changing ways. More radically, Lauren Berlant calls our attention to the affective properties of being present that make the now seem "virtually ahistorical, fleeting, fantasmatic." If, as Michel de Certeau suggests, "modern Western history essentially begins with differentiation between the present and the past," we might say that temporality covers experiences in which such differentiation is irrelevant or has been lost. There are echoes here of Henri Bergson's notion of "inner duration," in which our consciousness is continually oscillating between multiples states that we tend to reify as present, past, and future, but are in reality, "an organic whole." Long ago events come so vividly to mind that they seem to have just happened; time hangs fire in a moment of danger and speeds up in the face of an approaching deadline; an aroma or passage of music instantly transports us to another time; spellbound by a story, we lose all track of time; the future fills us with such dread that we hesitate to bring children

into the world. At the same time, historical events—the Holocaust, the crucifixion of Christ, the killing of Imam Hussein, the Atlantic Slave Trade, the Fukushima nuclear disaster, the devastation of a traditional way of life—come to figure more compellingly in one's experience than events that occurred yesterday.

In extremis, chronology collapses, and only a sense of duration endures. Writing in her great memoir about those who survived Stalin's Gulag, Nadezhda Mandelstam observes that "it was a feature of almost all the former camp inmates I met immediately after their release—they had no memory for dates or the passage of time and it was difficult for them to distinguish between things they had actually experienced themselves and stories they had heard from others. Places, names, events and their sequence were all jumbled up in the minds of these broken people, and it was never possible to disentangle them." In his work on the testimonies of Holocaust survivors, Lawrence Langer speaks of this as a movement from chronology to duration. One's life is reduced to a series of events that have no connection to the life one lived before the Holocaust or to any life one may hope to live thereafter. "Testimony may sound chronological to an auditor or audience," Langer writes, "but the narrator, a mental witness rather than a temporal one, is 'out of time' as he or she tells the story." This sense of being out of time is, of course, a corollary of the sense of being nowhere.

The terms past and future are clearly relative to our social, emotional, and ethical preoccupations in the here and now rather than any externally defined timeline. In *Pig Earth*, John Berger recounts how he was walking in the mountains with a friend of seventy. As they walked along the foot of a high cliff, the French peasant remarked that a young girl had fallen to her death there whilst haymaking on the alpage above. "Was that before the war?" Berger asked. "In 1833," his friend replied. E. E. Evans-Pritchard relates a similar anecdote in his classical ethnography of the Nuer. "How shallow is Nuer time may be judged from the fact that the tree under which mankind came into being was still standing in Western Nuerland a few years ago!" The exclamation mark is telling. It suggests that Evans-Pritchard has not been able to overcome a

Eurocentric assumption that preliterate people conflate mythology and history because their only means of reckoning time—through counting back ten to twelve generations—creates the illusion that "valid history ends a century ago."

Rather than see history as valid and myth as illusory, Hayden White, inspired by Michael Oakeshott, emphasizes the artificial and literary character of both genres. One explanation for this conflation of history and literature is that remembering and dreaming, which mediate both genres, are notoriously inconstant. Hence Gaston Bachelard's famous observation that "we are never real historians, but always near poets". Most importantly for White, however, is not the question of verisimilitude but the question of how the past is deployed. As a store of accumulated experience or accepted facts, tradition may be drawn upon to warn against repeating past mistakes, to give legitimacy to present practices, to teach lessons to the young, or lend weight to one's opinion.

Although, from an objectivist standpoint, the past has a causal effect on the present simply because it is prior, from a phenomenological standpoint effects may precede causes and, to all intents and purposes, "bring about the past." Thus, when a resentful younger brother in Sierra Leone complains about being "a slave" to his elder brother's will, or an unhappy wife refers to herself as "a slave" in her husband's house, or a sixteen-year-old schoolgirl expresses the opinion that "anyone who does not try to be educated will be just like a slave," we glimpse not only how "the" historical past (in this case "domestic slavery") is strategically and rhetorically deployed to explain quite different social and biographical circumstances but also how these contemporary allusions to slavery effectively bring the phenomenon into being. This was also brought home in Margaret Mead's famous "rap on race" in 1970 with James Baldwin, who repeatedly reminded Mead that if history "were the past, it would not matter," but for African Americans "history is not the past, it's the present"; slavery is not a historical fact, it is a lived experience, happening now

Clearly, our sense of being-in-time has inner and outer horizons, and we move continually and

contrapuntally between them. William James observes that "experience" is double-barreled and admits of no absolute division between the experiencing subject and the object of his or her experience. Experience encompasses the irreversible reality of aging and the inevitability of death, as well as fantasies of rejuvenation and rebirth that fly in the face of these facts. While young lovers may feel they have all the time in the world, the old may quail at the thought of "time's winged chariot hurrying near." The gambler may lose all track of time, taking refuge in a "zone" in which the tribulations of his or her everyday life momentarily disappear from consciousness. But being-in-the-now is an unstable state, and at any moment one may be brought to one's senses, repossessed by one's dismal past or overwhelmed by grim thoughts of one's immediate future.

Whether one's life is regulated by circadian rhythms, phases of the moon, the rising and setting of stars, the cycle of the seasons, the swing of a pendulum, the rate of radioactive decay of <sup>14</sup>C, or caesium seconds, lived time encompasses more than is measured in these ways, and it is this "more" that a phenomenology of temporality seeks to describe.

Varying subjective responses to the same phenomenon tend to reflect what a person is thinking, feeling, and doing at any given moment in time. Evans-Pritchard observed that the Nuer pastoralists have no word in their language equivalent to our word time as something that can be squandered or saved. They do not experience their lives as a fight against time or as requiring coordination "with an abstract passage of time, because their points of reference are mainly the activities themselves." Evans-Pritchard speaks of ecological time to capture the difference between the monotony and routine of the dry season and the more intense activities ("frequent feasts, dances, and ceremonies") of the rains. In the modern West, waiting is sometimes associated with a sense of having no future, of having too much time on one's hands, while hyperactivity is often taken to be a sign of vitality, like the business man in Antoine Saint-Exupéry's *Little Prince* who is so busily engaged with "matters of consequence" (counting the stars) that he feels himself to be someone of

much greater importance than a curious child or star-gazing dreamer.

Just as our sense of duration is constantly varying in relation to our immediate purposes, so our experience and discourse switch constantly between past, present, and future referents. Although Kuranko stories are framed as taking place "once upon a time," skilled narrators make recurring allusions to real places in real time in order to give these fantastic tales contemporary relevance. And when recording Dreaming narratives during fieldwork among the Warlpiri, I was constantly struck by the way narrators spontaneously slipped from third to first person, as if these epochal stories made sense only when integrated with the narrator's autobiographical experiences of the sacred sites and ancestral journeys referenced in the myths. We make history in the same measure that it makes us, and we inevitably make or remake the past in the light of our present concerns.

The art historian and anthropologist Aby Warburg spoke of the afterlife (*nachleben*) of the past, by which he meant the uncanny perseverance of images, gestures, expressions, and ideas over time and across different societies. Thus the snake in Australian Aboriginal myth, Aztec cosmology, ancient Greek healing rites, Minoan art, and Pueblo dance suggest an enduring human preoccupation with rain and fertility, health and healing, and life after death. Although the exact threat to life's continuance and abundance may differ from time to time, place to place, or person to person, death is always a matter of time. And both death and time are inextricably connected with narrative and ritual, for in narrating or enacting events that occurred in the past we can transform the experience of passing into nothingness to an experience of passing into another state of being.

Nevertheless, it is important to stress that different "regimes of historicity" and diverse "tones of mental life" may be found in every person and every society, and that context is what determines which will be brought to the fore and which will be suppressed. For example, traditional Aboriginal conceptions of the Dreaming suggest a timeless and



circumambient condition in which ancestral, animal, and contemporary beings are continually morphing, one into the other. Yet archaeological evidence suggests that the Dreaming is not as ancient and unchanging as it appears to be, and contemporary conceptions of the Dreaming often reflect the legal demands of reclaiming "traditional land" under the terms of Australian Land Rights legislation, in which case the Dreaming tends to be conflated with past time and firstness in order to confirm prior ownership and belonging.

Because variations within a population or person are as great as variations between populations or persons, one cannot define either cultures or individuals in terms of a single prevailing modality of time consciousness despite the allure of such anthropological binaries as hot/cold, stationary/cumulative, and cyclical/linear.

In West Africa, divinatory and musical talents often come to a person in the course of a feverish episode of illness, usually during childhood. The jinn that enter a person's life in this manner can be summoned at any time thenceforth and bestow oracular power. But when a diviner explains how he acquired his skills, he may refer back to such childhood events while acknowledging that the jinn are timeless beings and that during a divinatory séance the distinction between what happened in the past and what is occurring now is experientially annulled. The same is true of ancestors. Summoned in a sacrifice or appearing in a dream, an ancestor is nominally and palpably present; at other times, the same ancestor is out of sight and out of mind. In other words, consciousness oscillates between quite different ways of apprehending one's being-in-time, and it would be foolish to reduce temporality in any one society or any one person to a single static mode of experience. Rather, we need to speak of polyontologies, of multiple regimes of historicity, across and within cultures as well as within the consciousness of a single person. As easily as he'd slip from acoustic to electric guitar, or guitar to harmonica, Bob Dylan would move from realist to surrealist imagery. So it was with time, in one song singing that his name "it is nothing, my age it means less," yet invoking history as exact testimony ("Oh the history books tell it / they tell it so well / the cavalries charged / the Indians fell"),

only to declare, "I was so much older then, I'm younger than that now"—which seems logically impossible yet phenomenologically makes perfect sense, at least to me.

Consider the place of dreams and dreaming in traditional Africa. During my fieldwork in northern Sierra Leone, villagers would sometimes recount vivid dreams in which a deceased family member appeared to them. This was not construed as remembering, or dismissed as a figment of the imagination, but taken as evidence of the existence of the dream figure elsewhere in present time. My friend Sewa Koroma explained this phenomenon *offo' koe* (lit. "dead thing" or the "action of the dead"), as follows: "The dead are always there, they see everything, they know exactly what is happening. The dead are your *sabu* ('cause')." Sewa prays to his ancestors (*bimba forenu*) every morning, asking them to "beg God" to open a path so he will be blessed, before greeting his late father. "My dad is still alive," Sewa explained to me. "It's just that I am not seeing him. I only see him in my dreams, like once a month or every two or three months I see him in a dream, but I know he's around me. I have a picture of him in my room. There's one thing he never wants any of his kids to do, and that is drink alcohol. When I go out and drink alcohol, as soon as I come home and step into my room and see that picture, I have to run out of the room again. I want to go and take the picture and put it away, like in my cupboard or box, but I know I have alcohol in my system so I cannot touch the picture. I have to wait for days, days, to take that picture and put it somewhere, so I can walk into my room and not see it straightaway. I know it's just a picture, but it's like it's him seeing me, what I'm doing, you know. You see, I've got all these beliefs. And when I stop drinking, pray to him, ask him for forgiveness, I know that's the only thing I'm doing that my dad's unhappy about."

It is not that Sewa's "belief" eclipses his knowledge of his father's death or lessens the grief he feels over his father's passing. Rather, the conviction that his relationship with his father remains vital to him (*ni le wola*) bolsters his spirits in a foreign environment where he is often racked with guilt at having left his natal village, abandoned his birthright, and sought a new life in England. While

it may be logically fallacious to infer that the force of an experience proves the existence of what is experienced, Sewa's insistence that his father is "still alive," like Christians who speak of God as a living presence in their lives, are choosing beliefs not on the basis of their rationality but on the basis of what the beliefs make possible in their lives—a sense of community or solidarity with others, a sense of confidence in themselves, and a sense of connectedness that survives death and separation.

Time may not be unreal, as John McTaggart famously declared, but it is so various that it is impossible to unequivocally define it. At any given moment one cannot be sure whether one is blindly recapitulating a world one had no hand in making or actually creating a world one can call one's own. Our lives waver continually between these two extremes, sometimes moved by fates and furies we can neither comprehend nor control, sometimes appearing to be within our power to determine.

Ethnography offers one of the most edifying ways in which one can stretch the limits of being born, raised, and educated in one culture, just as history can potentially transport one to another time. However, as Johannes Fabian points out, both history and anthropology have invoked time past as a stratagem for denying coevalness to our prehistorical forebears and our distant contemporaries alike. Insofar as their time and our time are allegedly not one, their humanity and ours are essentially different. Yet ethnography holds out the possibility of seeing through this illusion of essential difference and identifying what is common to all humans despite appearances to the contrary.

Whether fieldwork is carried out in a remote African village or close to home, through face-to-face encounters or archival research, through history or through autobiography, and whether one writes fiction or nonfiction, for academic consumption or the common reader, the promise is not only that we will know ourselves as if for the first time through the other but that we will have, in the process, made it more possible to live with one another in the same world.

The present work is at once ethnographic and biographical. Its focus is on life in a minor key—the small things, contingent events, everyday habits,

and mood shifts that sustain a sense of life endured rather than comprehended, lived rather than rendered explicable. My writing is realist in Saul Bellow's sense of the word ("Realism specializes in apparently unmediated experiences"). Bellow also speaks of realist writing as "victim literature" since it tends to depict people struggling against natural or social forces that they cannot fully explain or control.

Both "The Blind Impress" and "The Enigma of Anteriority" explore this Homeric theme, particularly as it finds expression in the fragment of Anaximander where it is suggested that things "suffer punishment and give satisfaction to one another for injustice according to the order of time." Herodotus shared the view that "history was essentially the interval, calculated in generations, between an injustice and its punishment or redress," and this notion is echoed in Walter Benjamin's messianic theory of history, with its emphasis on the infinite possibilities for redeeming the past in the here and now. The focus of "The Blind Impress" is the criminal career of John Joseph Pawelka, a self-styled "man against the world," whose name, in the annals of New Zealand crime, became practically synonymous with anarchy. The Pawelka manhunt was the most sensational news story of 1910, and the mystery of his escape from prison and subsequent disappearance has never been solved. In recounting the story of this disaffected son of Moravian migrants, I draw on historical and ethnographic research to describe Joe Pawelka's background, the radically different stories occasioned by his life, and the long-term repercussions of his criminal career for his family, both past and present. An autobiographical thread also runs through this book as I reflect on the relationship between Joe Pawelka's times and my own, his life and mine. While noting precise dates and times for events that occurred over one hundred years ago, I am most intrigued by the presentness of Pawelka's story—its relevance for understanding contemporary struggles to overcome stigma and marginalization and for what it reveals about the interplay of demotic stories, hidden histories, and media narratives in constructing allegories of national and moral identity.

"The Enigma of Anteriority" comprises a set of reflections on journeys up and down the two main islands of my natal New Zealand in 2008-2009. Revisiting old haunts and talking with old friends, I was inspired to ponder the hold our histories have over us and the limits of our freedom to renegotiate our relationship to the past. Blending ethnography, history, philosophy, and literature, "The Enigma of Anteriority" touches on the ways that personal stories are interwoven with social and historical events and shows how the ambiguity of our origins pertains equally to indigenous Maori invocations of *toi whenua* in making claims for recognition and social justice; the search by adopted children for their birth parents; the notion of childhood as "the formative years"; our current preoccupation with genealogical, geographical or genetic backgrounds; and the allure of myths and models of cause and effect.

Both these narratives pay homage to Svetlana Boym's argument against seeing exile and expatriation as all-or-nothing phenomena. Like the knight in a game of chess, we simultaneously move one square forward and one square off to the side. Despite the fact that we can only be physically present in one place at any one time, our consciousness is not so confined. Our minds wander constantly, and our dreams return us nightly to places we have left and people we once knew, so that we continue our lives in parallel to theirs even as we hive off in search of new horizons. We experience nostalgia for the past and the future. These stories, then, are testimonies to the "off-modern condition," its hidden histories, its oblique continuities, its multiple lives and multiples selves. As such, place and time become as arbitrary as the person who once thought of himself or herself as being indivisibly one. <>

[As Wide as the World Is Wise: Reinventing Philosophical Anthropology](#) by Michael Jackson [Columbia University Press, 9780231178280]

Philosophy and anthropology have long debated questions of difference: rationality versus irrationality, abstraction versus concreteness, modern versus premodern. What if these disciplines instead focused on the commonalities of human experience? Would this effort bring philosophers

and anthropologists closer together? Would it lead to greater insights across historical and cultural divides?

In [As Wide as the World Is Wise](#), Michael Jackson encourages philosophers and anthropologists to mine the space between localized and globalized perspectives, to resolve empirically the distinctions between the one and the many and between life and specific forms of life. His project balances abstract epistemological practice with immanent reflection, promoting a more situated, embodied, and sensuous approach to the world and its in-between spaces. Drawing on a lifetime of ethnographic fieldwork in West Africa and Aboriginal Australia, Jackson resets the language and logic of academic thought from the standpoint of other lifeworlds. He extends Kant's cosmopolitan ideal to include all human societies, achieving a radical break with elite ideas of the subjective and a more expansive conception of truth.

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At any given moment, our understanding of the other must be provisional, and this should, arguably, also be the case with our academic understandings of the ways that others understand one another. Rather than name or claim to know the other or create a static description that classifies or identifies a person, our ethical mandate is to hold the tension and accept the contradictions between alternating states of consciousness or modes of action, refusing to allow our anxieties over not comprehending or controlling the world to lead us into making generalizations that effectively bring the world to an end, much as psychological or

biological experiments on laboratory animals often lead to their deaths.

In repudiating philosophy's search for a transcendent grounding outside the chaos and confusion of our worldly existence and invoking ethnography as a method for involving us more deeply in the existential situations that condition the way we think, our emphasis effectively passes from a concern with legal codifications and moral ideals to a paranomic realm of ethical negotiation in which ideals are subverted, rules are bent, laws are broken, and *ex post facto* rationalizations have greater force than rational choice. By beginning and ending our essays in understanding in *medias res*, in the shifting sands of human relationships, we move away from abstract categories, whether of the person, the nation, or the tribe; we regard bounded entities—genders, classes, cultures, ethnicities, individuals, groups—as figments of the academic imagination rather than intrinsically real and reject systematicity as our intellectual goal and dialectic reason as our methodology. Relationship becomes key—relations that hold in tension both antagonistic and empathic potentialities, in which subjects become objects and vice versa as the dynamics of interaction change, and in which consciousness is never fixed in a single steady state but is always oscillating between a sense of identity and difference, patiency and agency, constancy and inconstancy, transcendence and immanence, free will and determinism, belief and experience, person and type, life and concept, being and nothingness.

### Between Poles

Although each chapter in this book evokes a binary, I resist ontologizing the terms, and seek, rather, to explore the modes of experience they signify, and the space between them, where they are, by turns, given definition and dissolved. My focus is, therefore, on the transitive, the contingent, the fugitive, the fragmentary, and the fleeting rather than substantives as such. I am fascinated by what Adorno calls "constellations," in which unflagging oscillations, lines of tension, temporary alignments, and indeterminate positions render questions of constancy and order absurd. Unlike Claude Lévi-Strauss, who demonstrated how binaries are

mediated, I share Adorno's view that resolution, synthesis, and mediation may be perfectly possible in the myths and models of reality that artists and intellectuals so brilliantly and diligently create, but lived reality rarely admits of this as a permanent possibility. This is a recurring leitmotif in the chapters that constitute this book, and it is first broached in chapter z. In preparing the ground for this perspective, however, chapter i addresses the ubiquity and scope of analogical reasoning, calling into question the ways we conventionally distinguish between modern and premodern thought and, by extension, distinguish between philosophy and common sense.

Chapter 2 considers the seemingly incompatible perspectives of philosophy and ethnography. While philosophy has traditionally presumed to make universal claims about the human condition, modern sociocultural anthropology has, for the most part, avoided such claims, preferring a vision of human diversity, ethnic distinctiveness, and moral relativism. The challenge for reinventing philosophical anthropology is working out how we can accommodate both these orientations, recognizing difference and sameness, dissonance and consonance. I evoke Arnold Schoenberg's atonal music, Adorno's negative dialectics, and John Keats's negative capability in taking up the question of how it is possible to do justice to both our empirical knowledge of the linguistic, cultural, and individual diversity of humankind and our quest to identify modes of thought, action, and being that are common to all humanity and, in many cases, are shared with other life-forms.

Chapter 3 explores the recurring problem in both philosophy and anthropology of doing justice to what William James called the "unsharable feeling which each of us has of the pinch of his individual destiny as he privately feels it rolling out on fortune's wheel." Is it possible to bracket out such a priori, abstract, and transpersonal terms as "the social," "the cultural," or "the customary" and avoid what A. N. Whitehead called the fallacy of misplaced concreteness—treating such analytical constructs as though they were lived realities and, as a corollary, treating lived realities as though they were a veil camouflaging unconscious forces

that required scientific expertise or intellectual genius to uncover and arcane coinages to describe?

Chapter 4 further explores the indeterminate relationship between being and thought. Can thought ever transcend the limits of a thinker's particular situation, let alone comprehend the lifeworlds of animals or the nature of the material universe? Is an abstract language possible, or is all language grounded in bodily, material, and social imagery and experience? Theodor Adorno speaks of the illusion "that the concept can transcend the concept" and "thus reach the nonconceptual." This remains "one of philosophy's inalienable features and part of the naïveté that ails it." Arguably, however, this naïveté is also a necessity, for what human being could live without the illusion that thought or language, number or knowledge, can enable him or her to encompass, demystify, and even master the world?

My focus in chapter 5 is on human-animal relationships, specifically the ways in which the life of one passes into the other and one makes the other thinkable. After elucidating how this interchange of being is understood in various societies, I propose an existential theory of ritual that explores the proposition that many myths and rites are informed by an urge to redistribute life itself, which always tends to be perceived as unequally distributed. Life-forms are constantly moving, both physically and imaginatively, from where life is scarce to where it is more bountiful, and these life-forms are also in constant competition with one another for the scarcest of all goods, life itself. These actual or virtual redistributions of life are typically justified by moral dogmas that determine which life-forms are more deserving of life (including eternal life) and which have less urgent claims on the right to live. For if life is to be taken from one person, creature, or place and incorporated into another, then some kind of moral rationale will be needed to justify why one being's right to life is greater than another's.

This theme is taken further in chapter 6, which explores the conditions under which certain beliefs and behaviors seem so incommensurable and inexplicable that we are led to conclude that those

who hold these beliefs or exhibit these behaviors are alien to us, even scarcely human. While philosophers have occasionally wrestled with the question as to whether beliefs and practices are intrinsically rational or magical, moral or immoral, ethnographers have sought to explicate the social and practical functions of worldviews. But is it possible to go beyond relativism and claim that there are epistemological, logical, psychological, or ethical criteria that hold true in all human societies and at every period of human history?

Chapter 7 considers the relationship of persons and types in both philosophical and anthropological discourse. My starting point is F. Scott Fitzgerald's observation in his story "The Rich Boy" that "there are no types, no plurals," only individuals, and his warning against the literary tendency to begin with individuals only to create types, for types offer us "nothing." Although Fitzgerald has in mind the stereotypes with which the poor depict the rich and the illusions the rich have about themselves, his comments apply equally to the glib contrasts we draw between men and women, good and evil, old and young, and modern and premodern. Not only do we tend to believe that these category distinctions reflect empirical reality, but we become convinced that one category is superior to the other and that we who deploy these antinomies with greatest aplomb are more rational and clear-sighted than those who occupy the inferior positions in our equations.

Chapter 8 is a critique of the notion of agency. Rather than make a philosophical case for either agency or patiency, I consider two modes of thinking. The first emphasizes an active, disciplined, focused application of thought to being; the second stresses a more passive, attentive, open-minded approach in which the thinker simply registers or channels thoughts that appear to come from elsewhere. In critiquing any kind of ontologizing of cultural representations of self and other and sweeping generalizations concerning intrinsic cognitive or epistemological differences between primitive irrationality and modern rationality, "them" and "us," I focus not on fixed mind-sets or mentalities but on the existential conditions under which thinking is experienced either as a process that is undertaken consciously and intentionally or

as a process that simply happens to people without their choosing.

Chapter 9 explores the theme of fatality and freedom as a fact of experience—as something to be lived through rather than simply thought through. My existential bias implies that the compatibilist resolution of the so-called free-will problem in philosophy perpetuates the view that this problem is a logical one that can be resolved by some kind of intellectual legerdemain when in fact it must be treated as a recurring and often unresolvable existential issue.

The leitmotif of chapter 10 is alienation. Though Marx broached this subject in his critique of the capitalist mode of production—which alienates the worker from the fruits of his labor and undermines his capacity to determine his own destiny—and French existentialism made fashionable cognate ideas of aloneness and estrangement in mass society, my focus is the imperfect fit between our lived experience and the ways we conceptualize, narrate, and represent it. Building on Adorno's negative dialectics, Derrida's method of deconstruction, and James's radical empiricism, I explore this aporia between words and worlds, nomos and nature, through the vernacular medium of Kuranko storytelling. Storytelling, I argue, may be conceptualized as an alternative sovereignty, a negotiated form of ethical and social life that lies at the margins of the state—a space outside of domestication.

My concluding chapter returns to the theme with which this book begins—the oscillation between intimacy and estrangement, participation and observation, immanence and transcendence, and the contrary roles that anthropology and philosophy have traditionally played in academic discourse. Life involves a perpetual oscillation between engaging with the world and seeking distance, respite, or release from it. What we call philosophy is only one of many adaptive strategies that human beings have devised for working out a modus vivendi with other human beings and with the extra-human world that envelops them. As such, ideas emerge, spread, metamorphose, mutate, and die out in the same way that other traits do, and all are as potentially vital to our continuing existence

as the tools we use, the genes we carry, the families we create, the homes we build, the clothes we wear, the land we farm, and the minerals we mine. <>

[The Work of Art: Rethinking the Elementary Forms of Religious Life](#) by Michael Jackson [Columbia University Press, 9780231178181]

How are we to think of works of art? Rather than treat art as an expression of individual genius, market forces, or aesthetic principles, Michael Jackson focuses on how art effects transformations in our lives. Art opens up transitional, ritual, or utopian spaces that enable us to reconcile inward imperatives and outward constraints, thereby making our lives more manageable and meaningful. Art allows us to strike a balance between being actors and being acted upon.

Drawing on his ethnographic fieldwork in Aboriginal Australia and West Africa, as well as insights from psychoanalysis, religious studies, literature, and the philosophy of art, Jackson deploys an extraordinary range of references—from Bruegel to Beuys, Paleolithic art to performance art, Michelangelo to Munch—to explore the symbolic labor whereby human beings make themselves, both individually and socially, out of the environmental, biographical, and physical materials that affect them: a process that connects art with gestation, storytelling, and dreaming and illuminates the elementary forms of religious life.

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Painting runs in my family, but not religion. My mother's maternal uncle, Walter Tempest, was a late nineteenth-century watercolorist and member of the British Royal Academy, and my mother was an acclaimed painter of abstract landscapes. In my early twenties I vacillated between painting and writing before deciding on anthropology as my vocation. In recent years my daughters have excelled in the arts I chose not to pursue. Heidi Jackson exhibits regularly in Sydney and teaches art for a living, while Freya Jackson, now studying art in college, already promises to follow in her sister's and grandmother's footsteps. Where some people bear witness to a religious tradition, sustained over many generations, I marvel at the artistic trait that has given my family a very present help in times of trouble. My mother's accidented landscapes often appear to be outward expressions of her inward struggle with the pain of rheumatoid arthritis.<sup>1</sup> The death of Heidi's mother when she was thirteen, and her attenuated ties with her homeland following our decision to embark on a new life in Australia, undoubtedly found expression in Heidi's New Zealand landscapes. And Freya frequently turned to painting and drawing when overwhelmed by the confusions of her adolescent years.

In writing about art, I have drawn inspiration from my family history as well as from my ethnographic fieldwork in West Africa and Central Australia, focusing not on art as an expression of individual genius or as an aesthetic, but rather on the work of art, where work is to be read as a verb rather than a noun and understood as a techné for making one's life more individually and socially viable.<sup>2</sup> Art opens up an artificial—one might say a ritual or utopian—space for trying to get around or beyond the mundane difficulties that beset us and the misfortunes that befall us.<sup>3</sup> As John Dewey put it, "Art is thus prefigured in the very process of living." Or, in the words of Jim Carrey, "Painting is a way I free myself from concern ... putting something out there rather than having it in here."

Crucial to this point of view is the pragmatist assumption that art (ars) and techné are intimately linked, and that the work of art is a matter of making, acting, and doing before it is a form of knowledge, an object of contemplation, or a thing of beauty.<sup>4</sup> As William James noted, "what really exists is not things made but things in the making." As such, art and craft must be placed on a par. The creation of an efficient tool may contribute as much to our well-being as the creation of a religious icon or statue, a prayer wheel, a mask, or a musical instrument. Nor is the work of art simply a way of expressing inner experience; rather, it is a way of processing experience and working it through; not necessarily a means of changing the world, but an oblique way of changing our perception of the world, particularly when it becomes too much for us to manage by direct or mundane means. It is because the work of art makes our lives more viable that art or craft objects are often regarded as participating in our lives as social beings, though the contrary is also the case, since the human body is commonly likened to a container such as a house, a suit of clothing, a cooking pot, a drinking vessel, that can be opened or closed, picked up or discarded, go to rack and ruin or be repaired.

Elements of these metonyms and metaphors find expression in Alfred Gell's view that "art objects are the equivalent of persons, or more precisely, social agents" that mediate agonistic exchanges and manipulate social relations within "a system of action, intended to change the world rather than

encode symbolic propositions about it "10 But while I share Gell's fascination with how art objects transform experience—bedazzling, intimidating, or mystifying us—my focus is less on outward effects than on the dynamic interplay of subjective and objective dimensions of reality. Art emerges in the space between oneself, standing apart from others (eigenwelt), and oneself as a participant in a world shared with many others (mitwelt).

Philip Bromberg's insights into dissociation are relevant here. Repudiating the common assumption that dissociation is necessarily a sign of mental disorder, Bromberg emphasizes the creative value of dissociation in managing unbearable experiences by shifting one's focus to something outside oneself, something that can be regarded as objective rather than subjective, not-me rather than me. Though there is a danger that this defensive strategy can estrange us from the very reality we are struggling to come to grips with, it provides the possibility of seeing one's own world from the inside out, not from within but from somewhere other or elsewhere, thereby offering one some purchase on experiences that seemed both unthinkable and unendurable.

This risk that we may lose our reason in the process of recovering our footing reminds us that the human condition is inescapably liminal. In D. W. Winnicott's terms, art and religion are "transitional phenomenon," emerging in the space between self and other and constituting a "third part of the life of a human being, a part that we cannot ignore ... an intermediate area of experiencing, to which inner reality and external life both contribute. It is an area that is not challenged, because no claim is made on its behalf except that it shall exist as a resting-place for the individual engaged in the perpetual human task of keeping inner and outer reality separate but interrelated."

Rather than identify religion with belief and liturgy, I prefer to focus on the existential situations in which divinities and spiritual entities as well as ideas about ultimate reality, fate, and natural justice come into play as potential means whereby human beings gain some purchase on shattering experiences and regain some measure of comprehension and control over their lives. Limit

experiences, however, do not necessarily bring us to religion, as my own family history makes clear. Nor do post-Enlightenment notions of religion necessarily illuminate the African and Aboriginal lifeworlds I have described in my ethnographies. Nor are "spiritual" resources the only resources available to us in crisis, despite our tendency to use a quasi-theological language in recounting experiences that confounded us. For these reasons, many of the forms of life we refer to as "cultural"—including religion, art, ritual, ideology, and belief—may be construed as ways of circumventing and even subverting the world as we find it, ways of affirming "another nature," ways of living by other means. As Louise Bourgeois put it, "Art comes from life.... Art is not about art. Art is about life."

To explore this point of view, I have divided this book into three parts. Part i introduces my ethnographic and intersubjective methodology and adduces perspicacious examples to illustrate my key themes: the dialectic of inner and outer; the shape-shifting character of consciousness; the relation of art, ritual, storytelling, and religion; and the symbolic links between natality and creativity. Part 2 focuses on several antipodean artists whose work has engaged my interest for many years, while part 3 explores the works and lives of several European and American painters, performance artists, photographers, sculptors, and graphic artists whose work speaks just as compellingly to my central themes. <>

[Handbook of Political Anthropology](#) edited by Harald Wydra and Bjorn Thomassen [Elgar Handbooks in Political Science, Edward Elgar Publishing, 9781783479009]

This ground-breaking collection introduces readers to the fascinating research field of political anthropology. The chapters engage in major theoretical and methodological debates to provide interpretive frames, analytical tools and ethnographic illustrations for culturally based interpretations of political phenomena, revealing the intersection between anthropology, culture, politics and international relations.

Theoretical tools such as liminality, sacrifice, mimesis, ethics, trickster and interpretation of



meaning provide understanding of key challenges in a globalised world. These include war zones, revolutions, migration, securitization, territorial borders, climate change and ethno-religious violence. The contributing authors focus on the ethnographies of power, political culture and forms of cultural intimacy in informal networks. Using self-critical and reflexive approaches, they show that disciplinary boundaries have been reshaped by changing meanings of power, including reconfigurations of state and sovereignty. With reflections on the potential and limits of political anthropology, this Handbook explores the art of understanding human interaction within political frameworks in a globalising world.

Offering a unique reference resource in the area with exceptional cross-disciplinary research, this Handbook will suit political, social and cultural anthropologists as well as scholars in comparative political analysis and social theory. Students and researchers of politics, anthropology and international relations will also benefit from the key methodological tools explaining the challenges and consequences of globalisation.

Contributors include: S. Coleman, J.-P. Daloz, G. de Anna, H. Donnan, T.H. Eriksen, R. Farneti, M. Fog Olwig, J. Gledhill, J. Gould, S. Haugbølle, A. Horvath, C. Illies, J. Kubik, N. Long, M. Mälksoo, K. Martin, M. Moodie, M. Nuijten, P. Rabinow, M. Rasaratnam, P. Raman, E. Ranta, A. Sanchez, D. Sausdal, A. Stavrianakis, F. Stepputat, A. Szokolczai, B. Thomassen, H. Vigh, H. Wydra.

#### Editorial Appraisal:

[Handbook of Political Anthropology](#) presents a useful balance between an introductory survey of the field that is accessible to any educated enquirer and at the same time provides an expert useful accounts of new theoretical and research strategies. Overall the work is engagingly written, and my only caveats are a need for greater focus upon metanarratives, and the academic institutional constraints upon research paradigms and well as the need to create bridges to practical engagements. In other words, is this knowledge for whom and for what end? How is the political situated with actors and institutions?

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### The promise of political anthropology by Harald Wydra and Bjorn Thomassen

Excerpt: This handbook introduces readers to the field of political anthropology. It engages major debates and the shifting borders of a moving field of enquiry at the intersection of anthropology, politics, philosophy and international relations. The aim is not only to provide an overview of the current debates around political anthropology today, but also to flesh out the potential and the limits of the approaches, methodologies and explanatory frames developed by scholars working within political anthropology. Political anthropology is not an easily definable subject area or sub-discipline. The variety of approaches one can connect to the term makes it virtually impossible to interrogate the what, how, why and where of current political anthropology: one is immediately thrown into the daunting task of reviewing not only the entire discipline of anthropology but also the many interfaces between anthropology and the social and political sciences in a world of blurry boundaries. In a sense, it may appear futile writing a handbook on a field whose contours seem difficult, if not impossible, to delineate. And yet it is worth a try.

It is worth a try exactly because we find ourselves in a moment where there is a growing awareness

of the need to retrieve older insights and combine them with newer developments. Social science, after all, should be cumulative. Contemporary challenges in an ever-shifting world should not necessarily result in a giving up on disciplinary traditions. Indeed, to speak with Marcel Mauss, the "political" cannot be so neatly separated, as the political sphere intersects with social, economic, legal, and cultural patterns and practices, forming a "total social fact". This might be a compelling reason for a return to classical insights, exactly due to problems of the contemporary political scene, whose underlying challenges and dangers may not always be so radically new after all. Surely, the idea of politics as a total social fact would seem to fit better in societies with low degrees of institutional differentiation. However, anthropologists have successfully argued that also in modern states a great deal of politics takes place via informal networks and informal political action, underpinning or overlapping with the more objectifiable institutional level that political scientists tend to concentrate on. Here, anthropology still offers a supplement to, and an enriching of, the wider social and political sciences.

Political anthropology has been a powerful challenge to conventional wisdom in political science. It has called into question the validity of rationalist, structuralist or normative explanations of states and relations between states. Political anthropology has framed new visions of contemporary interpretive political analysis. This occurred, on the one hand, by adopting analytical tools from germane disciplines and, on the other hand, by providing analytical tools to germane disciplines as well. The move from structuralism and functionalism to process approaches, for instance, would be met by new theoretical frameworks inspired by post-structuralism and post-modernism. Post-structuralism has facilitated a decisive turn towards acknowledging the agency of the "other". Later on, post-modern approaches claimed to ground structures of power in discourse and knowledge. Driven not only by an emancipatory thrust of post-structuralism and post-colonialism but also by variants of post-Marxism, the "old" was quickly becoming synonymous with dispensable.

Writing about culture was in itself permeated by power inherent in knowledge production.

The renaissance of process approaches, the increasing focus on identity-politics, or the theorization of models of development in a post-colonial world all suggest that political anthropology has come to acknowledge multiple forms of modernity. In a similar vein, a joint concern for an inquiry at the frontiers of anthropology and political theory has emerged. This tradition of scholarship draws connections between politics as conventionally understood (practices that engage with the distributive functions of the state) and the subjective and affective dimensions of political struggle and commitments. Scholars increasingly recognize that any engagement with contemporary politics requires a simultaneous analysis of modes of action and reflection that cannot be easily understood within a language of "rationality" and its alleged opposite.

By insisting on the term "political anthropology", therefore, we do not propose a call to arms around either new or old paradigms. Political anthropology deals with central themes of institutionalized domination, political hierarchies, and distributional conflicts within and amongst states by focusing on informal networks, interpretations of meaning, and non-rational forms of action, and by emphasizing self-critical and reflexive approaches. We certainly do not wish to suggest that any attempt to identify territorially or demarcate substantively what the political is or should be about is either possible or desirable. Ever since its beginnings as a sub-discipline of anthropology, political anthropology has been through several paradigm shifts. In 2003, Ted C. Lewellen could claim that "political anthropology is already a different discipline than it was only a decade ago and continues to change rapidly". The sources of such rapid changes are, partly at least, linked to the changing life-worlds produced by economic, social, and political transformations. Such transformations reshaped not only classical boundaries of the state, conceptions of sovereignty, or political hierarchies, but also disciplinary boundaries of political anthropology. Globalization, writ large, has been a powerful force that would open established boundaries,

break up hierarchies, and produce new centres of political action. The relational fields that link global discourses and mobile logics of rule to local knowledge have had, for instance, consequences for the agency of the weak and disempowered as well as the politics of movement, be it as flows of capital, information, or population.

In this world of rapid change it is important to remind ourselves that political anthropology is not a new term. The history and meanings the term carries require consideration. Rather than replacing earlier overviews of political anthropology, this handbook builds on the scholarship traditions these works have outlined and also served to shape. To a certain extent anthropology was of course always about politics. The very first anthropologists — from Henry Maine, Lewis Henry Morgan, and Edward Tylor — had a direct or indirect relationship to law (and many, like Morgan and John McLennan, were lawyers). In this sense, anthropology was critically rooted in legal discourse to much the same extent as sociology, whose founding fathers also held law degrees. The 19th-century discussion over the "original society" being male or female was couched in legal terms, as clearly reflected in Johann Jakob Bachofen's *Das Mutterrecht* (1861).

The interest of early political anthropology was inclined towards establishing a typology of political forms, ranging from their simplest to their most complex forms. Early evolutionism sought to establish the evolutionary ladder by which societies had developed, from bands to tribes toward more complex political arrangements in chiefdoms and finally states. Although these attempts often failed, and although the underlying epistemology of early evolutionism has rightly been deconstructed as flawed, the question concerning succession and change of political forms has never been entirely abandoned; nor should it. The links between cultural/social anthropology and archaeology or paleoanthropology and a continued interest in bio-cultural evolution have been more salient in American compared to European anthropology; but there are signs that such concerns are on their way back.

Bronislaw Malinowski and Franz Boas, who established the fieldwork tradition, are not always considered founding figures in our standard genealogies of political anthropology. Yet both of them paid great attention to political organization in their ethnographies, as did practically all their students. In *Crime and Custom in Savage Society*, Malinowski (1926) continued the legal approach, analysing law, order, crime, and punishment with the help of more solid ethnographic data. Both Boas and Malinowski engaged in political themes and discussions outside their primary ethnographic areas of research. Boas used very consciously a comparative anthropological perspective to reflect on political questions like race, nationalism, eugenics and criminology in the West, as in his *Anthropology and Modern Life* (1928). Paul Radin, one of Boas's "difficult" students, also ventured into the political domain via his interest in religion and mythology, and developed path-breaking insights into the ways of the "trickster" figure that have helped political scientists like Agnes Horvath capture aspects of power and communication in the 20th century. In many ways, scholars like Radin were already engaged in a reflexive political anthropology, solidly anchored in ethnography. In 1927 Robert Lowie had published *The Origin of the State* (1927), trying to liberate the "anthropology of the state" from unilinear, speculative evolutionism. These are some reasons why Georges Balandier (in his much-quoted 1967 book on political anthropology) claimed that the foundations of political anthropology were laid in the 1920s. This claim can be further substantiated by referring to the work of Marcel Mauss, who in the interwar period did in fact seek to establish new foundations for anthropology and sociology.

In Britain, Alfred R. Radcliffe-Brown also developed an approach to structural functionalism in the pre-war period. His analysis was clearly directed towards political organization, as single institutions were always analysed against the larger social order that they were seen to uphold. This was to become the theoretical background to British political anthropology as it developed in the post-war period. Political anthropology indeed became a more recognizable and well-defined branch of anthropology in the 1940s and 1950s,

as it became a main focus of the British functionalist schools, heavily inspired by Radcliffe-Brown, and openly reacting against evolutionism and historicism. The approach was empirical, with the main bulk of work carried out in colonial Africa. The British structural-functionalist school was institutionalized with *African Political*

*Systems*, edited by Meyer Fortes and E.E. Evans-Pritchard (1940). A similar degree of institutionalization of a distinctive political anthropology never took place in post-war America, partly due to the Parsonian (di)vision of the sciences, which — somewhat artificially we would argue — relegated anthropology to the sphere of culture and symbolism. The very strong stress on social equilibrium, which was so evident in Evans-Pritchard's approach, was quickly questioned in a series of works that focused more on conflict and change (Leach, 1954). These works attempted to show how individuals acted within political structures, and that changes took place due to both internal and external pressures. Contradictions and conflict came to the fore. A special version of conflict-oriented political anthropology was developed in the so-called Manchester School, started by Max Gluckman (1963). Gluckman focused on social process and an analysis of structures and systems based on their relative stability. In his view, conflict maintained the stability of political systems through the establishment and re-establishment of crosscutting ties among social actors. Gluckman even suggested that a certain degree of conflict was necessary to uphold society, and that conflict was constitutive of social and political order.

From the 1960s a "process approach" developed, stressing the role of agents in situations where the colonial system was being dismantled. The focus on conflict and social reproduction was carried over into Marxist approaches that became particularly dominant in the 1960s and 1970s. It is important to stress that this was far from a result of any sudden discovery. From the 1940s and 1950s onwards anthropologists studying peasant societies in Latin America and Asia had increasingly started to incorporate their local setting (the village) into its larger context, as in Robert Redfield's famous distinction between "small" and "big" traditions,

developed in the 1930s (Redfield, 1941). Already in the 1930s however, scholars such as Arthur Hocart had used fieldwork in Fiji and in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) to propose a novel theory of the origin of government. For specific reasons of institutional affiliation and scholarly fashion — with the dominant functionalism of his times — his major work, *Kings and Councillors*, has remained little known; but it uses ethnographic material from unfamiliar places to argue that government, with its authority and hierarchy, had ritual origins, as the predominant impulse to secure life would lead to a systematic evolution of society from segmentary to centralized, from precedence to authority, from complementarity to hierarchy. [A segmentary lineage society has equivalent parts ("segments") held together by shared values. A segmentary lineage society is a type of tribal society.]

It would take some decades before in the 1960s and 1970s one could witness the emergence of Europe as a region of anthropological investigation. This turn toward the study of complex modern societies made anthropology inherently more political. It was no longer possible to carry out fieldwork in, say, Spain, Greece, Italy, Mexico, Algeria, or India without taking into account the ways in which all aspects of local society were tied to states and markets. Early ethnographies in Europe had sometimes done just that; they had carried out fieldwork in villages of Southern Europe as if they were isolated "islands". However, from the 1970s onwards such approaches were openly criticized: anthropologists had "tribalized Europe" and if they wanted to produce relevant ethnography they could no longer afford to do so.

Contrary to what is often heard from colleagues in the political and social sciences, anthropologists have for more than half a century been careful to link their extremely local micro-settings to wider social, economic, and political structures. Meanings of concepts such as state, representation, or democracy are very different according to the place they originate in and where they are practised. In a broader vein this relates to the symbolic and ritualistic dimension of politics, for long a core theme in political anthropology. This, of course, has never meant to abandon an ethnographic focus on very local phenomena, the

care for ethnographic detail. From the 1980s an increasing focus on ethnicity and nationalism and ethnic—national conflict developed. "Identity" and "identity politics" became defining themes of the discipline, partly (and perhaps problematically) replacing earlier the focus on kinship and social organization.

Initially, therefore, the term "political anthropology" was one of those subdisciplinary categories produced by post-war anthropology, and accordingly inspired by the major post-war "isms": functionalism, structuralism and Marxism. The demise of these narratives led to the momentary retreat of "political anthropology" in the early 1980s. And yet, from exactly the same moment, anthropology experienced a return to politics via post-structuralism. The shift in the social and political sciences toward an understanding of power outside and beyond state and sovereignty, replaced by a focus on representation and symbolic power, prepared the way for what may even be recognized as an "anthropological turn" in politics. Explanatory frameworks for phenomena of institutionalized domination have increasingly moved beyond state and sovereignty. This "turn" has emphasized representations, imaginaries, and symbolic power. Developments such as post-colonialism, post-communism, multiculturalism, or migration, and new forms of mobility affected political arrangements practically everywhere.

Post-war political anthropologists had converged around a series of key questions that guided empirical analysis and gave orientation to theoretical debates. Very broadly, these debates were oriented towards comparative studies of forms of political organization, types of political leadership, and ways of dealing with conflict and cooperation in the absence of formal institutions. Such convergence is harder to spot today. Not so many people today use the category "political anthropology" to define one's main area of interest, while practically everyone would claim, and perhaps rightly so, to be engaged in the anthropology of the "political". This trend has arguably only been reinforced with the so-called "ontological turn" in anthropology or the focus on ethnographies of "forms of life" in states of emergency.

Many of the themes mentioned above figure prominently in this volume. In order not only to reflect the historical depth of classical ideas and traditions but also to do justice to the different perspectives by which scholars aim to understand the political world, this handbook is thematically organized in four sections. Whilst the first section reconsiders the use of alternative paradigms regarding the human condition in understanding politics, the second presents anthropological concepts and approaches that appear to be particularly adequate to understand the analysis of political processes today. The third section deals with ethnographies of the political, and the fourth engages with political anthropology in global processes.

Part I aims to express not only the malleability and diversity of the field but also its ever-growing potential to explain and understand people's relations with power in a changing world. Old and new paradigms are understood here not as well-established bodies of knowledge. Rather, the purpose is to trace back some of the most important conceptual transitions and changing relationships between human practices and their collective arrangements. Political anthropology rests on the continued (or renewed) application of classical concepts, precisely because of their long-standing nature and "untimeliness". An approach that is "untimely" — and outside mainstream political anthropology — gives the possibility of detachment and space for critical reflection, which are fundamental to diagnosing political predicaments. In our judgement a series of classical anthropological concepts — precisely because of their untimeliness — are particularly adequate to grasp the critical conditions of the contemporary. Political anthropology developed paradigms in relation to the background conditions of authors and their problems. Social and political life in primitive communities would be explained with a view to expectations in aggregated systems in modern states. Yet, if contemporary processes are studied, the analytical aim has to preserve a certain critical distance. This critical distance is provided by concepts that hark back to the origins of the discipline. In this sense, continuities appear within contemporary process, which apparently are

all about the present. Traditional concepts have gained enormous power in grasping central logics and conundrums in current globalizing politics. Given that they express ideas of continuity or "permanence" in understanding human conditions of collective self-organization and collective identity, it is these anthropological tools that can provide powerful explanations of contemporary puzzles.

Arpad Szakolczai's opening chapter, "Recovering the Classical Foundations of Political Anthropology", assigns a foundational role to political anthropology for understanding our contemporary predicament. The chapter delivers two key messages. First, it argues that political anthropology must identify the problems of the specifically "humanist" vision of the modern world, including the all-encompassing emancipation and empowerment that entailed profound uprootedness and disempowerment of many living beings on the planet. Second, by drawing on a contemporary reading of the work of Plato and some of its most recent interpreters such as Voegelin, Jan Patočka and Michel Foucault who took up the concern or care for the meaningful order of the soul or the self, Szakolczai claims that power ultimately lies with the concrete human person, and not outside of it.

Roberto Farneti enquires whether there is a "mimetic turn in the social sciences". Working on the basis of the mimetic hypothesis as developed by cultural anthropologist René Girard, this chapter identifies human beings as imitative and conflictual. Political anthropology based on a mimetic perspective suggests that human sociability is based on social bonds that are not hypothetical but real, although such reality is often unconscious, affective and not rational. This chapter reframes four types of canonical problems in the social sciences. First, it argues for a shift in ontological assumptions from individuals and groups towards mimetic doubles. Second, the rationale of politics is not so much based on struggle for power but on sacrifice as a means of protection. Third, mimetic theory undermines the canon of the repertory of politics, which is based on the bedrock of the individuationist model. Fourth, in terms of interdisciplinarity, mimetic theory proposes an inclusive perspective relating to anthropologically

grounded origins of social bonds and political order.

Agnes Horvath's chapter, "Charisma/Trickster: On the Twofold Nature of Power", distinguishes two forms of power. Taking a critical look at Weberian or Foucauldian conceptions of power — which either describe institutionalized domination or omnipresent and all-pervasive metapower — Horvath distinguishes "first" from "second" power. Whilst second power has become dominant in modernity, first power is about the centrality of power inside every human being. This chapter therefore shifts attention from the focus on external outside forces of power, which are a product of necessity or automatic diffusion, towards a focus on power as relying on inner, personal coherence, rooted in a rich and full personality. The chapter's ultimate claim is that power is a result of the perfect freedom of will, which is capable of giving without the need for receiving back. The possession of power centres on not only keeping its borders intact but also resisting every external intrusion and maintaining its own form.

In their chapter "Contemporary Political Stakes: After-Lives of the Modern", Paul Rabinow and Anthony Stavrianakis claim the need for a contemporary ethos, which helps us respond to a confusing and inchoate present. With the decline of metanarratives and post-modernism, the authors identify the contemporary ethos in a new, "third" movement of Kant's original question "What is Enlightenment?" We must still "dare to think", but need to go beyond Kant's pact with the reigning powers, with its separation of spheres of the public and the private, or Foucault's *History of the Present*, designed to undermine the seeming solidity of prior formations. In the current political conjuncture, "to dare to know" can be identified in the need for different publics to emerge. Such publics can only emerge in relation to specific problems, which in turn require inquiry and concept work. Political anthropology must therefore proceed by inquiry and concept work in order to conceive of the relation between anthropology and the political stakes of practices.

In their chapter — "Political Anthropology: Biology, Culture, and Ethics" — Gabriele de Anna and

Christian Illies distinguish two anthropological sources of human action and normativity: whilst the "classical" paradigm claimed teleological, value-centred visions of the human, the "modern" anthropological paradigm finds support in evolutionary theory and the reductionist naturalism of Scientific Darwinism. The authors argue that evolutionary theory is not bound to an evolutionary outlook, but can actually integrate elements of normativity typical of the classical paradigm. Although evolutionary theory lacks sources of normativity, it is nevertheless compatible with a teleological interpretation of the biosphere and humans. If our evolved cognitive abilities — as claimed by the modern paradigm — allow us freedom to choose, one potentiality is to choose the classical paradigm as a normative ideal. Our evolved nature can help us see that our potentialities can be realized in a good way, and that the classical paradigm is a suitable alternative to deal with the problems of the modern world that we face as individuals and as societies.

Michael Herzfeld concludes Part I with "Cultural Intimacy and the Politics of Civility", which reflects on performative and affective intricacies of political style in states and societies that cannot really conform to the formal standards required by their institutions, norms, and laws. This chapter covers one of the least obvious but also most promising areas of political anthropology, which is the informal ways by which social actors defend the inner spaces of institutional life. An anthropology of politics must therefore recognize that collusion depends heavily on the intimate winks and nods that signal shared recognition of long familiar but well-concealed possibilities for what may ultimately prove to be transformative action. Using concepts such as "phatic communion" or cultural intimacy in a fruitful dialogue with several different cultural spheres — such as Thailand, Italy, Greece, and the US — it teases out different implications of politics of civility and its variants.

Part II is organized around the idea that political anthropology must play a prominent part in understanding contemporary political processes precisely because the changing conditions of the human potential to create have made many of the long-standing explanatory patterns of political

science inadequate or obsolete. Whilst for long periods political anthropology was concerned primarily with politics in stateless societies, ever since the 1960s anthropologists increasingly started to study more "complex" social settings in which the presence of states, bureaucracies and markets became more visible in ethnographic accounts. As indicated above, the turn towards complex or more stratified societies also signified that political themes were increasingly taken up as the main focus of study, and at two main levels. First of all, anthropologists continued to study political organization and political phenomena that lay outside the state-regulated sphere (as in patron—client relations or tribal political organization). Second, they started to develop a more explicit disciplinary concern with states and their institutions and, in particular, with the relationship between formal and informal political institutions. An anthropology of the state unfolded, and it is a most thriving field today. Whilst Clifford Geertz's 1980 work on the Bali state was an early, famous example, there is today a rich canon of anthropological studies of the state and of the frontiers and borders that surround them. These are themes that figure prominently also in this section.

Paul Dumouchel's chapter, "Politics and the Permanence of the Sacred", argues that the crucial distinction between "good" and "bad" violence in legitimate states is not based on meaning or fear, but on the role of the sacred in the management of violence. The irruption of religious violence in politics is not so much a return to a form of pre-secular forms of the sacred, but rather indicates that the self-organizing mechanism of violence that gave rise to the sacred has become ineffective. In the individualist modern world violence has increasingly lost its capacity to give rise to new institutions, to new religions or new forms of social organization. The progressive disappearance of the sacred in its protective function is not only an institutional challenge but also requires re-thinking the relations between citizens, states and ethics in an increasingly borderless world.

In their chapter, "Anthropology and the Enigma of the State", Finn Stepputat and Monique Nuijten provide an inventory of "the anthropology of the state", starting from the insight that the

anthropology of the state drew considerably more on scholars of political science, political philosophy and sociology than on political anthropology. The "theoretical genealogies" of the field challenged the taken-for-grantedness of the state as a "distinct, fixed and unitary entity" operating outside and above society. The chapter concludes that the state as an idea of transcendental political authority and a centralizing organizational practice is not withering away, as observers in the 1990s suggested, but rather is transforming. The strongest contribution of political anthropology in grasping the manifold transformative processes is to combine rich ethnographic studies of this blurriness and the fragmentation of states with analyses of underlying rationales.

In her chapter, "Liminality and the Politics of the Transitional", Maria Mälksoo addresses political transitions in a global world through the lens of the concept of liminality. Liminality refers to the middle stage and consequent positioning of subjects in transition between socially established categories. Comparative Politics and International Relations (IR) tend to focus on political transformations through an institutionalist lens. They thus lack the depth of the internal meanings of transition as experienced by the communities and people in question. Taking a critical stance on the narrow transition paradigm in the study of international politics, the optic of liminality helps reorient the thinking of politics in the moment of transition via two examples, that is, transitional justice and the transformation of contemporary warfare. Russia's idiosyncratic policies of reckoning with the violent legacies of its predecessor, the USSR, and its ongoing engagement in the war in Ukraine serve as illustrations of both lines of inquiry pursued here.

In his chapter, "The anthropology of Political Revolutions", Bjorn Thomassen outlines a series of anthropologically inspired contributions to the study of revolutions. Most scholarship on political revolutions has come from sociology, political science and history. However, in recent years, and closely related to the Arab Spring and the worldwide political upheavals after 2011, a growing number of scholars have provided ethnographic accounts of revolutionary settings. At the level of theory, the chapter indicates some



possible anthropological contributions towards the study of revolutions and revolutionary action. It invites an understanding of revolutions as ritual processes, highlighting transformative characteristics that closely resemble liminal in-between periods and spaces known from rites of passage. The overall point stressed in the chapter is that anthropologists have contributed not only with ethnographic accounts of revolutions as lived through by social actors, but also with analytical approaches that can inspire and supplement existing theoretical approaches to political revolutions.

In "Comparative Political Analysis and the Interpretation of Meaning", Jean-Pascal Daloz engages the cultural realm of meaning with the study of comparative politics. Taking the departure from a criticism of several schools of thought in comparative politics within both the universalist and relativist paradigms, the chapter introduces an inductive methodology based on the thick description of locally meaningful codes within their historical and socio-cultural context. It argues that the interpretation of meaning constitutes a new form of scientific reasoning likely to offer comparative insights and not, as is frequently believed, simply add contextual knowledge. Drawing on different interpretations of meanings of political representation in Scandinavia, Nigeria and France, this chapter shows how representation is lived, performed, and understood within culturally rich local contexts.

Sune Haugbolle's chapter on anthropology and political ideology advocates the recognition by political anthropology of the need to match analytically and conceptually the recent renaissance of ideology in the political world. The "webs of significance" which connect human beings form political subjectivities in systemic ways.

Political anthropology should shed light on ideologies as cognitive structures with legitimizing functions. Using the uprisings in the Middle East as of 2011, this chapter suggests that ideologies are not fixed or cohesive, but rather can be retrieved from the fluidity of processes through ethnography and analysis of mass-mediated texts and images. Although there is no clear demarcation from other

knowledge structures — including those normally related to "culture" — political anthropology has a distinct edge in the current push in ideology theory towards better understanding the "anatomy of thinking politically", the complex ways in which political thought is shaped between subjective interpretation and social interaction.

Keir Martin's chapter on post-neoliberalism turns to an enquiry into the validity of the paradigm of neoliberalism and the usefulness of political anthropology in studying it. In reality, "neoliberalism", like "capitalism" or "the market", is more of a perspective on social relations than an objective description of empirically observable objective phenomena. For political anthropology the issue to decide is perhaps not so much whether or not the world we inhabit today is objectively post-neoliberal (or indeed ever was definitely neoliberal at some point in the recent past), but whether or not we are "post" a time when the advantages inherent in the concept outweigh the risks. Either way, the lack of agreement as to whether we have gone past neoliberalism or not suggests how strongly the trends that that term described continue to shape our appreciation of the world we live in today.

Simon Coleman's chapter, "The Political and the Religious: On the Making of Virtuous Politics", examines anthropological debates over the relationship between religion and politics. Why are religion and politics sometimes considered to be distinct entities (morally as well as empirically), and how have such assumptions been challenged by recent events? Exploring the dilemmas and struggles caused by the very labelling of evangelical Christianity as political, this chapter argues that rather than dismissing such "political evangelicalism" as not being "real" or "authentic" religion we need to re-examine the historically and culturally loaded assumptions behind such a view, which does little justice to the complexity of evangelicalism or the different ways in which it can be articulated within different normative registers. Ultimately, participation in evangelicalism may involve dealing in politics as understood by secularist, liberal models; but it may also be about reconstituting it through "virtuous" practices that

have not always been appreciated, but which anthropology is well placed to uncover.

Part III aims to portray not only the breadth of themes but also the methodological innovation that ethnographies of the political have developed in the past decades. In terms of terminology, the tendency since the late 1980s has been to put "politics of ..." in front of every single anthropological theme. It was no coincidence that a landmark survey of contemporary political anthropology published in 2004 and edited by David Nugent and Joan Vincent carried the title *Companion to the Anthropology of Politics*. There is today a "politics of" gender, race, identity, reproduction, citizenship, genes, space and place, state, storytelling, and globalization, to mention just the more conspicuous ones. This almost ubiquitous "politics of" indicates that the world as such has become politicized — including, of course, "culture" itself.

This so-called "politics of culture" was not invented by anthropologists, but evidently results from larger societal transformations, much beyond what can possibly be discussed here. However, to invoke a "politics of" very often relates to an explicit or implicit use of discourse analysis, a thematic focus on discursive power and discursive practices by means of which concrete phenomena are unmasked and heavily criticized. This has often involved a critical stance towards centralized or institutionalized forms of power and modes of representation from the vantage point of peripheries. Edward Said's or Michel Foucault's writings from the 1970s are often referred to here, together with a range of post-structuralist social theorists from outside the discipline of anthropology. In so many ways, contemporary "politics of" anthropology is a marriage between critical theory approaches and post-modern emphases on power and representation, held together by the bottom-up approaches that have always defined anthropology. Much "politics of" anthropology simultaneously draws on older (leftist) vocabularies of repression as well as resistance, and on newer ones that stress strategies of representation, local agency and diversity. One of the visible effects of this development is that while everything has become political, some of the

earlier, more definable political themes have been pushed into the background — and with them the anthropologists whose "classical" contributions established those themes as nodes of the debate.

By now, several ethnographies have been carried out in international organizations such as the European Union (EU), studying the fonctionnaires as a cultural group with special codes of conduct, dressing, interaction and so on. Bureaucracy is in fact not only a perfectly functioning rational system (Herzfeld, 1992; Gellner and Hirsch, 2001). In a similar vein, electoral politics, policy studies, and comparative politics have seen ethnographic turns. This was also promoted by a greater sensitivity to the life-worlds of people and the need to understand political structures from a position of local knowledge and the hermeneutics of meaning. Ethnographies of the political may be seen as a further version of "cultural relativism". Yet, it has been recognized that modernities are multiple and that development can be a means of power rather than of social or economic improvement. The global world has made political scientists more sensitive to culture, and not only because of misgivings about strategies of development.

The concern with political institutions has also reinforced a focus on institutionally driven political agency and policy making. This focus has been most evident in "development anthropology" or the anthropology of development, which over the last decades has established itself as one of the discipline's largest subfields. Political actors like states, governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations or business corporations are the primary subjects of analysis here. Via their ethnographic work anthropologists have cast a critical eye on discourses and practices produced by institutional agents of development in their encounters with local culture. Development anthropology obviously ties political anthropology to political economy as it concerns the management and redistribution of both ideational and real resources. In this vein, Arturo Escobar famously argued that international development largely helped reproduce the former colonial power structures.

Taking up this perennial theme Jeremy Gould and Eija Ranta use their chapter, "The Politics of Development: Anthropological Perspectives", to explore development in the light of the decolonization of anthropology. Anthropology has consistently struggled with its role as a trustee of a "global liberal project". Against this backdrop, this chapter examines the relationship of political anthropology to the politics of development through the prism of a long-term process — incomplete and perhaps ultimately unsuccessful — of disassociating anthropology from the (post)colonial project of domination through improvement. This chapter scrutinizes the terms and frameworks through which political anthropology and development have been brought into contestation during the post-colonial era. A key premise of this study is that the imperial legacy — above all the epistemic habits established through colonial government — continues to shape the way political anthropology and anthropologists participate in the politics of development.

Aiming to build a dialogue between political science and anthropology, Jan Kubik's chapter, "Ethnographies of Power", considers the intellectual, philosophical and epistemological origins of the tangled traditions of ethnographic inquiry in order to appreciate ethnography's potential value for the study of politics. The term "ethnography" refers to at least three overlapping yet sufficiently distinct types of intellectual activity and research practice. First, the essence of ethnography as a specific method of data collecting is, of course, participant observation. Second, ethnographic models are built around specific theoretical assumptions about "reality" — or its fragment — to be observed (for example, holism of the social system in early, functionalist, ethnographies). Finally, ethnography is a genre of writing (or, to be more precise, a set of genres) the author employs to narrate the reality in a manner that is different from presentations of formal or statistical models. Focusing mainly on ethnography as a method of research, this chapter explores five types of ethnography: traditional/positivistic, interpretive, postmodern, global (multisited) and paraethnography. [Para-ethnography involves collaborations among anthropologists and "other sorts of experts with

shared, discovered, and negotiated critical sensibilities," in the words of George Marcus. The root of "para" means "alteration, perversion, or simulation." It also means "auxiliary"—as in paramedics, professional staff who perform critical medical functions in ambulances and on the front lines, or para-legals who are qualified to perform legal work through their knowledge of the law gained through education or work experience. Rather than relegate para-ethnographers to a subservient role to bona-fide anthropologists, fully embracing their work can destabilize power hierarchies based on expertise.]

Nick Long's "Post-democracy and a Politics of Prefiguration" explores the recent phenomenon of multiple post-democracies. Post-democracy can be immensely harmful as it is frequently underpinned by dynamics quite different to the beneficent principles it purports to embody. This allows anthropologists to develop critical interventions that might help rein in post-democracy's worst excesses, if not transcend them altogether. Based on the ethnographic encounter with post-democratic actors from Indonesia, the chapter probes practices of post-democracy beyond simplistic conceptions of "expertise" and "economic power". It illuminates the complex processes that determine how and why different private (and public) interests gain leverage in policy-making processes. These insights do not just make for better causal explanations. They are also a vital resource for activism, enabling us to explore alternatives to post-democracy that are responsive to the concerns of the people we work with, rather than — or perhaps as well as — our own.

In her chapter "Feminist Theory and Reproduction" Megan Moodie takes up feminist anthropology and the positioning of feminist theory in the greater problem area of reproduction. She makes two related arguments. One is about the intellectual history of US feminist anthropology and how it might re-engage with a terrain lost to our own detriment as scholars trying to critically engage the political formations in which we ourselves are situated. The second is a more ethnographic argument about the American public sphere: specifically, a set of current discussions about social mobility crystallized in Robert Putnam's book *Our*

Kids: The American Dream in Crisis and media personage, and how it might be critically engaged with the tools described under the first argument. A key concern of this chapter is to emancipate reproduction studies from a feminized side-project and introduce it into contemporary studies of global capitalism and attendant national policies.

Morten Boas's chapter on the "new war zones" argues that what may appear to us as new war zones are neither substantially new nor incomprehensible. It is only our approaches that all too often make us avoid seeing the obvious: people take up arms because they are angry, scared, poor, or short of other livelihood opportunities. On the one hand, regional "big men" operate in a downward direction to capitalize on local grievances, largely for their own benefit. On the other hand, one can witness the evolution of local defence forces/militias moving upwards and becoming intertwined in larger networks and markets (and, in the process, producing new regional big men). A political anthropology of new war zones is therefore confronted by a field of constant flux and fragmentation where the important dimension to keep track of is less the very agents of violence, but rather the nodal points in these networks of governance and violence, and their ability to maintain networks across space and time.

An intimately related theme is that of political borders, as discussed by Hastings Donnan, Bjorn Thomassen and Harald Wydra in "The Political Anthropology of Borders and Territory". The authors outline some main themes and perspectives that in recent decades have emerged from the anthropological scholarship on borders, boundaries, and territory. They argue that borders not only frame and contain the territorial integrity of states, but also that the cultural and historical formation of borders is essential to understand how states think, behave, and act. In line with the still growing ethnographic record of populations inhabiting border areas, they stress the agency of border dwellers in their negotiation of power and identity. The chapter is framed by a contextual discussion of the demise of political borders that seemingly followed the end of the cold war and the current trend in an opposite direction, where new walls,

barriers, and fences are being built while old ones are being renovated and policed.

Parvathi Raman explores the politics of movement and migration. Her chapter analyses contemporary political struggles over mobility, and the production of racialized migration regimes. By discussing the story of Commonwealth migration to postwar Britain, the chapter focuses on the intersection between race and labour migration. It compares postwar migration to the role of the border in 'Brexit Britain'. It argues that mobility, fundamental to the human condition and central to the making of our modern world, has now become a deeply disputed political right. Ultimately, there is not a migration 'crisis' in the contemporary world, but rather a more general crisis of liberal democracy, a political ideology that has produced a highly discriminatory, profitable and inhuman 'migration industry'. In asking 'who has the right to cross the border', we also ask ourselves fundamental questions about political subjectivity and governance in the 21st century.

Part IV is concerned with some of the most pressing issues of globalization today. The legacies of totalitarianism, post-colonialism or genocide entailed a considerable shift towards cultural frames in which politics of conflict would become subordinate to practices of transitional justice, international law, or the recognition of victimhood and human rights. Political frames increasingly require attention to space, time, and nature. The breaking of boundaries demands greater attention to the meanings and functions of borders; but it also requires thinking harder about the politics of securitization, which has become a dominant paradigm in the 21st century. These include the changing nature of warfare, the pressing agendas of environmental politics, and the politics of movement epitomized by refugees, migrants, and the actors in international development.

John Gledhill's chapter — "Security, Securitization, Desecuritization: How Security Produces Insecurity" — engages with a proliferating series of "risks" in the era of globalization, including international movement of migrants and refugees, climate change, and transnational criminal networks. Exploring the theme of securitization and the

attendant risks of desecuritization in the specific context of Brazil, it argues that the emergence of new policing strategies and their relation to neoliberal urbanism failed to transform the repressive character of the policing of poor communities. Mass incarceration policies fuelled the emergence and expansion of networked criminal organizations. Combining ethnographic perspectives on what people living in poor communities think about crime and policing with research on police themselves, this analysis explores paradoxes that require us to understand how specific conditions in Brazil influence the impact of broader global trends. In conclusion, a political anthropology that combines perspectives on securitization from above and below can advance a realist, consequentialist critique of what securitization does.

Mette Fog Olwig's chapter, "Nature, Politics, and Climate Change", argues that relations of humans to nature are intrinsically political. By moving beyond simplistic dichotomies which separate nature from culture/society, political anthropology asks questions about how power relations influence which "facts", understandings, definitions, and narratives of nature prevail, and why. The chapter demonstrates how political anthropologists in studies of climate change continue the long legacy in anthropology of analysing the politics of language and deconstructing words, narratives, and conventional wisdom. First, conceptualizing climate change as a social versus natural problem has consequences for policy making and the perceived value and role of the social versus the natural sciences. Furthermore, the notion of the Anthropocene as our current epoch potentially destabilizes the dichotomy of nature versus culture/society, and the consequences thereof for democracy. Finally, the chapter provides examples of how political anthropologists have joined science and technology studies scholars in studying climate science and scientists.

In "The Fall and Rise of Class" Andrew Sanchez first explores the reasons for the decline of class in the age of neoliberalism before engaging with the arguments for the return of class. The chapter considers social anthropology's changing relationship to the class concept by asking what

ethnographers have done with the idea, why it fell out of favour during the 1980s and 1990s, and how attention to the topic has been reinvigorated by analyses of precarity, economic crisis, and social capital. The chapter concludes by considering how and why contemporary political anthropology must continue to engage carefully with the types of power relations described by the term "class".

Madurika Rasaratnam's chapter, "The Politics of Ethno-Religious Violence", explores the interpenetration of religion and nationalism in contexts of empire and post-colonial states. Comparing the violence associated with Hindu nationalism in India and the violence of the Sinhala Buddhist—Tamil nationalist conflict in Sri Lanka, it seeks to unsettle the binaries of secular/nation-state and religion as well as the contrast between west and non-west. Whilst secular forms of nationalism are generally understood as the solution to religious conflicts, this chapter suggests that religion is often central to the processes of national state formation in the colonies and the metropole. This process is not inevitable: not all religions become nationalized, and the scope and extent of nationalized religions varies. However, and despite these differences, this comparative analysis shows that religiously orientated violence is actually driven by nationalist logics and the nation-state rather than theology.

Henrik Vigh's and David Sausdal's chapter, "The Anthropology of Crime", tackles the contemporary potential of the anthropology of crime by tracing the origin of the discipline back to "criminal genetics" and the study of innate dispositions before engaging with the collective social conditions and logics that are the pillars of criminal formations, flows, and networks. It claims that political anthropology is needed to study more carefully the frames within which crime develops, is executed, and also is identified as being deviant. Beyond earlier evolutionistic, racialized, and functionalist approaches to crime, the chapter provides an investigation of criminal structures and groups as sub-societal or sub-cultural entities, leading us, in conclusion, to an examination of movements and assemblages along networks and trajectories that move across strata and space. In essence, anthropological knowledge is accumulative

rather than linear as many of the insights gained and the knowledge learnt are complementary rather than contradictory.

Thomas Hylland Eriksen's chapter on globalization argues that a political anthropology of globalization can use the concept of scale to shed light on the global (or glocal, [(a portmanteau of global and local) is the adaptation of international products around the particularities of a local culture in which they are sold. The process allows integration of local markets into world markets.]) situation, in particular the responses to political challenges by either scaling down or scaling up. Scaling down refers to local communities that try to regain control over their livelihoods in the face of encroaching large-scale actors. Scaling up can take place through the formation of transnational coalitions of social movements, or through more formal channels such as intergovernmental cooperation and treaty negotiations. Several of the examples described in this chapter can fruitfully be analysed through the notion of the "clash of scales": anthropologists are, by virtue of their ethnographic methodology, in a privileged position to study significant clashes of scale as they are perceived locally. The local cannot be understood without recourse to higher scalar levels up to the global; but the global and higher-level processes, likewise, cannot be understood without proper knowledge about the local.

Taken together, all the chapters of this handbook convey the orientations and dynamics of a moving field to specialists, while also opening these discussions to outsiders. The nature of this field of knowledge, practice, and interpretation of the political has made it imperative to invite authors beyond the professional field of anthropology. Therefore, the authors not only come from different disciplinary backgrounds (including anthropology, political science, international relations, and political theory) but also belong to different generations of scholarship. We hope that the reader will appreciate the balance we have sought to strike between such generations, perspectives, and theoretical orientations. <>

[The Laws of Human Nature](#) by Robert Greene [Viking, 9780525428145]

From the #1 New York Times-bestselling author of [The 48 Laws of Power](#) comes the definitive new book on decoding the behavior of the people around you that makes an excellent holiday gift

Robert Greene is a master guide for millions of readers, distilling ancient wisdom and philosophy into essential texts for seekers of power, understanding and mastery. Now he turns to the most important subject of all - understanding people's drives and motivations, even when they are unconscious of them themselves.

We are social animals. Our very lives depend on our relationships with people. Knowing why people do what they do is the most important tool we can possess, without which our other talents can only take us so far. Drawing from the ideas and examples of Pericles, Queen Elizabeth I, Martin Luther King Jr, and many others, Greene teaches us how to detach ourselves from our own emotions and master self-control, how to develop the empathy that leads to insight, how to look behind people's masks, and how to resist conformity to develop your singular sense of purpose. Whether at work, in relationships, or in shaping the world around you, [The Laws of Human Nature](#) offers brilliant tactics for success, self-improvement, and self-defense.

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Excerpt: If you come across any special trait of meanness or stupidity ... you must be careful not to let it annoy or distress you, but to look upon it merely as an addition to your knowledge—a new fact to be considered in studying the character of humanity. Your attitude towards it will be that of the mineralogist who stumbles upon a very characteristic specimen of a mineral. —Arthur Schopenhauer

Throughout the course of our lives, we inevitably have to deal with a variety of individuals who stir up trouble and make our lives difficult and unpleasant. Some of these individuals are leaders or bosses, some are colleagues, and some are friends. They can be aggressive or passive-aggressive, but they are generally masters at playing on our emotions. They often appear charming and refreshingly confident, brimming with ideas and enthusiasm, and we fall under their spell. Only when it is too late do we discover that their confidence is irrational and their ideas ill-conceived. Among colleagues, they can be those who sabotage our work or careers out of secret envy, excited to bring us down. Or they could be colleagues or hires who reveal, to our dismay, that they are completely out for themselves, using us as stepping-stones.

What inevitably happens in these situations is that we are caught off guard, not expecting such

behavior. Often these types will hit us with elaborate cover stories to justify their actions or blame handy scapegoats. They know how to confuse us and draw us into a drama they control. We might protest or become angry, but in the end we feel rather helpless—the damage is done. Then another such type enters our life, and the same story repeats itself.

We often notice a similar sensation of confusion and helplessness when it comes to ourselves and our own behavior. For instance, we suddenly say something that offends our boss or colleague or friend—we are not quite sure where it came from, but we are frustrated to find that some anger and tension from within has leaked out in a way that we regret. Or perhaps we enthusiastically throw our weight into some project or scheme, only to realize it was quite foolish and a terrible waste of time. Or perhaps we fall in love with a person who is precisely the wrong type for us and we know it, but we cannot help ourselves. What has come over us, we wonder?

In these situations, we catch ourselves falling into self-destructive patterns of behavior that we cannot seem to control. It is as if we harbor a stranger within us, a little demon who operates independently of our willpower and pushes us into doing the wrong things. And this stranger within us is rather weird, or at least weirder than how we imagine ourselves.

What we can say about these two things—people's ugly actions and our own occasionally surprising behavior—is that we usually have no clue as to what causes them. We might latch onto some simple explanations: "That person is evil, a sociopath" or "Something came over me; I wasn't myself." But such pat descriptions do not lead to any understanding or prevent the same patterns from recurring. The truth is that we humans live on the surface, reacting emotionally to what people say and do. We form opinions of others and ourselves that are rather simplified. We settle for the easiest and most convenient story to tell ourselves.

What if, however, we could dive below the surface and see deep within, getting closer to the actual roots of what causes human behavior? What if we could understand why some people turn envious



and try to sabotage our work, or why their misplaced confidence causes them to imagine themselves as godlike and infallible? What if we could truly fathom why people suddenly behave irrationally and reveal a much darker side to their character, or why they are always ready to provide a rationalization for their behavior, or why we continually turn to leaders who appeal to the worst in us? What if we could look deep inside and judge people's character, avoiding the bad hires and personal relationships that cause us so much emotional damage?

If we really understood the roots of human behavior, it would be much harder for the more destructive types to continually get away with their actions. We would not be so easily charmed and misled. We would be able to anticipate their nasty and manipulative maneuvers and see through their cover stories. We would not allow ourselves to get dragged into their dramas, knowing in advance that our interest is what they depend on for their control. We would finally rob them of their power through our ability to look into the depths of their character.

Similarly, with ourselves, what if we could look within and see the source of our more troubling emotions and why they drive our behavior, often against our own wishes? What if we could understand why we are so compelled to desire what other people have, or to identify so strongly with a group that we feel contempt for those who are on the outside? What if we could find out what causes us to lie about who we are, or to inadvertently push people away?

Being able to understand more clearly that stranger within us would help us to realize that it is not a stranger at all but very much a part of ourselves, and that we are far more mysterious, complex, and interesting than we had imagined. And with that awareness we would be able to break the negative patterns in our lives, stop making excuses for ourselves, and gain better control of what we do and what happens to us.

Having such clarity about ourselves and others could change the course of our lives in so many ways, but first we must clear up a common misconception: we tend to think of our behavior as

largely conscious and willed. To imagine that we are not always in control of what we do is a frightening thought, but in fact it is the reality. We are subject to forces from deep within us that drive our behavior and that operate below the level of our awareness. We see the results—our thoughts, moods, and actions—but have little conscious access to what actually moves our emotions and compels us to behave in certain ways.

Look at our anger, for instance. We usually identify an individual or a group as the cause of this emotion. But if we were honest and dug down deeper, we would see that what often triggers our anger or frustration has deeper roots. It could be something in our childhood or some particular set of circumstances that triggers the emotion. We can discern distinct patterns if we look—when this or that happens, we get angry. But in the moment that we feel anger, we are not reflective or rational—we merely ride the emotion and point fingers. We could say something similar about a whole slew of emotions that we feel—specific types of events trigger sudden confidence, or insecurity, or anxiety, or attraction to a particular person, or hunger for attention.

Let us call the collection of these forces that push and pull at us from deep within human nature. Human nature stems from the particular wiring of our brains, the configuration of our nervous system, and the way we humans process emotions, all of which developed and emerged over the course of the five million years or so of our evolution as a species. We can ascribe many of the details of our nature to the distinct way we evolved as a social animal to ensure our survival—learning to cooperate with others, coordinating our actions with the group on a high level, creating novel forms of communication and ways of maintaining group discipline. This early development lives on within us and continues to determine our behavior, even in the modern, sophisticated world we live in.

To take one example, look at the evolution of human emotion. The survival of our earliest ancestors depended on their ability to communicate with one another well before the invention of language. They evolved new and complex emotions joy, shame, gratitude, jealousy,

resentment, et cetera. The signs of these emotions could be read immediately on their faces, communicating their moods quickly and effectively. They became extremely permeable to the emotions of others as a way to bind the group more tightly together—to feel joy or grief as one—or to remain united in the face of danger.

To this day, we humans remain highly susceptible to the moods and emotions of those around us, compelling all kinds of behavior on our part—unconsciously imitating others, wanting what they have, getting swept up in viral feelings of anger or outrage. We imagine we're acting of our own free will, unaware of how deeply our susceptibility to the emotions of others in the group is affecting what we do and how we respond.

We can point to other such forces that emerged from this deep past and that similarly mold our everyday behavior—for instance, our need to continually rank ourselves and measure our self-worth through our status is a trait that is noticeable among all hunter-gatherer cultures, and even among chimpanzees, as are our tribal instincts, which cause us to divide people into insiders or outsiders. We can add to these primitive qualities our need to wear masks to disguise any behavior that is frowned upon by the tribe, leading to the formation of a shadow personality from all the dark desires we have repressed. Our ancestors understood this shadow and its dangerousness, imagining it originated from spirits and demons that needed to be exorcised. We rely on a different myth—"something came over me."

Once this primal current or force within us reaches the level of consciousness, we have to react to it, and we do so depending on our individual spirit and circumstances, usually explaining it away superficially without really understanding it. Because of the precise way in which we evolved, there are a limited number of these forces of human nature, and they lead to the behavior mentioned above—envy, grandiosity, irrationality, shortsightedness, conformity, aggression, and passive aggression, to name a few. They also lead to empathy and other positive forms of human behavior.

For thousands of years, it has been our fate to largely grope in the shadows when it comes to understanding ourselves and our own nature. We have labored under so many illusions about the human animal—imagining we descended magically from a divine source, from angels instead of primates. We have found any signs of our primitive nature and our animal roots deeply distressing, something to deny and repress. We have covered up our darker impulses with all kinds of excuses and rationalizations, making it easier for some people to get away with the most unpleasant behavior. But finally we're at a point where we can overcome our resistance to the truth about who we are through the sheer weight of knowledge we have now accumulated about human nature.

We can exploit the vast literature in psychology amassed over the last one hundred years, including detailed studies of childhood and the impact of our early development (Melanie Klein, John Bowlby, Donald Winnicott), as well as works on the roots of narcissism (Heinz Kohut), the shadow sides of our personality (Carl Jung), the roots of our empathy (Simon Baron-Cohen), and the configuration of our emotions (Paul Ekman). We can now cull the many advances in the sciences that can aid us in our self-understanding—studies of the brain (Antonio Damasio, Joseph E. LeDoux), of our unique biological makeup (Edward O. Wilson), of the relationship between the body and the mind (V. S. Ramachandran), of primates (Frans de Waal) and hunter-gatherers (Oared Diamond), of our economic behavior (Daniel Kahneman), and of how we operate in groups (Wilfred Bion, Elliot Aronson).

We can also include in this the works of certain philosophers (Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche, José Ortega y Gasset) who have illuminated so many aspects of human nature, as well as the insights of many novelists (George Eliot, Henry James, Ralph Ellison), who are often the most sensitive to the unseen parts of our behavior. And finally, we can include the rapidly expanding library of biographies now available, revealing human nature in depth and in action.

This book is an attempt to gather together this immense storehouse of knowledge and ideas from different branches (see the bibliography for the

key sources), to piece together an accurate and instructive guide to human nature, basing itself on the evidence, not on particular viewpoints or moral judgments. It is a brutally realistic appraisal of our species, dissecting who we are so we can operate with more awareness.

Consider *The Laws of Human Nature* a kind of codebook for deciphering people's behavior—ordinary, strange, destructive, the full gamut. Each chapter deals with a particular aspect or law of human nature. We can call them laws in that under the influence of these elemental forces, we humans tend to react in relatively predictable ways. Each chapter has the story of some iconic individual or individuals who illustrate the law (negatively or positively), along with ideas and strategies on how to deal with yourself and others under the influence of this law. Each chapter ends with a section on how to transform this basic human force into something more positive and productive, so that we are no longer passive slaves to human nature but actively transforming it.

You might be tempted to imagine that this knowledge is a bit old-fashioned. After all, you might argue, we are now so sophisticated and technologically advanced, so progressive and enlightened; we have moved well beyond our primitive roots; we are in the process of rewriting our nature. But the truth is in fact the opposite—we have never been more in the thrall of human nature and its destructive potential than now. And by ignoring this fact, we are playing with fire.

Look at how the permeability of our emotions has only been heightened through social media, where viral effects are continually sweeping through us and where the most manipulative leaders are able to exploit and control us. Look at the aggression that is now openly displayed in the virtual world, where it is so much easier to play out our shadow sides without repercussions. Notice how our propensities to compare ourselves with others, to feel envy, and to seek status through attention have only become intensified with our ability to communicate so quickly with so many people. And finally, look at our tribal tendencies and how they have now found the perfect medium to operate in—we can find a group to identify with, reinforce

our tribal opinions in a virtual echo chamber, and demonize any outsiders, leading to mob intimidation. The potential for mayhem stemming from the primitive side of our nature has only increased.

It is simple: Human nature is stronger than any individual, than any institution or technological invention. It ends up shaping what we create to reflect itself and its primitive roots. It moves us around like pawns.

Ignore the laws at your own peril. Refusing to come to terms with human nature simply means that you are dooming yourself to patterns beyond your control and to feelings of confusion and helplessness.

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[The Laws of Human Nature](#) is designed to immerse you in all aspects of human behavior and illuminate its root causes. If you let it guide you, it will radically alter how you perceive people and your entire approach to dealing with them. It will also radically change how you see yourself. It will accomplish these shifts in perspective in the following ways:

First, the Laws will work to transform you into a calmer and more strategic observer of people, helping to free you from all the emotional drama that needlessly drains you.

Being around people stirs up our anxieties and insecurities as to how others perceive us. Once we feel such emotions, it becomes very hard to observe people as we are drawn into our own feelings, evaluating what people say and do in personal terms—do they like me or dislike me? The Laws will help you avoid falling into this trap by revealing that people are generally dealing with emotions and issues that have deep roots. They're experiencing some desires and disappointments that predate you by years and decades. You cross their path at a particular moment and become the convenient target of their anger or frustration. They're projecting onto you certain qualities they want to see. In most cases, they're not relating to you as an individual.

This should not upset you but liberate you. The book will teach you to stop taking personally their insinuating comments, shows of coldness, or moments of irritation. The more you grasp this, the easier it will be to react not with your emotions but rather with the desire to understand where their behavior might come from. You will feel much calmer in the process. And as this takes root in you, you will be less prone to moralize and judge people; instead you will accept them and their flaws as part of human nature. People will like you all the more as they sense this tolerant attitude in you.

Second, the Laws will make you a master interpreter of the cues that people continually emit, giving you a much greater ability to judge their character.

Normally, if we pay attention to people's behavior, we are in a rush to fit their actions into categories and to hurry to conclusions, so we settle for the judgment that suits our own preconceptions. Or we accept their self-serving explanations. The Laws will rid you of this habit by making it clear how easy it is to misread people and how deceptive first impressions can be. You will slow yourself down, mistrust your initial judgment, and instead train yourself to analyze what you see.

You will think in terms of opposites—when people overtly display some trait, such as confidence or hypermasculinity, they are most often concealing the contrary reality. You will realize that people are continually playing to the public, making a show of being progressive and saintly only to better disguise their shadow. You will see the signs of this shadow leaking out in everyday life.

If people take an action that seems out of character, you will take note: what often appears out of character is actually more of their true character. If people are essentially lazy or foolish, they leave clues to this in the smallest of details that you can pick up well before their behavior harms you. The ability to gauge people's true worth, their degree of loyalty and conscientiousness, is one of the most important skills you can possess, helping you avoid the bad hires, partnerships, and relationships that can make your life miserable.

Third, the Laws will empower you to take on and outthink the toxic types who inevitably cross your path and who tend to cause long-term emotional damage.

Aggressive, envious, and manipulative people don't usually announce themselves as such. They have learned to appear charming in initial encounters, to use flattery and other means of disarming us. When they surprise us with their ugly behavior, we feel betrayed, angry, and helpless. They create constant pressure, knowing that in doing so they overwhelm our minds with their presence, making it doubly hard to think straight or strategize.

The Laws will teach you how to identify these types in advance, which is your greatest defense against them. Either you will steer clear of them or, foreseeing their manipulative actions, you will not be blindsided and thus will be better able to maintain your emotional balance. You will learn to mentally cut them down to size and focus on the glaring weaknesses and insecurities behind all of their bluster. You will not fall for their myth, and this will neutralize the intimidation they depend on. You will scoff at their cover stories and elaborate explanations for their selfish behavior. Your ability to stay calm will infuriate them and often push them into overreaching or making a mistake.

Instead of being weighed down by these encounters, you might even come to appreciate them as a chance to hone your skills of self-mastery and toughen yourself up. Outsmarting just one of these types will give you a great deal of confidence that you can handle the worst in human nature.

Fourth, the Laws will teach you the true levers for motivating and influencing people, making your path in life that much easier.

Normally, when we meet resistance to our ideas or plans, we cannot help trying to directly change people's minds by arguing, lecturing, or cajoling them, all of which makes them more defensive. The Laws will teach you that people are naturally stubborn and resistant to influence. You must begin any attempt by lowering their resistance and never inadvertently feeding their defensive tendencies. You will train yourself to discern their insecurities

and never inadvertently stir them up. You will think in terms of their self-interest and the self-opinion they need validated.

Understanding the permeability of emotions, you will learn that the most effective means of influence is to alter your moods and attitude. People are responding to your energy and demeanor even more than to your words. You will get rid of any defensiveness on your part. Instead, feeling relaxed and genuinely interested in the other person will have a positive and hypnotic effect. You will learn that as a leader your best means of moving people in your direction lies in setting the right tone through your attitude, empathy, and work ethic.

Fifth, the Laws will make you realize how deeply the forces of human nature operate within you, giving you the power to alter your own negative patterns.

Our natural response to reading or hearing about the darker qualities in human nature is to exclude ourselves. It is always the other person who is narcissistic, irrational, envious, grandiose, aggressive, or passive-aggressive. We almost always see ourselves as having the best intentions. If we go astray, it is the fault of circumstances or people forcing us to react negatively. The Laws will make you stop once and for all this self-deluding process. We are all cut from the same cloth, and we all share the same tendencies. The sooner you realize this, the greater your power will be in overcoming these potential negative traits within you. You will examine your own motives, look at your own shadow, and become aware of your own passive-aggressive tendencies. This will make it that much easier to spot such traits in others.

You will also become humbler, realizing you're not superior to others in the way you had imagined. This will not make you feel guilty or weighed down by your self-awareness, but quite the opposite. You will accept yourself as a complete individual, embracing both the good and the bad, dropping your falsified self-image as a saint. You will feel relieved of your hypocrisies and free to be more yourself. People will be drawn to this quality in you.

Sixth, the Laws will transform you into a more empathetic individual, creating deeper and more satisfying bonds with the people around you.

We humans are born with a tremendous potential for understanding people on a level that is not merely intellectual. It is a power developed by our earliest ancestors, in which they learned how to intuit the moods and feelings of others by placing themselves in their perspective.

The Laws will instruct you in how to bring out this latent power to the highest degree possible. You will learn to slowly cut off your incessant interior monologue and listen more closely. You will train yourself to assume the other's viewpoint as best you can. You will use your imagination and experiences to help you feel how they might feel. If they are describing something painful, you have your own painful moments to draw upon as analogues. You will not be simply intuitive, but rather you will analyze the information you glean in this empathic fashion, gaining insights. You will continually cycle between empathy and analysis, always updating what you observe and increasing your ability to see the world through their eyes. You will notice a physical sensation of connection between you and the other that will emerge from this practice.

You will need a degree of humility in this process. You can never know exactly what people are thinking and can easily make mistakes, and so you must not rush to judgments but keep yourself open to learning more. People are more complex than you imagine. Your goal is to simply see their point of view better. As you go through this process, it becomes like a muscle that gets stronger the more you exercise it.

Cultivating such empathy will have innumerable benefits. We are all self-absorbed, locked in our own worlds. It is a therapeutic and liberating experience to be drawn outside ourselves and into the world of another. It is what attracts us to film and any form of fiction, entering the minds and perspectives of people so different from ourselves. Through this practice your whole way of thinking will shift. You are training yourself to let go of preconceptions, to be alive in the moment, and to continually adapt your ideas about people. You will find such fluidity affecting how you attack

problems in general—you will find yourself entertaining other possibilities, taking alternative perspectives. This is the essence of creative thinking.

Finally, the Laws will alter how you see your own potential, making you aware of a higher, ideal self within you that you will want to bring out.

We can say that we humans have two contrary selves within us—a lower and a higher. The lower tends to be stronger. Its impulses pull us down into emotional reactions and defensive postures, making us feel self-righteous and superior to others. It makes us grab for immediate pleasures and distractions, always taking the path of least resistance. It induces us to adopt what other people are thinking, losing ourselves in the group.

We feel the impulses of the higher self when we are drawn out of ourselves, wanting to connect more deeply with others, to absorb our minds in our work, to think instead of react, to follow our own path in life, and to discover what makes us unique. The lower is the more animal and reactive side of our nature, and one that we easily slip into. The higher is the more truly human side of our nature, the side that makes us thoughtful and self-aware. Because the higher impulse is weaker, connecting to it requires effort and insight.

Bringing out this ideal self within us is what we all really want, because it is only in developing this side of ourselves that we humans feel truly fulfilled. The book will help you accomplish this by making you aware of the potentially positive and active elements contained within each law.

Knowing our propensity for irrationality, you will learn to become aware of how your emotions color your thinking (chapter 1), giving you the ability to subtract them and become truly rational. Knowing how our attitude in life effects what happens to us, and how naturally our minds tend to close up out of fear (chapter 8), you will learn how to forge an attitude that is expansive and fearless. Knowing you have the propensity to compare yourself with others (chapter 10), you will use this as a spur to excel in society through your superior work, to admire those who achieve great things, and to be inspired by their example to emulate them. You will work this magic on each of the primal qualities,

using your expanded knowledge of human nature to resist the strong downward pull of your lower nature.

Think of the book in the following way: you are about to become an apprentice in human nature. You will be developing some skills—how to observe and measure the character of your fellow humans and see into your own depths. You will work on bringing out your higher self. And through practice you will emerge a master of the art, able to thwart the worst that other people can throw at you and to mold yourself into a more rational, self-aware, and productive individual.

Man will only become better when you make him see what he is like. —Anton Chekhov

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*[The Laws of Human Nature](#) give a much different set of skills than [48 Laws of Power](#). Why did you feel like this book needed to send a different message?*

[The 48 Laws of Power](#) advocates a strategic approach to life and teaches you to better defend yourself against the sharks out there. The new book requires some similar skills, but it goes much more deeply into the psychology behind people's behavior. Instead of just telling you to Never Outshine the Master, it explains why everyone has a fragile ego, including those above you in the hierarchy. It gives you a more profound understanding of people's motivations, including your own. It's not just enough to follow certain laws of power, but to be more aware of what governs people's behavior.

The major difference is that [The Laws of Human Nature](#) is designed to help you develop more empathic skills, to really know and tolerate what makes everyone different. With those who are aggressive and dangerous, it still advocates awareness, playing defense, and never being naïve. But in general it actually pays to accept people as they are and to see similarities between yourself and others, instead of always imagining you're superior. I think since the publication of my first book twenty years ago I have seen a gradual coarsening of the culture, more tribalism and self-absorption. I wanted to address this. We are social

animals, gifted with remarkable powers to take other people's perspective. Developing social intelligence in general should make you a much better person to be around, a better leader, a more tolerant member of the group. This does not preclude becoming aware of your uniqueness and your calling in life.

I think in general, developing these particular skill sets around understanding and empathy will actually make you a better and more strategic player of power. In that sense, the two books complement one another.

*What are some ways that we can harness our human nature on a daily basis?*

First and foremost, observe the laws in action with ourselves. Several times a day, we should try to understand why we feel the way we do, instead of merely accepting our emotions as so immediate and necessary. Why do we feel frustrated or angry or excited? Perhaps we are not reacting to what is happening in our lives, but to something in our past. This type of analysis will become a habit, and it will make it much easier in the long run to not overreact, or to stay more in control of ourselves. It does not mean we tamp down our emotions, but rather that we understand them better.

As far as the laws are concerned, we catch moments in which we feel some envy but disguise it with anger at another; we question whether our beliefs and opinions have been greatly influenced by the group and our desires to fit in; when we have any kind of success, we train ourselves to step back and see the element of luck, or how others helped us, all ways to avoid becoming grandiose; with our mistakes and failures, we look at what we did and what we could have done differently, rather than reflexively blame others; we train ourselves to see certain patterns in our behavior. As we go through this process, we gain a much more truthful appraisal of who we are.

We can break some of our negative patterns of behavior and the kinds of actions that alienate people. Knowing ourselves more deeply, we can also play to our strengths.

The second way to do this is by observing other people through a similar lens. We look behind

people's smiles and polite behavior to question what might really be going on underneath the mask. We take notice of their patterns. We question and analyze. This should be an endlessly entertaining exercise. We also look at the context for people's behavior, why they might be difficult, or why they are so anxious to please. By understanding where this might come from, we can look at them more empathically and get rid of our sense of superiority. By simply committing to this idea of observing others more deeply, through the perspective of the laws, we can alter our entire approach to people and the social world.

In the end, the key is to become less self-absorbed and more attuned to people's moods and nonverbal behavior. This will have a very pronounced effect on our whole way of thinking, which I describe in the Preface and scattered throughout the book.

*Who are some figures in history who were masters of their human nature?*

There are many figures to include in such a list—Xenophon, Pericles, Leonardo da Vinci; in modern times I would mention Nelson Mandela and Warren Buffett. But of all the people to choose from, I would single out Queen Elizabeth I and Abraham Lincoln as the icons. They were both highly sensitive, empathetic people who were masters at reading others. They were also prone to be carried away by feelings of frustration, anger and excitement. (Lincoln also had to deal with strong bouts of depression.) They both worked hard to master these emotions in the public realm and remain as calm and patient as possible. If Lincoln got angry with a particular general, he would write him a letter and put it in a drawer. He would look at it the next day and most often the emotion had passed, and he would never send it. Elizabeth would vent her true feelings to a select few, but in public she was very difficult to read; she had learned to keep her cards close to the vest.

When it came to strategy they both were quite farsighted and having analyzed the situation, they would come up with a grand plan. As others would predict doom, they would stay resolute and true to their vision, Elizabeth defeating Spain and its Armada, and Lincoln guiding the North to victory.

They knew their limitations and weaknesses and never let success go to their heads. With almost all of the laws they demonstrated self-awareness and mastery. And what should be noted here is that most of these positive qualities they had deliberately developed - they did not come so naturally.

*How has social media hurt our opportunity to hone our ability to use the laws of human nature? For instance, our sense of empathy or how to read envy in ourselves and others?*

There are obviously some positive aspects to social media. It has given us amazing opportunities to connect to other people with similar interests to our own, and to share information, experiences and knowledge. This is intensely appealing to us, being such social animals, which explains its seductive power.

But social media comes with great dangers. Over hundreds of thousands of years, we evolved for face-to-face interactions. With the other person physically present, all kinds of unconscious processes are engaged, as we evaluate people's non-verbal behavior. We're extremely sensitive to tone of voice, to facial expressions, to gestures, which greatly enhance our sense of empathy, our ability to take the perspective of other people. When that is absent, we can really only evaluate people by the words they write, or flat images on the screen. And so we become used to judging people rather quickly and according to pre-set categories. We are prone to misinterpret what people say, negatively or positively. Because of this, we become more emotional, more apt to succumb to excitement and outrage.

And on social media we tend to associate only with those with whom we agree, limiting our social intelligence, which is enhanced by interacting with a variety of people. We are more prone to feel envy, as we compare ourselves to thousands of others.

Social intelligence is a skill like any other, and it depends on the number and quality of interactions with people. If we spend increasing amounts of time in virtual interactions or are extremely distracted when in the presence of others, always

checking our phones, our social skills become stunted. Those who developed the technology for social media know how to make us addicted to it. They use casino effects, with pings and rewards for constantly checking out the feed. Because of this it takes great effort to resist the temptations. It feeds into our lower nature, our love of things that are quick and instant. Being around people and observing them requires effort, focus, and a thick skin, all of which are critical life skills that we must cultivate in person-to-person interactions. If we could control our exposure to social media it could turn into a very positive experience, but the technology is too new for us to have developed such powers.

*How has technology heightened human nature's tendency towards shortsightedness and how do we work to combat that?*

As I have described in the book, our tendency is to judge matters by what is immediately apparent to our eyes, by appearances. It takes effort for us to think more deeply about the causes of events, of the consequences of our actions. Our shortsightedness has been the source of our greatest military and political disasters throughout history. But technology has certainly made this worse. The news cycle has sped up considerably. Every event that is reported seems important, earth-shattering; our instant analysis of the situation appears irrelevant a few days or hours later. Technology also makes us more impatient; we expect results as quickly as a click, and studies have shown how our attention span has been decreasing. We can see the rippling effects on politics. Through social media, political leaders can actually manufacture a crisis to exploit. This is what is happening in Germany right now. Leaders on the right have stoked great fears of the immigration problem, even though immigration is way down in Germany. In business, the stock market has become tied to computing applications that calculate price shifts in milliseconds. We can expect more frequent financial bubbles because of this. I have served on the board of directors of a publicly traded company and I can tell you the pressures that come from the quarterly report have never been greater, making it that much harder for business leaders to plot long-term strategies.



The best solution to this is to be aware of the problem. We make ourselves understand, through our own past experiences, that what we judged to be so important or trivial in the present seems much different days or months later. We can train ourselves to adopt such a perspective in the present, reminding ourselves that our current perceptions are faulty, and that we need to examine events with more distance, to analyze whether something is as important as we thought. We can train ourselves to think more globally, to consider the wider picture, the overall context for what has happened or people's behavior. In chapter 17, I explore how we can learn to sense the *Zeitgeist* more accurately, and thus see how what is happening now fits into the greater scheme of the times we are living in. This kind of thinking pays enormous dividends. Patience is a muscle that we can develop through daily practice. Those who think longer term than others will almost always have an advantage, better positioned to adapt to changes along the way.

*Do you believe that there is some part of the foundation of human nature that draws us to authoritarian leaders? How can we as a society work against that attraction?*

Our attraction to authoritarian leaders is rooted in a fundamental principle of human nature: we do not like uncertainty or the unpredictable. In times of chaos and confusion, we are easily seduced by forceful leaders who know how to play on our emotions and make vague but alluring promises. The authoritarian type offers something quick and simple—he alone (it is almost always a male) can bring about order. No need for conflict between parties or cliques. He'll short-circuit all that and get quicker results. It plays into the child in all of us—wanting to be soothed and led by a strong parental figure. The authoritarian leader often wraps himself up in a religious-like aura—he can deliver us from bad times; he's infallible; all those who doubt him are infidels. This has great appeal to those who are insecure and fearful.

The other aspect of the authoritarian leader is that he attracts the shadow side of human nature. He will punish outsiders, deal with enemies from within and without rather harshly. In believing in him,

people get to act out their own dark impulses. This shadow side of our nature is dying to come out and the authoritarian leader gives it permission to become more public. As mentioned above, the popularity of such leaders is often an indication of some deeper change going on in society, often the breaking up of an old order and its privileges.

It is very hard to work against this attraction on a group level. When people believe in these leaders, it is more like a religious faith, and any attacks on them only strengthen their followers' convictions. If you try to reason with them by showing the authoritarian leader is a con artist, you can make things worse. Cognitive dissonance will kick in. People do not like to believe their prior choices were irrational or that they were duped; that questions their intelligence. For those opposing such leaders, they must realize that people are drawn to these leaders because of a need for a belief system, for some larger vision, and they must supply a counter-vision, not merely appealing to people's reason but to their emotions as well.

*Many believe that we have progressed as a society, do you agree? If not, why?*

On some levels we have progressed. Women have it much better than in the past, although there is a long way to go. We could say the same about minorities in this country. There is less overt violence in society than in the past. Various career paths are now open to a much greater variety of people. We have unprecedented access to information.

But these gains are also precarious, as we see in the growing intolerance around the world for migrants, and the #MeToo movement is facing a backlash. We have also regressed in many ways. Levels of irrationality have only become higher, as people are much quicker to believe in conspiracy theories; social media continually stirs people's emotions, which makes it harder for all of us to think or plan far ahead. Studies have shown that we have become more self-absorbed and narcissistic. We see many more signs of grandiosity in the world today. Because of technology, many have the impression they can have all kinds of powers instantly and without much effort. The predominance of superhero movies in our culture, and the belief in the supreme power of the

individual, shows a lack of connection to reality—to what it takes to really have power. When it comes to having a purpose in life, more and more people are lost. We have no overarching belief systems to unite and anchor people, fewer guides and mentors to help young people deal with a very complicated world.

We find higher levels of conformity, and although I would not say people are more aggressive than in the past, they certainly are as aggressive—the virtual world has opened up all kinds of possibilities for expressing our anger. In an article in the NYT, Maureen Dowd describes how Twitter, despite its public proclamation to make it a friendlier forum, has actually found a way to use outrage, anger and aggression to boost its traffic. To quote a Times reporter, "Twitter tweaked its central feed to highlight virality, turning Twitter into a bruising barroom brawl featuring the most contentious political and cultural fights of the day." This is occurring all over social media, which has also become a forum for promoting the most irrational ideas, as if it is true there are alternate realities.

I try to take the longer view. I do not ascribe to either perspective that things are getting worse or better. Human nature is what it is. It goes through ups and downs, where there are periods of greater peace and cultural vitality, followed by periods of incredible irrationality and violence. In chapter 17 I highlight the continual cycles of generations. I take great issue with Pinker's idea that we are more enlightened than ever. Many have pointed out the fallacies in his use of statistics. But the main fallacy is to imagine that we humans become better through some outside force—such as science, technology, capitalism, or communism. This approach assumes that people can become gentler through such forces and that these are traits that are inherited as the human race alters its own genetics. This is impossible. We evolved over the course of millions of years, from primates, and in a period of 200 years we cannot rewire ourselves. What we can do is gain awareness of our nature and work with it, to make it something more positive and productive, one individual at a time. That is something I try to provide a roadmap for.

*How do you apply the Laws of Human Nature to the political landscape today?*

The Laws have tremendous relevance to what we are now experiencing on the global political arena. In Law #17, I explain how our nature has created certain cycles in history, as each new generation struggles against the previous one. I make the point that we are currently going through a cyclical period of crisis and chaos, which almost always precedes a revolutionary period. People have lost faith in institutions and those in power. Old ideas no longer carry the same weight. In ten or twenty years, a new generation will forge a much different political landscape. It is hard for us to see this in the present, but around the globe the old forms of order and old belief systems are crumbling.

In chapter 13 I talk of the lack of purpose and meaning that currently haunts us. This will play an enormous role in the presidential elections in 2020. Those who seek to defeat Trump must realize that people are hungry for a grand, unifying vision, for a message that points the way to the future, a new kind of political order. In the 2018 elections, which are more local, we will see less of this, but the leaders of both parties will seek to increase turnout by creating some overarching theme to the election, and turnout will be the key to taking the House. Can the Democrats find the proper narrative to unite the various forms of discontent?

In law 14, I discuss our tribal instincts and how in a chaotic world we become even more tribal. This will intensify, as it is around the globe. In a world of increasing insecurity, individuals find more comfort in belonging to some niche group that offers a more direct form of power. This might put in jeopardy the two party system here. In law 16 I discuss how aggressive people always manage to monopolize power, and that people's love of power often trumps their ideology. Those who are more aggressive than others and less bound by conscience as to how to gain power will unfortunately always have an advantage. We can see in the Republican Party less emphasis on its traditional ideas, and more on holding on to power at any cost. To combat this, Democrats must present a more unified front, and not play into the other

side's hands by splintering into special interests. They must also become more aggressive in return, not ceding so much political ground by taking the high road.

To summarize, the laws show that in times of chaos and disorder, people yearn to believe, are more vulnerable to demagogues, and more tribal and irrational. But this doesn't last forever, as we humans cannot stand prolonged periods of uncertainty. Something new is in the process of being born and we shall see the outlines of it in the next few years. <>

[A History of Modern Psychology](#) by Per Saugstad [Cambridge University Press, 9781107109896]

[A History of Modern Psychology](#) provides students with an engaging, comprehensive, and global history of psychological science, from the birth of the field to the present. It examines the attempts to establish psychology as a science in several countries and epochs. The text expertly draws on a vast knowledge of the field in the United States, England, Germany, France, Russia, and Scandinavia, as well as on author Per Saugstad's keen study of neighboring sciences, including physiology, evolutionary biology, psychiatry, and neurology. Offering a unique global perspective on the development of psychology as an empirical science, this text is an ideal introduction to the field for students and other readers interested in the history of modern psychology.

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Excerpt: I shall first give a short description of psychology as an empirical science as it appears at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Then, I shall discuss how a study of the history of psychology can contribute to our understanding of present-day psychology. Further, I shall account for the way (I believe) psychology as an empirical science originated. Finally, before I present the plan for the book, I shall discuss reasons why empirical psychology over time has undergone changes. In this discussion, I shall be particularly concerned with the problem of assessing progress in psychology as an empirical science.

## A Short Characterization of Present-Day Psychology

Here at the beginning of the twenty-first century, psychology as an empirical science has grown into a broad, diversified field of study. We can gain an impression of its breadth by noting that it borders on the biological sciences on the one hand and the social sciences on the other.

Psychology is a theoretical as well as an applied science, and also a profession incorporating a number of specialties. In a wide variety of areas it has produced knowledge useful for the solution of theoretical problems as well as problems of practical and social life. However, so far, psychology has hardly produced comprehensive theories or scientifically acceptable principles of a general nature. Thus, the discipline appears highly fragmented.

## The Present Approach to the Study of the History of Psychology

The attempt to establish psychology as an empirical science raised several questions that were not easily answered and that soon became controversial. Questions such as what is the relationship between mind and brain, between human and animal behavior, and between genetic endowment and environmental influence (nature and nurture) emerged at the inception of the discipline and have remained controversial to this day. At an early stage, disagreement arose about whether we should conceive of psychology as the study of mental experiences or the study of behavior. In what sense should we regard as mental experiences various types of nonconscious processes, such as the subconscious and the unconscious? How do society and culture influence human thinking and behavior? This last question emerged later in psychology's history and is of central importance for the advancement of psychology as an empirical science.

When controversial questions such as these have been satisfactorily answered, psychology will be considerably advanced. I believe a critical, historical examination of them can contribute to their conceptual clarification. For this reason, I give the study of its history a central place in the general study of psychology. Ernst Mayr (1982, p.

16), who called my attention to the prominent role played by the historical examination of long-standing controversies in a field of science, stated the point in his history of evolutionary biology as follows:

Even today's controversies have a root that usually goes far back in time. It is precisely the historical study of such controversies that often contributes materially to a conceptual clarification and thus makes the ultimate solution possible.

By clarifying the available concepts and creating new ones, scientists make their thinking and communication more efficient. As James Conant (1947/1951) and Mayr (1982) have argued, the best way to understand a science is to study how its main concepts are used. I agree with them on this point, and in this book I shall undertake a detailed examination of how some of the most influential psychological researchers have used their main concepts, including careful descriptions of their research.

My concentration on the scientific concepts does not suggest that I believe the invention of new techniques is not significant. Progress often comes with new techniques, but I believe that if new techniques do not result in new or improved concepts, their introduction does not represent important scientific progress.

## How Did Empirical Psychology Originate?

A book on the history of psychology written by Harvard professor Edwin Boring in 1929 greatly influenced the ideas psychologists have had of the history of their discipline. To get an overview of the problems related to the question of how psychology originated, let us take Boring's book as our starting point.

## Edwin Boring's Book on the History of Psychology

Boring (1929/1950) represented the origin of psychology as the convergence of two lines drawn through the scientific and intellectual history of the West: One through philosophy and the other through physiology. In his view, the lines converged in the study of perception started by German researchers around 1850 and eventually met in the psychological studies of Wilhelm Wundt. According

to Boring, Wundt was the founder of experimental psychology, and, slightly altering Boring's account, several historians have dated the beginning of scientific psychology to Wundt's establishment of the world's first experimental psychological laboratory in Leipzig in 1879. According to Boring, we can regard experimental psychology as having been founded by Wundt in 1879 and as having spread first throughout Germany and subsequently to other European nations and to the United States. Boring's account of the origin of German experimental psychology, published fifty years after the establishment of the Leipzig laboratory, was comprehensive, yet at the same time outstanding in its simplicity. It remained unchallenged for nearly half a century.

To Boring, scientific psychology primarily meant experimental psychology, and his book was entitled *A History of Experimental Psychology* (1929/1950). Actually, it dealt with all areas regarded as belonging to scientific psychology during Boring's time. British comparative animal psychology, based on field studies, was included with the (doubtful) justification that animal psychology belongs to the laboratory; studies of individual differences and personality psychology were included because they are based on testing, and testing could be seen as a type of experimental psychology. Even stranger was the rationale for including clinical psychology: It might, said Boring in his foreword, become experimental.

### History as University Politics

Boring had been appointed professor at Harvard a few years prior to writing his history. During the time he was working on the book, considerable controversy raged over the nature of psychology, both at Harvard and at other US universities. Behaviorism was about to become one of the dominant schools, and psychoanalysis was gaining ground in psychology and psychiatry. Boring himself represented the 1800s view of psychology, psychology as the study of consciousness; in his own empirical research he carried on the German tradition in experimental psychology. His teacher, Edward Titchener, to whom Boring's book was dedicated, was also a representative of this tradition.

Boring had additional goals. By highlighting German experimental psychology, he could, as John O'Donnell (1979) notes, claim that psychology first had to develop as an empirical theoretical discipline before it could become an applied discipline. Further, by claiming that Wundt had liberated psychology from philosophy, Boring could advocate his view of psychology as an independent discipline, a view the Harvard philosophers did not share. His book, therefore, had obvious university-political aims, as Mitchell Ash (1983) noted in a survey of the US study of the history of psychology.

Boring's account of the origin of psychology gave a useful perspective on the field. However, as later historians have shown, several of the questions he dealt with could be answered differently. The following three questions need a more careful consideration: How is psychology related to philosophy?; How is it related to other natural science disciplines?; and Where did it originate?

### Philosophy and Scientific Empirical Psychology

In Western civilization, several problems of a psychological nature have been subjected to systematic examination, first by the Greek philosophers of antiquity, and then by the philosophers of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. The latter debated, among other things, the relationship between body and mind, feelings and reason, sensation and perception, and perception and learning based upon associations, as well as remembering, innate and learned abilities, and the relationship between reflexlike (automatic) and voluntary movement. At the beginning of the 1800s, philosophers also focused on the problem of unconscious processes and studied psychological processes, and several works on psychology were written. Only occasionally, however, did philosophers' interest in psychology result in empirical investigations.

As early as the 1700s, there were thinkers interested in expanding science to include psychology. Towards the latter part of that century, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) discussed in detail the question of whether psychology could be converted into a discipline similar to physics. Like most

psychologists of the 1700s and 1800s, Kant understood a psychological study to be an investigation of mental processes. He concluded that a study of consciousness could not be similar to a study of physics because, among other reasons, mental processes could not be the subject of an experimental inquiry based on quantification and mathematics.

Kant's successor to the professorship in Königsberg, Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776–1841), was more open to the idea of a scientific psychology, although he agreed with Kant that psychology could not be converted into an experimental science. Herbart held that consciousness contains entities in fixed dynamic relationships to one another, and these relationships could be expressed mathematically. Consequently, mental processes could be subjected to mathematical treatment, and in this respect the study of psychology could be regarded as scientific. Herbart presented his thoughts about psychology in two widely read books, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie* (Textbook of Psychology) in 1816 and *Psychologie als Wissenschaft* (Psychology as a Science) in 1824–1825.

Some years after the publication of Herbart's book on psychology as a science, the French philosopher Auguste Comte (1798–1857) discussed the historical development of science in the Western world. Comte became the main representative of a broad intellectual movement known as positivism. I shall return to Comte in Chapter 2, but for now we can note that he rejected the idea that the introspective study of mental processes could be developed into an empirical science. On this point, he was opposed by John Stuart Mill (1806–1873), who argued that it is possible to undertake an experimental, scientific study of consciousness. Mill even claimed that by using experimental methods, the British philosophers of the empiricist tradition had arrived at scientific laws stating how associations between ideas were formed. In an influential work, *A System of Logic*, published in 1843, he further proposed that the psychological study of consciousness could be widened to include the study of human character, or what we today call personality.

Apart from Mill, none of the more influential philosophers in the first half of the 1800s wholeheartedly supported the idea of turning psychology into an empirical science. I think we can therefore conclude that the time was not yet ripe for an empirical scientific psychology.

During the latter half of the 1800s, however, the intellectual climate became more favorable to the idea. An increasing number of philosophers were then attracted to the notion that psychological problems could be investigated by empirical methods. Positivism arose as a strong movement within Western thinking, and a central belief in positivist thinking was that empirical scientific research could be expanded to include problems of philosophy.

Boring insisted that the establishment of Wundt's laboratory in 1879 was an expression of a new and more favorable attitude to the idea of developing psychology as an empirical science. However, more dubious was his claim that empirical psychology had thereby become independent of philosophy. Fifty years later, as we have seen, it was still important to champion this belief, and in fact the question of how empirical psychology is related to philosophy persisted to the end of the 1900s. In 1979, at the centenary of the establishment of the Leipzig laboratory in 1879, one of the most prominent methodologists of the day, Sigmund Koch, raised it again. Let us look at his view of empirical psychology.

### Sigmund Koch's View of the History of Psychology

As the director of a large-scale project sponsored by the American Psychological Association and the National Science Foundation, and carried out in the 1950s and early 1960s, Sigmund Koch (1959–1963) held a central position in the discussion of methodological and historical problems in psychology. In this project, ninety leading psychologists of the time wrote reports describing their research and evaluating progress in their particular fields. Their detailed and thorough reports were published in six comprehensive volumes. As Daniel Robinson (1998) and Michael Wertheimer (1998) have noted, the project shed considerable light on the history of psychology as

well as on present-day psychology. After examining the reports, Koch concluded that the concepts used by the theorists lacked clarity and precision, and that none of the theories discussed were acceptable.

Koch was particularly critical of the comprehensive theories from the first half of the 1900s, such as psychoanalysis, Gestalt psychology, and various versions of behaviorism. Unlike many earlier critics, he had soft spots for none of the theories, and he revealed fundamental weaknesses in all of them. Although he was far from alone, he probably contributed considerably to the maturing of psychology as a science by installing a more critical attitude to psychological work. After 1960, few attempts were made to construct comprehensive psychological theories for the rest of the century. The attitude seems to have been that psychology was not yet ripe for this task. Thus, we can see Koch's project of the mid-1960s as a manifestation of an important change in psychologists' attitude to their discipline.

Twenty-two years after Koch had finished his first large project, he and David Leary (Koch and Leary, 1985) edited a new collection of essays assessing contemporary psychology. For this collection, Koch (1985a,6) wrote an essay and an afterword in which he evaluated progress up to about 1980. As before, he was highly critical of the belief that psychology had made progress as a scientific, empirical endeavor. However, he felt psychology was ready to make some progress.

According to Koch, there were several reasons psychology had not progressed as an empirical science. One was a disdain for nonexperimental methods, and another was the idea that the experimental method is applicable only to certain areas of the field. The introduction of the experimental method had, therefore, not significantly advanced psychology as an empirical science. Nor had attempts at introducing the methods of the natural sciences resulted in a definite break with philosophy. In contrast to Boring, who wanted to show that empirical psychology should be considered independent of philosophy, Koch insisted that psychology had never been separated from it:

Our problems, concepts, terminology, questions have grown out of the history of philosophy; and any position, theory, model, procedural decision, research strategy, or lawlike statement that we assert presupposes philosophical commitments.

According to Koch, empirical psychology was not founded by the establishment of Wundt's laboratory in 1879. Nor could it be said to have been established at any other point during the 1800s or 1900s. I believe Koch was right, but in discussing the relationship between psychology and philosophy, he overlooked the fact that since the Renaissance, philosophy and conceptions of science had been intertwined. Thus, for example, Descartes contributed to the new directions in empirical science at the same time as he worked out his own philosophy, and we can see the philosophies of Hume, Kant, and other influential thinkers as responses to progress in natural science. Moreover, Koch overlooked that in the mid-1800s a change had taken place in philosophy, making it more open to the idea that philosophical problems might be investigated by the methods of empirical science.

Koch was right, however, in pointing out that in the universities the separation of psychology from philosophy was a far slower process than Boring suggests. Actually, in German and most other European universities, the study of psychology formed part of philosophy until the mid-1900s. On the other hand, prominent pioneers in German experimental psychology, such as Hermann Ebbinghaus and Georg Elias Müller, attempted to develop psychology independently of philosophy. Although many of the pioneer US psychologists had a close tie to philosophy, empirical psychology there was treated as a discipline independent of philosophy earlier than in Europe. Several early US psychologists were appointed professors of psychology without responsibility for the development of philosophy.

### Expansion in Natural Science

In his account, I feel Koch gave too little weight to the effect of nineteenth-century progress in natural science that made the idea of empirical psychology more acceptable. Development in physiology was

rapidly accelerating, and from 1860 on, surprising findings were being made about the functions of the brain. This stimulated interest in the empirical exploration of psychological problems, to which we shall return in Chapter 2. However, other important events also took place in natural science. In 1859, Charles Darwin presented documentation to convince a majority of biologists that biological evolution had occurred. This provided a new approach to the study of human nature, which led to a comparable psychological study of animals as well as to a study of heredity. Further, progress in neurology and psychiatry threw light on important psychological problems, and a clinical psychology emerged in France and Austria that originated in these advances. So much was new in the study of psychology in the latter half of the 1800s that I believe we may call it a new era in the field. Particularly new was the use of the procedures of natural science. In contrast to Koch, I believe these procedures have led to more or less continuous progress from the mid-1800s to the present, and I shall trace this progress through the history of psychology.

The idea of scientific psychology was not new with Wundt, and several researchers before him had undertaken experimental work on psychological problems. Moreover, Wundt had not consistently - and perhaps never - held that the study of psychology should be carried out independently of philosophy. As we will see in Chapter 3, it is an oversimplification to regard him as the founder of experimental psychology. I think Koch made an important correction of Boring's account of the role played by Wundt.

### Where Did Psychology Originate?

We saw above that Boring described German experimental psychology as having one root in philosophy and one in physiology. This gave an adequate picture. But when he went on to describe the development of empirical scientific psychology as a branching out of German experimental psychology to European countries as well as to the United States, the picture became seriously distorted. When we examine matters more carefully, we see the differences in the types of problems studied by the early researchers, and

how slight the influence of one country on another often was. Psychology in Great Britain, France, Austria, Russia, and the United States was widely different from German experimental psychology. Thus, scientific psychology was not the coherent discipline we meet in Boring's book, and Wundt played a far different role than that Boring ascribed to him.

We gain a better perspective on the origin and further development of empirical psychology by recognizing that it originated in several countries at almost the same time. The early psychologists had a common background of ideas; they believed in the importance of science and in the possibility of expanding it to include the study of psychology. However, they had different research interests, were linked to different research traditions, and on the whole worked independently of each other. These cultural and research differences led to substantial differences in their conceptions of psychology.

### The Emergence of Scientific Psychology

Next I present a survey of the approaches to scientific psychology adopted in different countries and - to the extent that it is possible - describe them in chronological order.

Germany came first. Here, the study of sensory physiology and perception flourished about 1860, headed by Hermann von Helmholtz. In an extensive work published in 1874, Wundt described a number of problems that could be studied from the point of view of psychology as well as physiology, and he suggested that physiological psychology should be instituted as a study in the natural sciences. As we have already seen, he established the first laboratory in the world for experimental work in psychology some years later, in 1879. Conceiving of psychology as the study of consciousness, he extended the study of perception to include the study of attention and feeling. Some years later Ebbinghaus laid the foundation for an experimental study of verbal learning and memory.

In Great Britain, scientific psychology emerged in a completely different manner. There, the major inspiration was the theory of evolution, which gave an entirely new perspective to the study of the

nature of human beings and laid the foundation for a comparative study of psychology. In 1872, Darwin published his highly influential studies on the expression of emotions and, in 1877, his notes taken thirty-seven years earlier on the development of his eldest son from birth to early childhood. These notes were an important contribution to modern infant and child psychology. They inspired Darwin's friend, the British-German physiologist William Preyer, who in 1882 published an influential book on developmental psychology based on extensive and careful studies of one of his sons. Moreover, inspired by the theory of evolution, Darwin's cousin Francis Galton laid the foundation for the psychological study of heredity. Galton constructed tests for measuring individual differences, thereby initiating the psychological study of individual differences and personality.

The development of psychology in Russia was entirely different again. Russian psychology was based on a view of the nervous system as the integration of different types of reflexes. As early as the beginning of the 1860s, this view had been elaborated by the Russian physiologist Ivan Setchenov, but not until the turn of the century did it form the basis for empirical investigations carried out by Ivan Pavlov and Vladimir Bekhterev. The Russians hoped to create what they believed to be an objective psychology, a psychology based on observations of an objective nature. This was a form of behaviorism.

In France, psychology emerged in the 1880s and 1890s as part of the neurological and psychiatric research that was then flourishing there. This was a clinical psychology, oriented towards practical life. Apart from pathological conditions, the early French psychologists took an interest in all forms of unusual mental conditions, and the study of hypnosis was a key interest of theirs. Two prominent names in early French psychology are Pierre Janet and Alfred Binet.

In Austria, inspired by the development of neurology and psychiatry, as well as by French clinical psychology, Sigmund Freud promoted a psychodynamic psychology. This psychology began not in consciousness but in ideas Freud claimed were unconscious. Psychoanalysis therefore

conflicted with German experimental psychology and also with French clinical psychology. More or less independently of Freud, two other neurologists, Alfred Adler in Austria and Carl Jung in Switzerland, developed other versions of clinical and personality psychology. These were influenced by an entirely different philosophical tradition than the one that had inspired German experimental psychology.

These were the developments in Europe. But what of the United States? It seems to have been widely accepted that psychology was developed in the United States almost as early as in Europe. This conclusion needs some qualifications.

As we shall see in Chapter 11, early US psychologists produced a number of ideas that later influenced empirical psychology, and the American William James (1890) gave psychology a new and modern direction in an extensive, critical textbook. Only four years after Wundt established his laboratory in Leipzig, the first psychological laboratory was founded in the United States, and, as Ernest Hilgard (1987) notes in his *Psychology in America*, forty-two others had been set up by 1900. These performed studies in comparative animal psychology and child development.

Yet I believe an examination of the empirical research of the early US psychologists reveals that it was lacking in originality and in support from its neighboring disciplines: Physiology, evolutionary biology, neurology, and psychiatry. The experimental work is with few exceptions an elaboration of ideas of the early German experimentalists, and hardly any US study has comparable originality and quality. The same seems to be true for comparative animal psychology. The studies performed are mainly elaborations of work carried out in Great Britain, and the studies in child psychology in the early years are based on British and German ideas. Thus, while we may easily be led to believe that psychology in the United States developed in a similar way to that of the European countries, we must qualify the point.

When empirical psychology was being developed in Europe, the United States had just begun to build its scientific institutions. Its scientists and science

administrators looked to Europe for models, and ideas were to a large extent imported from Europe, including German experimental psychology, British comparative psychology, and to some extent French clinical psychology. As a result, though it was lacking in originality, empirical psychology in the United States acquired a far broader foundation than it had in any of the European countries. But not until the 1920s and 1930s did it begin to flower.

All the research traditions I have listed above are incorporated in the modern, empirical study of psychology. While the diverse empirical research traditions originated in Europe, the organization of them into one field of study seems mainly to have been the achievement of the American psychologists, who in the 1920s also added to the field the study of social psychology. Further, they developed the study of personality into a quantitative pursuit and helped broaden the definition of psychology to include behavior.

As we shall see in the chapters to follow, not until several decades had passed was psychology organized into a coherent study. This is understandable when we consider that a number of highly different empirical research traditions had to be integrated into it, requiring far more than taking over the procedures worked out in the various research traditions. The ideas underlying the traditions were complex, and it took time to understand more concretely their implications for psychological theory.

### Why Is Psychology Changing?

Historians have found a number of reasons why empirical psychology has changed from its inception at the latter half of the 1800s to the present. One is the changes taking place in the society in which psychology is studied and practiced.

For example, like all other scientific enterprises, psychology depends upon society's interest in recruiting students and obtaining salaries, laboratories, and financial support for research. As we shall see in Chapter 6, in Great Britain in the 1800s, many researchers financed their studies by private means, and in the United States, many larger research projects were financed through

funds established by wealthy people. Today that support comes from universities and scientific institutions. However, these are not the only sources of funding. National governments, for example, are a significant source of funding.

As another example, from its early years, particularly in the United States but also in Europe, one of psychology's aims was to contribute to the planning of society and particularly to assist people in adjusting better to social life. As society changes, its need for the help of psychology also changes.

Finally, as Thomas Leahey (2004) said, "scientists are human beings socialized within a given culture." We can often see that in particular periods, despite individual differences, members of a society concentrate on specific values and views of ethics, religion, science, and so on. This is naturally true of psychologists too. Even if it is sometimes difficult to identify the influence of society and culture on psychologists' conceptions of their subject, this is what historians must try to do. For instance, many scholars have claimed that people in the United States place greater emphasis on individuality and have a more optimistic view of life than, say, Europeans. This applies equally to American psychologists. General historical accounts of the history of psychology should, therefore, include attempts at describing the relationship between society and culture on the one hand and psychology on the other. Leahey has pointed out many interesting relationships of this nature.

We have already seen that psychology is also influenced by progress in other natural science disciplines, primarily physiology, neurology, evolutionary biology, and genetics.

Further, philosophy has exerted - and still exerts - an influence on psychology. Other disciplines may influence subject matter as well as procedures. And closely related to these changes is progress in technology. For example, the development of computers has had a strong impact upon the thinking of psychologists in the latter half of the 1900s.

Research is a collective endeavor, and scholars develop their thinking and skills in interaction with



others. They operate in a collective and a tradition. At the same time, it is reasonable to believe that a discipline changes as a result of the efforts of particular individuals. As John Benjafield (1996) has maintained, this view might also be pedagogically appropriate. By undertaking careful studies of the lives of historical figures who influenced our thinking about psychological phenomena, we can shed light on their work. I shall, however, concentrate on research carried out by the psychologists dealt with here and only occasionally go more deeply into their lives.

### Progress in Empirical Psychology

Psychology has also undergone changes as a result of progress in research and practice; in other words, psychologists have learned from their activities. Because the aim of scientists as scientists is to advance their field of study, this is naturally the cause of change that interests them most.

For three main reasons, however, it is difficult to assess progress in psychology. First, progress is entangled with other causes of change, and it is difficult to separate the two. For this reason, I shall discuss progress in the wider context of the general history of psychology. Second, everyday life is based upon the extensive psychological knowledge we accumulate throughout our lives. To assess progress, we must be able to decide whether some idea or position is new, and this is often difficult because our everyday psychological knowledge is extensive as well as diffuse. Third, there are no simple criteria for assessment of progress in empirical research. I shall elaborate the second and third points; my concern is with ideas and empirical procedures, and not primarily with the creativity of the individual researchers.

### Scientific Psychology Has a Basis in Everyday Knowledge

In his criticism of the belief that psychology had emerged at a particular time, Koch started by pointing out that psychological knowledge is as old as mankind; being human implies having psychological knowledge. Like Koch, Daniel Robinson has maintained that our predecessors must have faced psychological problems similar to ours:

Our distant ancestors, no less than we, wrestled with the problems of social organization, child rearing, competition, authority, individual differences, and personal safety. Solving these problems required insights, no matter how untutored, into the psychological dimensions of life.

When we reflect a little on what is understood by psychological knowledge, we realize that all people who develop normally in interaction with their physical and social environments will acquire considerable knowledge of psychological states and reactions.

They will gain knowledge about the workings of the senses, about remembering, and thinking; they will have an understanding of emotions such as joy, love, sorrow, anger, fear, and jealousy; and they will learn about their own actions and those of other people. They will also acquire knowledge of what to expect from children at different ages and the changes people go through in old age.

Moreover, they will have a vast knowledge of social relationships between human beings. They will know of ties between friends, married couples, and parents and children, and they will learn to respect or fear those with economic or political power. As members of a particular society and a specific culture, they will also share the knowledge accumulated in customs, moral rules, laws, religion, and art. Those in certain professions - for instance, teachers, priests, nurses, doctors, lawyers, and persons in the military and businesses - will accumulate a fund of knowledge of a psychological nature. Thus, from their personal experiences and as members of a particular society, all normally equipped people will possess an extensive psychological knowledge.

Clearly, we cannot attribute knowledge we have gained as a result of growing up in a given society to progress made in empirical psychology. For example, infants have ties of a psychological nature to their mother, which they manifest by smiling when she picks them up and holds them, or by clinging to her and crying when she leaves. Adults have known of these ties long before the establishment of scientific psychology. Therefore, to claim progress on behalf of scientific psychology, researchers must demonstrate that they have

produced knowledge that goes beyond this everyday knowledge. As we shall see in Chapter 19, this has not turned out to be as simple as psychologists anticipated.

### No Simple Criteria for the Assessment of Progress in Empirical Research

To advance knowledge, scientists carefully systematize the phenomena to be studied, extend and refine observations, undertake measurements, apply mathematics, state hypotheses relating phenomena to each other as explicitly and precisely as possible, note what can support or falsify their hypotheses, design experiments to determine causal relations, attempt to find relationships of a general nature between the phenomena studied, and search for adequate explanations of them.

Improvement in any of these procedures may represent scientific progress. However, improvements in procedure may also restrict the range of phenomena so that the use of the study is reduced. For example, by making observations more precise or by introducing measurements, we may narrow their range. Similarly, experiments may allow better control of relevant conditions but limit the number of phenomena studied. Moreover, to ascertain that one approach to a study of some problem is better than another, we cannot concentrate only on improvements in procedures. We must also consider that one approach may better agree with current knowledge at the time.

The fact that there is no simple way of assessing progress in psychology, and that assessments often call for subjective or arbitrary decisions, does not mean we cannot measure it. As a matter of fact, authors of textbooks and handbook chapters continually do so, and I shall do it here as I account for historical changes. I shall attempt to be as explicit as possible and to note where my beliefs seem to differ from current opinions.

### Plan for the Book

Based on the views of the history of psychology outlined in this chapter, I have structured my presentation as follows.

In Chapter 2, I shall give a brief account of the progress made in physiology, and of the ideas of

science that predominated in the mid-nineteenth century and constituted a common intellectual background for the early empirical psychologists. In Chapter 3, I shall present a description of the early German research in perception, emphasizing some features that became characteristic of the German psychological research tradition; and in Chapters 4 and 5, I shall continue the account of the German experimental psychology, first presenting Wundt and his contemporaries, and then phenomenology and Gestalt psychology. In Chapter 6, I shall discuss the theory of evolution and British psychological thinking in the mid-1800s; in Chapter 7, British comparative psychology with special emphasis on the concepts of instinct and motivation; and in Chapter 8, early Russian psychology.

In Chapters 9 and 10, I shall deal with European clinical and personality psychology, first French psychology, and then Austrian psychodynamic psychology. In Chapter 11, I shall turn to the psychology of the United States, first to the early empirical psychology and then in Chapters 13, 14, and 15 to later developments: behaviorism, social psychology, and personality psychology. In Chapter 16, I shall review progress in the study of cognition in Europe and the United States in the first half of the 1900s, and in Chapter 17, progress in physiological psychology, particularly in neuropsychology in the 1900s. In Chapter 18, I shall report on some important changes taking place in American society, in the philosophy of science, and, more specifically, in psychology, and I shall review two approaches that emerged in the 1950s and 1960s: humanistic psychology and information processing. In a final chapter, Chapter 19, I shall review some important trends in the psychology of the twenty-first century. <>

[Automatism and Creative Acts in the Age of New Psychology](#) by Linda M. Austin [Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture, Cambridge University Press, 9781108428552]

The late nineteenth century saw a re-examination of artistic creativity in response to questions surrounding the relation between human beings and automata. These questions arose from findings in the 'new psychology', physiological research that diminished the primacy of mind and viewed human

action as neurological and systemic. Concentrating on British and continental culture from 1870 to 1911, this unique study explores ways in which the idea of automatism helped shape ballet, art photography, literature, and professional writing. Drawing on documents including novels and travel essays, Linda M. Austin finds a link between efforts to establish standards of artistic practice and challenges to the idea of human exceptionalism. Austin presents each artistic discipline as an example of the same process: creation that should be intended, but involving actions that evade mental control. This study considers how late nineteenth-century literature and arts tackled the scientific question, 'Are we automata?'

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### Excerpt: The Nineteenth-Century Debate over Human Automatisms

The ineluctable tendency of all repeated actions, however intellectual or artistic, to become automatic was a commonplace observation of nineteenth-century mental science. The physiological and often experimental "new psychology" of the century concentrated on such automatic actions and, in doing so, acknowledged life in human beings, not just lower animals, without significant or any cerebral involvement. This acknowledgment laid the foundation for the new materialisms of the late twentieth century that would further deprivilege human life and set it on a continuum with nonhuman and, in some cases, nonliving processes. From 1870 to 1911, the period covered by this book, the topic

of automatic functions was not confined to scientific and philosophic circles. The idea of animating mechanisms as the fundamental, generating force of living organic beings infiltrated almost every aspect of literary and artistic culture, sometimes well before or independent of its articulation in mentalist or physiological terms. *Automatism and Creative Acts* traces the command of neuromotor operations over areas of productive and aesthetic behavior that involve cognition, memory, and emotion. The documents covered in the next five chapters — which include treatises, novels, an autobiography, a libretto, travel essays, and institutional reports — all function as semantic recoveries of the physical and physiological automatisms that constitute the definitive artistry of photography and ballet and that offer explanatory models for less formalized creative activities, such as professional writing and aesthetic judgment.

The new psychology was controversial, and its presence in the fine and imaginative arts, as well as in aesthetics, was considered especially so. Because automatisms were negatively correlated with a Cartesian idea of humanness based on thinking, willing, and feeling, it was the task of those who spoke for arts and aesthetics in the nineteenth century to reaffirm the mind's domain over these operations during creative moments. Their theories and descriptions obviously had no isomorphic connection with taking a photograph, dancing, even, at times, writing — all of which are generating processes involving systemic and often unconscious actions. Undaunted, they worked retroactively — defending the artistic value of their productions by translating unconscious acts of creating into conscious ones. For this reason, they usually represented the rear guard in current philosophical and scientific debates and, as Adrian Rifkin has discerned, depended on "formulations" from art history "rich in their inertia and unresponsiveness to the new." *Automatism and Creative Acts* analyzes their strategies of resistance to the new psychology from the decentered public discourse in which it already had an insidious presence. I begin with an examination of the repeated exercise of individual thought described by John Stuart Mill and then consider the role of

aesthetic categories in automating displays of individual taste. From there I move on to explore the collective and organized automatisms constituting arts or disciplines that during this time were either moribund (ballet), emerging (art photography), or in the midst of bifurcation (professional and creative or literary writing). Each of these fields of activity enfolded particular controversies over automatisms, and each staked its status as art, in the honorific sense, on denying or mitigating the physiological orientation of the most contentious of the new psychological theories. Rather than viewing ballet, photography, and professional writing as distinct methods or cultural formations subject to separate influences, I treat them all as creative processes whose legitimacy depended on their being represented as intentional and attentive acts, when all the while a significant part of their operations evaded mental control.

If the debates over human automatism had a central arena, it was in the philosophical exchanges between those committed to mentalism — the idea that the mind is a separate sphere — and the experimental physiologists who often called themselves materialists because, like their seventeenth- and eighteenth-century predecessors, they viewed matter as the fundament and generator of consciousness. Their detractors often termed them "mechanists" or "reductionists" for approaching the body as a composite of separately functioning parts. This was not uniformly true; and indeed, materialism and mechanism had long been interchangeable and often misleading terms. As Daniel Cottom has remarked, the "overreliance on [the term] materialism" in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries overlooked "how the representation of machines ... was no less a matter of soulful bodily organs than of artificial tools and works." Setting organic against mechanistic models obscured, moreover, an important vein of late eighteenth-century vitalism that, Peter Harms Refill has argued, evaded the mind—body problem by "positing the existence in living matter of active or self-activating forces." Automatism and Creative Acts sets representations of the physiological, or mechanistic, unconscious in action amid this seemingly perpetual philosophical division, which has been sustained to this day as

much by confusion as by entrenched ideas of the soul and Cartesian assumptions about the exceptionality of human beings.

The concept of "automatism" has proved an especially unsettling link in the tottery separations of mind and body, human and machine, not only in the age of the new psychology, but in the current era of neuroscience and biosystems. In the nineteenth century, the idea of "automatism" was chiefly represented by its particular manifestation, the "automaton": the word has always captured a paradox, designating both a "mechanism ... that ... appears to move spontaneously" and a "living being whose actions are purely involuntary or mechanical." In the latter sense, it often appears in the texts under study here as a slur for the producer whose hitherto creative and expressive work has degenerated through repetition, fatigue, and inattention. In *On Liberty*, Mill equates the "automatons in human form" who might at some future times execute various manual tasks with "machinery." In the same passage, he famously invokes the opposition between the "machine" and "human nature." But the machine was not just a trusty metaphor enlisted by mentalists to deride and separate the regular and automatic functions of the body from the sphere of mind. It was a broad technological category with its own history, a history that encompassed various objects and, more important, different kinds of operations. As technologies such as steam and electricity brought popular attention to the idea of a completely automated machine, "automatism" became, in the words of Pierre Naville, "a general operational principle," not just a "rare technological combination" (his emphasis), and one, therefore, applicable to human behavior. The particular conception of an automatic, energy-powered machine spread from industry into the sciences. As several studies have recently shown, the body began to be viewed as an electric machine or motor; operations previously likened to machines were, as a result, reconceived as thermodynamic.<sup>1</sup> The automatisms of the operating human being under the new psychology followed, in particular, the "same concept of process that rules in machine technology," observed Thorstein Veblen, looking back in 1937 at the trajectory of nineteenth-

century industrialization. Speculation about the physiological unconscious, he elaborates, borrowed from machine technology the theory of "cumulative sequence" to understand how an operation shifts from the repetition of cause and effect, sources and objectives, to "an unfolding process" that alters the relation between these factors. Of course, as Laura Otis observes, "a cultural channel for transmitting metaphors ... always involves movement in both directions." In her most recent intervention, N. Katherine Hayles has named this interpenetration of human and technical systems "cognitive assemblages." Both adaptive and recursive, these systems extend what she calls the "cognitive nonconscious" beyond human and animal life.

And so, I shall show that the idea of cumulative sequence did not just pass from industry to physiology. It was bound up with an abstract and capacious conception of latency that informed views not just of the human neuromotor system but of a nonhuman technology, that of photochemical development. This shared concept of molecular motility led to a further discursive breakdown of the opposition between human and technological operation: for if physiology could function mechanically (as a kind of raw information system, Richard Menke has observed), then photochemistry could possess an unconscious. To countenance, in short, human automatism was to allow the possibility of creative mechanisms. The rubrics and practices of the arts and aesthetics, the focus of this book, illustrate this mutual interchange. Secondary automatism, or habits acquired through repetition, follow the industrial principle of cumulative sequence when they "unfold" into the collective, recognizable, and established actions that define individual artistry in specific fields of practice. As I shall relate, the new discourse of art photography, the institutionalization of professional writing, and the parodies of balletic movement all reflected the same attention to physiological automatism that Alexander Bain, William James, and Thomas Henry Huxley — among others — were exploring in the second half of the century.

Moreover, as certain arts, independently of science, acquired their distinctive patterns of movement and cumulative sequences, they themselves exhibited the power of epigenesis, a Kantian term (modeled

on the theory of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach) for the "formative impulse" in matter and with it the capacity to change through movement. As Stanley Cavell has written, "the creation of a medium [is] the creation of an automatism," so "in mastering a tradition one masters a range of automatism upon which the tradition maintains itself." These "automatisms" exist, he implies, independent of their operators; at the same time, they constitute any discipline's collective memory. Cavell is writing of film in particular, but his use of the word is instructive, for in this formal and psychological sense, all arts comprise "automatisms": patterns of human thought and movement that with repetition become defining practices, preexisting and independent of any single human agent. When they alter through use, they affirm the link Veblen found between the operating principle of the machine and of the physiological body. They too are not just human automatism but creative mechanisms.

Reinstating hybridity to the nineteenth-century presentation of the mind—body problem, *Automatism and Creative Acts* thus reflects a "predisciplinary" world where, as Jay Clayton has observed, "the professional characteristics of science as a discipline had not yet been codified." In its attention to the physical and physiological movements of the body during creative activity, my book joins cultural histories by Clayton, Jessica Riskin, Otis, and Menke, all of which orient the texts they study toward mechanistic rather than organic models of human behavior while exposing the open borders between the two. And in mining the creative possibilities of automatism and revealing parallel rhetorical tensions in science and aesthetics, *Automatism and Creative Acts* contributes to the flourishing field of cognitive cultural studies, which often returns to earlier texts armed with the latest findings from neuroscientific research.

I remain wary of the disembodied view of the mind that neuroscience often presents, however. Theory of mind (ToM), for example, often views consciousness as mental and fully volitional, passing over the issue that was of such importance in the nineteenth century: the place of embodiment in cognition. In neuroscience, as in the so-called mentalist arm of Victorian psychology, the "body is

reduced to its representation in the somatosensory cortex," according to Raymond W. Gibbs. It is "considered important only to the extent that it provides the raw sensory input required for cognitive computations." Instead, I turn to more systemic views that obscure the differences between bodies and machines. Critical interventions enabled by the early work of Veblen though the mid-twentieth-century writings of Silvan Tomkins on affect and the current theories of Hayles on degrees of cognition help me integrate human creative processes as Victorians described them with contemporary views of mechanical and physiological systems. To elicit process from these descriptions, I often rely on critical tools fashioned specifically for embodied action, a current term generally indicating the body's sensorimotor system as the generating force of cognition. Kinesthesia, for example, has proved a particularly valuable instrument for historians of dance, the fine arts, and literature. The coinage of the term kinesthesia in 1880 coincided, in fact, with much of the activity I discuss. Susan Leigh Foster defines it as a field of research "establishing the existence of nerve sensors in the muscles and joints that provide awareness of the body's positions and movements." Such "kinesic intelligence," writes Guillemette Bolens, enables us to read immeasurable aspects of movement.

Yet as I recover, through kinesic intelligence, the physiological motion that defining documents of the arts and of individual genius do not articulate, I encounter contrary tendencies — to mystify forms of creativity and genius, for instance, or to represent them as the designs of intentional minds. Indeed, notwithstanding their integration of technological and physiological automatisms, the nineteenth-century fine arts — those bastions of individual genius — were prestigious fields of resistance to principles of akinesic operation. In them, the idea of embodied cognition was often considered an oxymoron. The tendency of writers on ballet, photography, and poetry to credit the controlling power of a thinking soul for all expressive or mimetic acts kept vitalism safely separate from the body and linked to a quasi or overtly religious form of idealism. In this light, the parts of this book that coax systemic operations

from defiant declarations of intentional creation effectively reverse the hard work of those Victorians who — to borrow a phrase from Hayles — "restag[ed]" the "cognitive nonconscious" in "the theater of consciousness." Finally, then, *Automatism and Creative Acts* does not rehistoricize the nineteenth-century arts in ways that undermine the technophobia for which many Victorians were notorious. On the contrary, it confirms the chronic antipathy that Clayton, Menke, and others among my contemporaries have been eager to obscure. The Victorian era may not yet have developed codified practices for branches of psychology (as I relate below), but it was not quite an "age unmarked by current disciplinary conflicts between the sciences and the humanities," as Tamara Ketabgian has remarked; for the controversy over human automatism was the seedbed of those conflicts. With my debt to these insightful critical studies always in mind, I have tried to recapture the conversations among artists and scientists when living being and moving machine were still nominally oppositional but functionally collapsing. These exchanges reveal how a tenacious theoretical divide between mentalists and physiologists became the structural weakness of sciences devoted to the mind—brain problem. And they explain why theorists of the arts often began and ended their treatises and manuals by declaring the special status of the signature intellectual and artistic acts in their fields.

The theoretical instability evident in many of the texts examined in the chapters ahead was reflected by the fluid state of research into the unconscious at the time, which was mirrored in turn by the direction of individual careers. As Jenny Bourne Taylor has convincingly shown, nineteenth-century thinkers recognized several gradations of consciousness. Among the new psychologists of Britain, William Benjamin Carpenter gradually accepted the expanded role of neurosensory functions in mental behavior. Bain maintained the existence of inherent faculties of mind but used behavioral criteria to assess the mental dimension; his theories adhere to the axioms of mental science while adopting the methods of physiology. In its general orientation toward the unconscious, moreover, the new psychology differed from the

continental version: Théodule Ribot's *psychologie nouvelle* was modeled on Associationism, the preeminent mind-based psychology of the century. The operating picture of the mind under Associationism varied from a hydrodynamic model of fluid channels to a network of vibrating strings, but it consistently depicted an independently functioning realm, nonetheless. Although associationists recognized that some ideas, because of their numbers, were probably more conscious than others, they did not pursue different terminology for them or place them in a subterranean part of the organic territory they had mapped. And although in theory associationist principles included feelings, as Thomas Brown emphasized in the 1820s, in practice they almost always covered ideas only. As a result, the common phrase for Associationism, the "association of ideas," further secured the mind from the dispersed loci of the senses, from affects, and from other visceral actions. Ribot invoked this British tradition, hoping for a scientific approach to the mind independent of philosophy. His own ideas were not exclusively mentalist, however, as will become apparent later in this Introduction. From the beginning, he admitted systemic notions of the unconscious, as did Jean-Martin Charcot in his experiments with hypnotic suggestion.

Nevertheless, unlike the British strain of psychology, which remained anchored in experimental physiology and thus betrayed its ties (in the public view) to radicalism and materialism, the *psychologie nouvelle* was quickly "mentalized" on the continent during the 1870s and 1880s. Wilhelm Wundt's Psychological Institute at the University of Leipzig housed a laboratory intended solely for the study of consciousness and subjective experience. In Paris, Sigmund Freud and Josef Breuer turned their attention from psychic stimuli and physiological excitation to the mind. Freud eventually pinned his analyses on the theory of intrapsychic conflicts, and Breuer, who had gained recognition for showing that breathing was an automatic nervous process, began to specialize in memory therapy or the "talking cure" while treating "Anna O." Breuer's shift in particular, from physiology to psychology, encapsulates the dramatic swerve in an emerging discipline that (under Ribot and Charcot) seemed to

have assumed that mind was an epiphenomenon of brain but that came to concentrate exclusively on mental conflict and the suppression of ideas. Instead of connections through vibrations, Freud perceived tension, but the idea of the mind as an associative space survived in his picture of it. So "after his own failed experiments with mind—brain integration," Freud "considered the quest a kind of madness, and urged his followers to adopt psychic determinism, in which the contribution from the brain on psychic states was considered unknowable," relates George Makari in his historical digests of psychoanalysis and mentalism. Having been separated from biological causes like heredity, the Freudian mind occupied a disciplinary limbo "between literature and neuropathology." It was effectively metaphysical, "loosed from the material world." Thus depth psychology returned to the enclosed mental world of Associationism by way of *psychologie nouvelle*. It became the authoritative reference for recognizing and analyzing extraordinary psychic states such as trauma and trance and an enriching critical tool in the humanities, where it provided spatial metaphors for the unconscious.

The presence of the repressed unconscious in the fiction of the period has been well analyzed — most recently by Jill Galvan, Anne Stiles, and Jill Matus. Although both, following Taylor, have refrained from imposing a developed Freudian paradigm on the Victorians, I find it useful to keep in mind the success with which this discourse has permeated discussions of the arts, aesthetics, and artistic processes throughout most of the twentieth century; but I also want to remember the tangled germination I have just outlined. For two categories of the unconscious emerged from the new psychology and the *psychologie nouvelle*, each to anchor a different orientation in the study of human thought, personality, and emotion. While the humanities readily embraced psychoanalysis, studies of a physiological unconscious — part of what Hayles calls the cognitive nonconscious — remained peripheral to or absent from discussions of creativity. Unlike the hidden or repressed unconscious, this peripheral and physiological unconscious could not be mapped or compartmentalized as a concealed, second self.

Fluid — neither eidetic in the mental sense of consciousness nor oneiric in the sense of an irrational unconscious — it resisted representation through secondary revision (or the talking cure) in therapeutic discourses. Until recently, it evaded the interest of literary critics for the same reason. It was the unconscious of quotidian behavior. It fell, therefore, under the purview of behaviorism and sciences that downplayed or obscured differences between human, animal, and particularly mechanical action. Its various aspects are only now being explored. Reactions to the dominance of the Freudian discourse by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in the 1970s and 1980s eventually granted physiological studies a place in cultural criticism through biophilosophy. Continuing explorations of posthuman and transhuman systems have further occluded the binaries — of mind and body, of conscious and unconscious — that structured much Victorian promotion of the arts, inflamed contemporary mental scientists, and helped determine the disciplinary divides in psychology that have governed thought for more than a century.

The debate in the second half of the nineteenth century over whether human beings were automata — defined and dominated by neurophysiological operations beyond basic autonomic ones like breathing — lies, then, at the beginning of a theoretical trajectory that only in recent decades has altered interventions in the humanities. This debate was diffuse and ongoing, even among those who numbered themselves in the scientific community. I outline its chief controversies below, some of which remain unresolved.

The chapters of this book draw several cultural trends, which by themselves have received full attention elsewhere, into the orbit of the automaton debates. These include the popular understanding of genius in the late nineteenth century, concurrent changes in theories of memory, the formal acknowledgment of a professional class of writers, the disenchantment with classical ballet, the struggle among photographers for artistic status, and the scientific alignments of spiritualism and surrealism. All crossed and recrossed the fracture lines of modern science caused by the mind—body problem. Part I, comprising the first two chapters of

this book, presents stark cases of automata-phobia, the shame and fear it generated, and the displays of human exceptionality — intellectual and aesthetic — that it provoked and shaped. As both discussions illustrate, pitting human behavior against mechanical operation was the initial rhetorical move in a dynamic and diffused struggle to enunciate the worth of aesthetic, artistic, and intellectual practices that necessarily engaged human automatisms. Chapter 1 analyzes the operation of John Stuart Mill's renowned genius in light of accusations that it worked mechanically. My central text is the *Autobiography*, both in its published form (1873) and its early draft from the 1850s. Through it, I identify both the physiological operations of memory that provoked the charge that Mill was an automaton and the demonstrations of emotion that he believed would effectively repudiate such a slur. His text never quite dispels the unflattering suspicion that he thinks like an automaton, I argue, because both his reputation as a programmed prodigy and his famous account of his "mental crisis" feature unconscious functions of questionable neurophysiological province that would tend, in the eyes of many contemporaries, to confirm his image as a machine. Moving beyond this significant, individual case, Chapter 2 similarly depicts the efforts of Richard Jefferies and John Davidson to elevate their aesthetic experiences into self-conscious and contemplative modes of production and consumption in the face of popular picturesque modes of sightseeing. The ways in which they were foiled, recorded in Jefferies's travel essays of the 1880s and in Davidson's *A Random Itinerary* (1894), reveal the tension between authoritative displays of taste and the automatic apparatuses of enjoyment linked to Associationism and to a discredited aesthetic of tourism. The fruitless attempts of Jefferies and Davidson, both journalists aspiring for recognition as serious imaginative writers, show how pervasive and formative were the physiological effects of repeated experiences on associative processes long touted as the supreme forms of human expression.

Part II explores the ways in which automatism figures in specific fields of creative practices and operations roiled by the same controversies that



absorbed Huxley and others. Chapter 3 examines the parallel between the two emergent psychological models governing creative acts and alternate explanations of two separate photographic processes: the development of the image and the taking of the picture. The first part of the chapter pairs competing photochemical theories of the inception of the image, the so-called latent image, with disagreements between the mentalists and the physiologists over the relations between conscious and unconscious ideas. On the one side were those who believed that the developed image simply brought out the initial, invisible formation of the grains of metallic silver, that in effect the developed picture resulted from and realized what was already there. This theory furnished one of the principal technological examples of the shaping power of the surface-depth dichotomy, which would dominate twentieth-century thought in psychology. On the other side were those who theorized a more systemic process in which latency itself consisted of continual change. This model brings Kaja Silverman's recent discussion of photography's "unstoppable development," its capacity to generate an endless variety of prints through industrial reproduction, to bear on the chemical formation of the image. The idea of a fluid chemical image provided a technological equivalent of both Hodgson's theory of consciousness as molecular motion and Bain's similar conception of mind as energetic activity. The disagreement over the latent image was, in fact, an example of the way in which technology, or the understanding of technology, could determine distinct critical practices in different fields; and I follow these two trains of thought in texts ranging from Henry Mayhew's accounts of street photography, the notebooks of William Henry Fox Talbot, correspondence in the *British Journal of Photography*, Brassai's early essay on the latent image, and in the last third of the chapter, Charles Darwin's *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872).

Conversely, Chapter 3 also follows the tortuous attempts of spokespersons with some institutional connection or other official backing from the arts to chart the stages of creative acts in their fields while avoiding or suppressing technico-physiological

operations. In particular, the second half of the chapter explores the tension between human agency and mechanical operation in the infant genre of landscape photography. As they struggled to overcome the camera's decisive role — skeptical, as Patrick Maynard observes, that "by its technological nature it could be sufficiently capable of manifesting the ... depth psychology" of the artist behind the lens — leaders in the field fortified the opposition between the human and the machine, with all the invidious distinctions they believed it entailed. The writings of Henry Peach Robinson exemplify the aversion to technology that occurred within the emerging art form. While he tried to rescue photographic practice from its lapse into habit and nonconscious cognition, his young challenger Peter Henry Emerson perversely ceded all agency to the camera. In their often acrimonious exchanges about the threshold of consciousness and unconsciousness during the act of picture taking, these adversaries stumbled into their own debate over extent of human automatism and engaged with some of the most inflammatory issues of the new psychology.

Chapter 4 pursues the debate over human automatism into the late nineteenth-century crisis in publishing. It shows, on the one hand, that the institutional definition of the professional writer incorporated a version of automatic writing that George Gissing, in his bitter novel, *New Grub Street* (1894) resisted by representing serious literary effort as an inefficient and easily fatigued neuromotor system siphoning conscious thought. It goes on to follow the uneasy and unlikely alliance between two communities, the literary and the psychic: both used antimaterialist rhetoric to react to the rise of the figure of the professional who was, in essence, a creature made possible by the new psychology. The fictional accounts of automatic writing in George Du Maurier's study of genius, *The Martian* (1897), and James Thomson's belated review of the poems produced by J. J. Garth Wilkinson in *Improvisations from the Spirit* (1857) weigh the mentalist, psychic, and physiological origins of this controversial activity against each other. Like Gissing, Thomson based the distinction between serious imaginary literature on the one side, and journalism as well as amateur writing, on

the other, not on any feature of the product, but on his conception of the creative process through which it appeared. Setting the rhetorical strategies in these disputes against competing conceptions of the unconscious and the fractures in modern science they would help provoke, I confirm the conceptual affinities between spirit writing and surrealism: each depended for its authority on depth psychology, in particular its central theory of an unconscious as a mental repository of privileged content preexisting and hidden from, but accessible to, creative production. At the same time, I show that automatic writing for therapeutic and spiritualist, as well as surrealist programs suppressed an alternate, dynamic paradigm of creative activity, one that anchored the new psychology's focus on neuromotor movement as the foundation of consciousness, reawakened the anti-Cartesian perception of motion in matter, and anticipated biophilosophy.

I turn in my last chapter to an art of physical movement. Partly to amplify the association inevitably raised by a study of automatisms, partly to illustrate that by the late nineteenth century, the comparisons between bodies and machines "were not just aesthetically provocative but scientifically accurate," in Otis's words, I consider changes in the manufacture of actual automata and their effect on balletic style. To its critics, the stagnating art of classical ballet debased physical expressiveness into mechanical motion. In truth, the discourse of ballet had always hovered between its allegiance to the soul or mind as an abstract controlling power and its emphasis on the body as a flexuous machine. The early masters of ballet were naturally among the first to think of the body in physical and physiological motion and, therefore, to confirm Denis Diderot's impatient declaration in the unfinished *Elements of Physiology*, that there are no absolutely hard or elastic bodies. In their treatises on dance, which set the principles for nineteenth-century classical ballet, Carlo Blasis and Jean-Georges Noverre explored the continuum between the hard and the elastic body, the machine and the human being.

Automata have been the objects of study in several fine historical and critical works — by Julie Park, Gaby Wood, Victoria Nelson, Kara Reilly, and

Deanna Kreisel, among others I have already mentioned. In the last chapter of this book, I situate automata through representations of their movement, as a stage in the continuum between the mechanical and the organic. As I show, ballet was enmeshed in the controversy over human automata. A cluster of ballets featuring automata appearing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries exposed a divide between the mentalistic conceptions through which the discipline presented itself as an art and the physiological orientations of much of its training. This enduring conflict was both invigorated and reinterpreted through representations of the automatic as a cumulative sequence. Two pieces in particular, *Coppélia* (1870) and *Petrouchka* (1911), tackled the problem of the threshold between physiological and mental realms, and in doing so showcased the process of the hard body of the automaton becoming elastic — alive and human. *Petrouchka* in particular posits the automaton as an intermediary figure between the machine and the living human being. The starting point both in *Petrouchka* and in its precedent, *Coppélia*, lies, moreover, in the machine itself. Both allow degrees of affective and physiological freedom into the biotechnical category of the automatic. In this way, both pieces enact the controversies raised by the new psychology and leave the differences between moving automata and human beings indeterminate.

I end with a discussion of ballet for another reason as well. Much of this book concerns premodernist efforts to maintain a distinction not just between the human and the mechanical, but the human and the exceptional. Mill tried to distinguish between both, using his own case, but in doing so found that what makes the human exceptional set him once again in the domain of the mechanical. As an art of movement, ballet was best poised to transcend the extremes between which Mill was buffeted. By displaying both the feats and limits of human movement, the automata ballets confronted the central mystery of the automaton, the figure that in Kang's words, has always raised "all kinds of essential and disturbing questions about what exactly a human being is." By staging the scientific controversy over human automata, the ballets showcased movement and in doing so evaded the

schematic discourses in which science and art remained mired for the next century.

Notwithstanding recent attention to embodied action and to cognition in nonhuman life forms, some of the issues raised by the late Victorian debates over human automatism still exercise many of us. The first concerns the relation of movement to consciousness. It is "at the heart of the mind—body problem," declares Gibbs. "Do conscious thoughts exist in a realm separate from the body and bodily experience? Or might consciousness be intimately tied to embodied activity, not only within the brain, but also in the full body in action?" he asks. While "traditional dualists" hold that consciousness is immaterial, "[m]any contemporary scholars believe ... that consciousness must have some neural correlates." The positions of opposing sides have remained largely unchanged since the nineteenth century. A second resilient problem provoked by the automaton debates concerns the defining quality of human existence. When Alan Turing reasoned that a machine "whose behavior is indistinguishable from the intellect of the man is the machine that thinks," and that, therefore, a mind is a computer, he seemed to obviate the conundrum posed by the eighteenth-century false automaton, the Turk. Whether the Chess Player was a real or false automaton did not matter if machines had minds. To the critics of J. S. Mill and the many others who appear in this book, however, the Cartesian term was an insufficient marker of organic and human life. A human being had by definition to possess attributes not normally associated with machines: in addition to symbolic thinking, these included spontaneity, unpredictability, and emotion. But to explain exceptional instances of these qualities or their combinations, many often turned, ironically, to the very physiological systems that their definitions of the human had pointedly avoided. In doing so, they began to forge links between biological and technical cognition.

To be sure, the new psychology established the physiological basis for a set of recent positions on humanness and specifically, individuality that, having emerged in the new field of cognitive biology and biophilosophy, now affect those of us who study literature and the arts. By focusing on

cognitive processes "within a broad spectrum of possibilities that include nonhuman animals and plants as well as technical systems," Hayles has challenged the "human-dominated" context of the humanities. And by adopting the physiological concept of the will as a systemic mechanism, Deleuze and others have envisioned a hybrid kind of agency that decenters traditional notions of the human. "An individual ... is stable only within certain limits," Massumi writes; "the 'will' to change or to stay the same is not an act of determination on the part of unified subject in simple response to self-reflection"; rather, it is "a state of self-organised indeterminacy in response to complex causal constraints." Such assertions, coming only in the last few decades, actually confirm the persistence of antagonistic beliefs from a mentalist perspective. In this light, the nineteenth-century responses to the issue of human automatism seem neither quaint nor dated. When, in the course of this book I occasionally venture beyond the Victorian world to glimpse the ramifications of theories and practices with roots in the late nineteenth century — noting the effects of spiritualist practices on surrealist and therapeutic automatic writing, the resemblance between nineteenth-century reductionist physiology and later affect theory, or the surprising mentalism of twentieth-century theories of straight photography — I confirm how remarkably durable and open the debates over human automatism remain. <>

[Dimensions of Human Behavior: The Changing Life Course, Sixth Edition](#) by Elizabeth D. Hutchison [SAGE Publications, 9781544339344]

[Dimensions of Human Behavior: The Changing Life Course](#) presents a current and comprehensive examination of human behavior across time using a multidimensional framework. Author Elizabeth D. Hutchison explores both the predictable and unpredictable changes that can affect human behavior through all the major developmental stages of the life course, from conception to very late adulthood. Aligned with the 2015 curriculum guidelines set forth by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the Sixth Edition has been substantially updated with contemporary issues related to gender and sexuality, race and ethnicity, and social class and disability across the lifespan.

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Excerpt: Like many people, my life has been full of change since the first edition of this book was published in 1999. After a merger/acquisition, my husband took a new position in Washington, DC, and we moved to the nation's capital from Richmond, Virginia, where we had lived for 13 years. I changed my teaching affiliation from the Richmond campus of the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Social Work to the satellite program in northern Virginia. While I worked on the second edition of the book in 2002, my mother-in-law, for whom my husband and I had served as primary caregivers, began a fast decline and died rather quickly. A year later, my mother had a stroke, and my father died a month after that. Shortly after, our son relocated from Pennsylvania to North Carolina, and our daughter entered graduate school. In 2005, we celebrated the marriage of our daughter. After the third edition was published, we welcomed a first

grandchild, my husband started an encore career in California, and our son was married. In the year I worked on the fourth edition, I retired from teaching and joined my husband in California, we welcomed a second grandchild, and my mother's health went into steep decline and she died. That was a year of great change in our family. After the fourth edition, my son moved back to Massachusetts and now lives in the neighborhood where we lived when he was a toddler. He and his wife are raising their own young daughter there, and when we visit them, I am reminded that sometimes the life course takes us in circles. Just as the fifth edition went to press, my husband and I sold our home in California and moved to Reno, Nevada, where we live 5 minutes from my daughter's family and 40 minutes from beautiful Lake Tahoe. With this move, we have been able to participate actively in the lives of two of our grandchildren. These events and transitions have all had an impact on my life course as well as the life journeys of my extended family.

But change has not been confined to my multigenerational family. Since the first edition of the book was published, we had a presidential election for which the outcome stayed in limbo for weeks. The economy has peaked, declined, revitalized, and then gone into the deepest recession since the Great Depression in the 1930s. It is strong again, for now. Also since the first edition, terrorists hijacked airplanes and forced them to be flown into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City and into the Pentagon near my school. The United States entered military conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the one in Afghanistan continues to be waged at this writing, the longest war in U.S. history. Thirty-three students at Virginia Tech died in a mass murder/suicide rampage that shook the campus on a beautiful spring day, and a number of school shootings have broken our collective hearts, including the recent shooting at Marjory Stoneham Douglas High School in Florida. Natural disasters have killed and traumatized millions around the world, and the climate is becoming increasingly unstable. New communication technologies continue to be developed at a fast clip, increasing our global interdependence and changing our behavior in ways both good and bad. The United States

elected, and then reelected, its first African American president, but our government has been locked in an increasingly polarized philosophical division, made worse by foreign interference in a presidential election and increasingly hostile interactions on social media.

Since I was a child listening to my grandmother's stories about the challenges, joys, and dramatic as well as mundane events in her life, I have been captivated by people's stories. I have learned that a specific event can be understood only in the context of an ongoing life story. As social workers you will hear many life stories, and I encourage you to remember that each person you meet is on a journey that is much more than your encounters might suggest. I also encourage you to think about your own life story and how it helps and hinders your ability to really see and hear the stories of others.

Organized around life course time, this book tries to help you understand, among other things, the relationship between time and human behavior. The companion volume to this book, *Person and Environment*, analyzes relevant dimensions of person and environment and presents up-to-date reports on theory and research about each of these dimensions. This volume shows how these multiple dimensions of person and environment work together with dimensions of time to produce patterns in unique life course journeys.

### Life Course Perspective

As in the second, third, fourth, and fifth editions, my colleagues and I have chosen a life course perspective to capture the dynamic, changing nature of person-environment transactions. In the life course perspective, human behavior is not a linear march through time, nor is it simply played out in recurring cycles. Rather, the life course journey is a moving spiral, with both continuity and change, marked by both predictable and unpredictable twists and turns. It is influenced by changes in the physical and social environment as well as by changes in the personal biological, psychological, and spiritual dimensions.

The life course perspective recognizes patterns in human behavior related to biological age, psychological age, and social age norms. In the

first edition, we discussed theory and research about six age-graded periods of the life course, presenting both the continuity and the change in these patterns. Because mass longevity is leading to finer distinctions among life phases, nine age-graded periods were discussed in the second through fifth editions and are again covered in this sixth edition. The life course perspective also recognizes diversity in the life course related to historical time, gender and gender identity, race and ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, ability/disability, and so forth, and we emphasize group-based diversity in our discussion of age-graded periods. Finally, the life course perspective recognizes the unique life stories of individuals—the unique configuration of specific life events and person-environment transactions over time.

### General Knowledge and Unique Situations

The social and behavioral sciences help us to understand general patterns in person-environment transactions over time. The purpose of social work assessment is to understand unique configurations of person and environment dimensions at a given time. Those who practice social work must interweave what they know about unique situations with general knowledge that comes from theory and empirical research. To assist you in this process, as we did in the first five editions, we begin each chapter with three stories, which we then inter-twine with contemporary theory and research. Most of the stories are composite cases and do not correspond to actual people known to the authors. In this sixth edition, we continue to expand on our efforts in the last five editions to call more attention to the successes and failures of theory and research to accommodate human diversity related to gender and gender identity, race and ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, disability, and so on. We continue to extend our attention to diversity by being intentional in our effort to provide a global context to understand the human life course.

In this sixth edition, we continue to use some special features that we hope will aid your learning process. We have added learning objectives to each chapter. As in the first five editions, key terms are presented in bold type in the chapters and

defined in the glossary. As in the fourth and fifth editions, critical thinking questions are used throughout the chapters to help you think critically about the material you are reading. Active learning exercises and web resources are presented at the end of each chapter.

The bulk of this sixth edition will be familiar to instructors who used the fifth edition of *Dimensions of Human Behavior: The Changing Life Course*. Many of the changes that do occur came at the suggestion of instructors and students who have been using the fifth edition. To respond to the rapidity of changes in complex societies, all chapters have been comprehensively updated. As the contributing authors and I worked to revise the book, we were once again surprised to learn how much the knowledge base had changed since we worked on the fifth edition. We did not experience such major change between the first four editions, and this led us to agree with the futurists who say we are at a point where the rate of cultural change will continue to accelerate rapidly. You will want to use the many wonders of the World Wide Web to update information you suspect is outdated.

### Also New in This Edition

The more substantial revisions for this edition include the following:

- Learning objectives have been added to each chapter.
- Consistency with Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) curriculum guidelines is emphasized in Chapter 1.
- Coverage of advances in neuroscience continues to expand.
- More content on traumatic stress appears throughout the book.
- Content on the impact of information, communication, and medical technologies on human behavior in every phase of life is greatly expanded.
- Coverage of the global context of human behavior continues to expand.
- More content has been added on the effects of gender and gender identity, race and ethnicity, social class, sexual

orientation, and disability on life course trajectories.

- New content on gender identity and expression was added to several chapters.
- New exhibits have been added and others updated.
- Some new case studies have been added to reflect contemporary issues.
- Web resources have been updated for new edition. <>

[Handbook of Comparative and Historical Indo-European Linguistics, Volume 1](#) edited by Jared Klein, Brian Joseph, Matthias Fritz In cooperation with Mark Wenthe [Handbücher Zur Sprach- Und Kommunikationswissenschaft / Handbooks of Linguistics and Communication Science, De Gruyter Mouton, volume 1 ISBN 9783110186147 (e-ISBN (PDF) 978-3-11-026128-8 e-ISBN (EPUB) 978-3-11-039324-8)]

[Handbook of Comparative and Historical Indo-European Linguistics, Volume 2](#) edited by Jared Klein, Brian Joseph, Matthias Fritz In cooperation with Mark Wenthe [Handbücher Zur Sprach- Und Kommunikationswissenschaft / Handbooks of Linguistics and Communication Science, De Gruyter Mouton, volume 2 ISBN 9783110521610 (e-ISBN (PDF) 978-3-11-052387-4 e-ISBN (EPUB) 978-3-11-052175-7)]

[Handbook of Comparative and Historical Indo-European Linguistics, Volume 3](#) edited by Jared Klein, Brian Joseph, Matthias Fritz In cooperation with Mark Wenthe [Handbücher Zur Sprach- Und Kommunikationswissenschaft / Handbooks of Linguistics and Communication Science, De Gruyter Mouton, volume 3, ISBN 9783110540369 (PDF) e-ISBN 9783110542431 (EPUB) e-ISBN 9783110540529)]

This three-volume work presents the most comprehensive coverage of the field of Indo-European Linguistics in a century, focusing on the entire Indo-European family and treating each major branch and most minor languages. The collaborative work of 120 scholars from 22 countries, *Handbook of Comparative and Historical Indo-European Linguistics* combines the exhaustive coverage of an encyclopedia with the in-depth

treatment of individual monographic studies. The volumes are available as PDFs or E PUBs through publisher, [www.degruyter.com](http://www.degruyter.com).

### Editorial Appraisal:

This monumental reference work may well be the last print edition that attempts to offer a synthetic picture of the major language family of Europe and middle Asia. It is a creative swamp of insight into the structure as well as the drifting vocabularies of these languages. Anyone who wishes to correlate what is known in summary about IE, will find this work indispensable because of the editorial core of the work provides a focus by which comparisons can be made.

Excerpt from Jared Klein's Preface: In my graduate school days at Yale in the early 1970's, I dreamed of being part of a team that would produce an update and enlargement of Brugmann's Grundriss, in which the individual living branches of Indo-European would be traced from their roots to the modern day. As the years went by, this seemed increasingly to be no more than an idle fantasy. Then in the summer of 2004, I received an email message from Matthias Fritz (engineered by Stephanie Jamison) asking me whether I would be interested in participating in his proposed De Gruyter Handbook of Comparative and Historical Indo-European Linguistics (not precisely the original title). I asked him what the book entailed, and he told me that there would be sections on every subgroup of Indo-European, including chapters on phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexicon. Seeing an unexpected opportunity to fulfill my youthful dream, I said that I would participate, provided that three additional chapters would be added in each case: on documentation, dialectology, and, for those subgroups that had an ulterior history (i.e. everything but Anatolian and Tocharian), on evolution. A chapter on dialectology of course needs no special defense, but one on documentation has become something of an obsession of mine. It is of course not terribly critical for Greek, but for every other subgroup (including Italic, as soon as one moves beyond Latin), the reader needs to know what the primary sources are and how to find them. Thus, those looking for somebody to blame for the long gestation period

of this book should probably focus their wrath on me for having added 34 chapters (27.2 %) to the book in one fell swoop.

Things did not, however, progress smoothly. I, for one, had at that point never engaged in editorial work and had no idea how to proceed; nor was it clear to me what my role was to be in the project. Years went by as the individual chapters of the book piled up in my office. In 2011, I received a notice from one of the authors saying that he wished to withdraw his contribution in order to publish it elsewhere. I saw then immediately that the entire project was about to unravel and proceeded to resign from my position. Very quickly I was contacted by Uri Tadmor of De Gruyter and urged not to resign; I was told that Brian Joseph would be brought on to assist me. By that time, I had indeed gained experience in editing; but it was not until June 30, 2012 that I seriously sat down to set things in motion for the production of this book. Ultimately, I was able to convince De Gruyter that I needed an additional in-house assistant, and Mark Wenthe, despite his very heavy teaching schedule, kindly agreed to assume this role.

From the date just noted, I have put this project at the highest level of priority, working at it consistently and placing all my other long-term research projects on hold. Some chapters were dropped,<sup>1</sup> many chapters had to be reassigned to new authors, and These included: Section 1, Genetic and typological relationship of languages, Reconstruction and linguistic reality, and Reconstruction and extra-linguistic reality; Section 3, National traditions of Indo-European linguistics in Europe and North America; Section 19, Indo-Anatolian contacts in the Mitanni Period and The communities of Greek and Armenian. These were omitted for various reasons, ranging from the fact that obvious authors either declined or did not respond to our recruitment efforts, to loss of interest in the topic on the part of assigned authors, to a perceived lack of need for the chapter. In one instance, a contribution was received, but the author left no forwarding address, and the paper was consequently withdrawn by the publisher.

Original submissions in three instances had to be redone by others. The result, I would like to believe, is the most significant presentation of the field of Indo-European Linguistics since the second edition of Brugmann's *Grundriss*, which appeared just over 100 years ago. The two works, however, have almost nothing in common. Brugmann's book was deductive, starting with Proto-Indo-European and deriving the phonologies and morphologies of the individual Indo-European languages. This work is inductive, beginning with the oldest attested subgroups and working toward the most recent ones, from there moving on to languages of fragmentary attestation, larger subgroups (Indo-Iranian and Balto-Slavic), wider configurations and contacts (Italo-Celtic, Greco-Anatolian relationships), and, ultimately, Proto-Indo-European and beyond. All of this is preceded by sections on general methodological issues, the use of the comparative method in selected language groups outside of Indo-European, and on the history, both remote and more recent, of the Indo-European question. Many may wonder about the need for the discussions of language families other than Indo-European, but the original title of this book, since changed, included the phrase "An International Handbook of Language Comparison". While limitations of space forbid anything beyond a cursory glance outside Indo-European, these chapters will at the very least give the reader an overview of some of the most important literature on the language groups they cover...

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### General and methodological issues: Comparison and relationship of languages

Excerpt: The comparative method is central to historical linguistics. It is the method by which we demonstrate linguistic relatedness and reconstruct proto-languages. The results of the comparative method not only give us information about the types of changes, phonological and otherwise, that the linguistic descendants have undergone, but also a reconstructed vocabulary which can be used to make inferences about the culture and homeland of the proto-language's speakers. Finally, by studying the patterns of change which we reconstruct using this method, we are able to gain insight into linguistic evolutionary processes, such as how tree-like language split has been.

Nearly two hundred years ago, Bopp (1816), Rask (1811), and others began to elucidate principles such as regularity in sound correspondences, grammatical change, diagnostics for relatedness, and reconstruction methods which provide ways of inferring the properties of proto-languages and their speakers. In doing so, they were building on a longer tradition of comparison which can be traced through William Jones to the 18th and 17th Centuries (Sajnovics 1770; Gyarmathi 1799), and perhaps even earlier to Dante (Shapiro 1990). While historical linguists tend to emphasize the antiquity of the discipline, historical study has not, of course, remained a 19th Century endeavor. Far from being a static field, historical linguistics has benefitted greatly from recent research into synchronic language systems. In particular, historical linguistics has benefitted from sociolinguistics, as developed by Labov, Weinreich (Weinreich, Labov, and Herzog 1968; Weinreich 1979), and many others since. Studies of how changes permeate through speech communities, how speech communities themselves are defined, and how speakers interact with each other and use linguistic markers to signal aspects of their identity have all been crucial in developing theories of how language changes at the micro-scale. This has, in turn, given us a better understanding of how the

patterns that provide evidence for language relationship arise.

In this article, I provide an overview of the most important characteristics of the method with a focus on demonstrating linguistic relationship. While there have been many overviews of the comparative method in linguistics, I here focus on the comparative method in linguistics as one of a number of "comparative methods" which can be used to find out about the past (see, for example, Sober 1991). Comparative methods are not unique to linguistics, but are also found in other fields of study, especially biology. Situating historical linguistics

within other fields that study evolutionary processes is particularly important now that historical linguistics more frequently takes on the tools of other disciplines such as evolutionary biology. Furthermore, there is more work in prehistory which synthesizes results from anthropology, archaeology, and linguistics.

### Language relationship

While I do not dwell here on the different ways in which terms such as "comparison" and "relationship" have been used in historical linguistics, it is worth briefly considering both how we define language relationships and the consequences of these definitions for historical study. The comparison of languages to reconstruct their common ancestors — and to draw family trees — has typically been based on a notion of "normal" or "regular" language transmission. Such transmission is assumed to proceed from parents to children who are acquiring language in largely or wholly monolingual communities. Under this model, changes accrue when children adduce grammars with slightly different properties from their parents' grammars (compare Hale 1998; Kroch 1989). The different patterns could be due to spontaneous innovation, reanalysis, or differences in the frequency of the relevant features in the speech to which the child is exposed. We realize, of course, that this is an overly simplified picture of both acquisition and change, and relies on an idealized picture of what a language is. Children's peers are just as important an influence on acquisition as their caregivers are (Stanford 2006; Aitchison 2003),

and adults too are capable of innovations. Thus the parent-to-child transmission model is at best an idealization of how linguistic features are passed on; more accurate is a population-based model where learners deduce the features of their language based on input from their whole community (for more on agent-based models of this type, see Croft 2000). However, given that learners, on balance, come to almost identical conclusions about the properties of their language, generational models are a useful way of conceptualizing the most frequent type of linguistic transmission. This allows us to compare child-learner-centered transmission with other situations, such as creolization and mixed language formation, where both the transmission facts and the linguistic outcomes differ.

A further point of idealization comes from how we define a "language". The input to language comparison is typically taken to be uniform. Either we are working with features which do not usually vary across speakers (such as basic vocabulary) or we abstract away from variation for the purposes of comparison by treating one speech variety as representative. Clearly, such assumptions will matter more in some areas than others. Internal linguistic diversity clearly matters in models of language transmission, as the learner's input is never uniform. How learners abstract away from variation (and also acquire the patterns of variation) is crucial to understanding the role of acquisition in change. The transmission model gives us a working definition of language relationship. Two languages are related to one another if they show systematic similarities (that is, 'correspondences') across grammar and lexicon.

Linguistic comparison has been conducted for a much longer time than formalized comparative methods. However, there is also much work which compares languages without direct reference to either their evolutionary history or transmission processes. It is probably the case that whenever two people speaking different languages come into contact with one another, they notice similarities and differences between their languages. Some cultures have well-developed theories of folk-linguistic comparison which ascribe causes to similarities between two languages. Such theories

are also found in the Roman world, where we find frequent comparisons between Latin and Greek, as well as etymologizing within word families.

However, such comparisons were unsystematic and as such cannot be used for reconstruction. That is, while such theories suggest relationships between individual words, because the comparisons are unsystematic, they cannot be used to infer which changes happened at which times and to which words. This is the breakthrough of the late 18th and early 19th centuries; the discovery that similarities between related languages are systematic, while those between unrelated (more precisely, not demonstrably related) languages are ad hoc and unsystematic. All languages show resemblances, but only those which descend from a common ancestor have regular resemblances.

### Regularity

Regularity in change, while an important part of language comparison, is not without its critics. Debates about regularity in sound change have concentrated on two areas. One is whether change is in fact regular, or whether it only appears so after the fact as an epiphenomenon. The latter view is championed by lexical diffusionists such as Phillips, and earlier by Gilliéron. The other concerns the universal applicability of the principle of regularity, and whether all language families show it.

Recent work on the nature of sound change has sharpened our knowledge on the nature of sound change and its exceptionalities. For example, we now know that there are principled exceptions to regularity. Some arise through borrowing between related languages or dialects. Others arise because of frequency effects of particular words interacting with dialect. Thus far, claims about the non-application of regularity in sound change in individual languages have been shown with further research to be unfounded. An early demonstration of this comes from Bloomfield (1925).

### Features for determining relatedness

While all features of languages can, in principle, be compared, some features are more suitable than others if the goal of comparison is to determine linguistic relatedness. Importantly, the

best evidence for linguistic relationship comes from shared features which have high transmission rates and low diffusion rates, such as basic vocabulary and morphological paradigms. This guards against using similarities which may be due to borrowing (such as are often found in material culture vocabulary). While an initial claim of linguistic relatedness may be based on few features, relatedness can only be said to be comprehensively demonstrated once systematic correspondences can be demonstrated in multiple areas of the language. This guards against using accidental similarities, similarities due to independent development, or typological universals. For example, the use of the verb 'say' as a light verb is not evidence of language relationship, because most languages with light verb systems make use of this verb.

The comparative method is applied not only to sound change, but to other areas of language such as syntax, and related methods are used to reconstruct aspects of culture, society, or religion. However, as the number of traits to be reconstructed gets smaller, the greater the possibilities are for accidental similarity.

Lastly, it is important to compare language features which have phylogenetic meaning. That is, the features most useful for demonstrating relatedness are those which are transmitted (rather than derived from other facts about the language). For example, comparing phoneme inventories independently of lexical material does not provide information about genetic relatedness, because phoneme inventories have properties shaped by the physiology of speech. Secondly, there is no reason to suppose that phoneme X in one language corresponds in any meaningful way in another language, unless we also have the evidence of shared lexicon. Inventory alone does not give us the crucial evidence of cognate lexical items. In fact, related languages frequently do not have the same phoneme inventories, and if they do, the same phonemes may not correspond to one another in the same word. For example, both English and German have a phoneme /t/, but because of a sound change where German initial \*/t/ was affricated, English /t/ corresponds not to German /t/ but to /ts/; compare tongue : Zunge, tug : Zug 'train', etc.

### Horizons for determining relationships

As the time depth since the initial split between two branches increases, the more changes will have accrued and the less likely it is that systematic similarities will be readily discernible. This does not mean that the languages are not related, of course, just that there is insufficient evidence to uncover the relationship. Because the comparative method relies on correspondences in several domains to provide evidence for relationship, it has a horizon, beyond which the evidence for regularity is too slight to build the required case. Different authors have tried various ways to get around this problem, from relaxing the strictness of requirements for regularity, to concentrating on morphological or syntactic features rather than lexicon, on the (probably incorrect) assumption that changes in lexicon accrue faster than changes in syntax or morphology.

### The comparative method and family trees

As can be seen from the previous discussion, I am separating the comparative method (that is, the identification of regular correspondences between putatively related languages) from other aspects of historical linguistics which are also commonly discussed as part of the comparative method. These include reconstruction, subgrouping, and discussions of how treelike the changes in the data are. The comparative method allows us to identify systematic correspondences between the languages under analysis, to detect the lexical items which do not satisfy the criterion of regular correspondence, and to marshal evidence for linguistic relatedness. Family trees, however, allow us to represent hypotheses of language relatedness and descent.

While any aspect of language can be compared, not all comparisons are equally valid for demonstrating relationship. To show that languages are uncontroversially related, the languages must exhibit systematic correspondences in multiple domains: lexicon, morphology, and syntax. Sporadic shared similarities are found between all languages, and are due to chance, universal (or near universal) features of linguistic systems, borrowing, or convergent development. As the time depth of relationship becomes more remote, the

less evidence will be preserved and the more difficult it is to demonstrate relatedness.

### Language contact and Indo-European linguistics

In 1939 there appeared a brief, but thought-provoking posthumous article by Trubetzkoy on the "Indo-European Problem". The article's claim is commonly taken to be that ProtoIndo-European arose by convergence from several different, neighboring languages. While Trubetzkoy does indeed hint at such a proposal, it is more a speculative thought experiment than based on empirical evidence and arguments. In fact, the strong lexical and morphological similarities between the early Indo-European languages, including the idiosyncratic root suppletion in the personal pronouns (e.g. nom. \*eg[-] : oblique \*me-`l'), strongly argue for inheritance from a common ancestor, rather than origination through convergence, for in convergence it is structural features that come to be more similar, while the lexicon tends to remain distinct. In some geographical areas, e.g. the Balkans, lexical convergence may be more extensive. Even there, however, the lexica remain quite distinct; and the affixes and other grammatical elements in the convergent structures are native, not borrowed.

What is more important in the long run is Trubetzkoy's role in the development of the very concept of Sprachbund or convergence area (Trubetzkoy 1928, 1931, Jakobson 1931; an alternative English rendition of Sprachbund, going back to Emeneau [1956], is 'linguistic area'). To this must be added the claim at the foundation of Trubetzkoy's (1939) thought experiment, namely that the interaction between the languages of convergence areas is the same as that between dialects of a given language.

The new concept of structural convergence between distinct languages introduced an important alternative to traditional ideas about language contact as resulting primarily in lexical borrowing, with the added concept of substratum (or in some cases superstratum) influence as an explanation of structural similarities not ascribable to genetic relationship (see e.g. Pott 1833/1836 on Sanskrit retroflexion).

I examine both these traditional ideas about language contact and the alternative notion of convergence, with major focus on their relevance to Indo-European linguistics. I begin with lexical borrowing (section 2). Section 3 addresses the concept of substratum. Section 4 deals with convergence. Section 5 addresses the relationship between convergence and Indo-European dialectology. Section 6 presents conclusions and implications.

### Lexical borrowing

The most obvious effect of language contact is lexical borrowing. As long as the context is clear, the sources and direction of borrowing tend to be uncontroversial. Elsewhere, we have to rely on several criteria in order to argue for borrowing. These include etymological "motivation", cultural context, and historical priority. For instance, the relation between words for 'sugar' and 'candy' (Skt. *sarkara* : Pers. *sakar* : Arab. *sukkar* : Engl. *sugar*, etc. and Skt. *khandā* : Pers. *qand* : Arab. *qandi* : Engl. *candy*) can be explained as a series of borrowings from India via the Middle and Near East to Europe, because only in Sanskrit are the words in question etymologically motivated — as semantic specializations of preexisting words meaning 'sand, grit' and 'piece, chunk' respectively. Similarly in the set Engl. *sky scraper* : Fr. *gratte-ciel* : Span. *rasca cielos*, an American English origin is likely, since the construction of tall buildings deserving the name began in Chicago (after the Great Fire). Without such evidence of etymological motivation and/or historical or cultural priority, the source and direction of borrowing is extremely difficult to detect. In fact, in the case of *sky scraper*, it would be impossible, given that — through the process of calquing — each language created its own word from native resources, such that each word appears to be etymologically motivated.

The implications of these criteria and potential difficulties for Indo-European linguistics can be briefly illustrated with the case of the following set of words for 'wheel': PIE *\*kwekwlo-* : Sumer. *gigir* : Semit. *\*gilgal* : Kartvel. *\*brbar/\*rgar* (Gamkrelidze and Ivanov 1995). The PIE word is universally analyzed as involving (partial) reduplication of the root *\*kwel/kwl-* 'turn' and is

thus etymologically motivated. As it turns out, the same analysis holds for the Kartvelian words, based on the roots *bar/br* and *gar/gr*, respectively (Gamkrelidze and Ivanov 1995), as well as for Sum. *gigir* (Halloran 1999, s.v. *g'sgigir*[2]), and Semitic *galgal* (cf. *gll* 'turn'). We are thus dealing with a case strikingly similar to that of 'sky scraper'. Gamkrelidze and Ivanov, accepting the older view that the wheel was invented in the Near East, argue for a spread of the words from that area — presumably by calquing. More recent evidence (Anthony 2007) shows that wheeled vehicles arose at roughly the same time (ca. 3,500 BCE) both in the Near East and in Europe, making it difficult to determine the source for the words for wheel. Any of the languages could have been the source, or some other, unknown language. Parpola argues for a PIE origin, considering even the simple root *gir* of Sumerian to be of PIE origin. But in the case of Semitic it would be difficult to consider the root *g-l-* underlying *galgal* 'wheel' to be a borrowing from PIE. Murtonen provides ample evidence for the antiquity of this root, not only in Semitic, but even in Afro-Asiatic (see Somali *galgal* 'roll, rolling'; Tuareg *galallat* 'be round, circular').

### Substratum

The notion that migration and resulting contact can lead to linguistic change has been around since at least the time of Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia* (ca. 1300 CE). Influence by substratum (or superstratum) languages has been assumed especially commonly in Romance linguistics (see the discussion in Cravens 2002). In Indo-European linguistics, the notion of substratum influence seems to have been first introduced by Pott (1833/ 1836) in order to explain the retroflex consonants of Sanskrit (I ignore more generic references to the effects of language contact, such as William Jones's speculation [1788 (1786)] that Celtic and Germanic are "blended with a very different idiom").

As has often been noted, many cases of linguistic change attributed to substratum influence are problematic, and "internal" explanations (not involving contact) are at least as explanatory, if not better; and some proposals, such as Millardet's

(1933) invoking an unknown "substrat X" to account for the appearance of retroflex consonants in several Romance languages, are downright silly. See e.g. the critical discussion by Cravens (2002), as well as Hock (1986/1991) with references. On the other hand, examples like Indian English seem to lend strong support to the possibility of substratum influence, with extensive Indianization, especially in its phonology (unaspirated voiceless stops, retroflex for English alveolar stops, etc.). In fact, Thomason and Kaufman (1988) argue that, in effect, priority should be given to contact explanations over purely internal ones.

Rather than succumbing to either "substratophobia" or "substratomania", the best approach would be to decide particular cases on empirical grounds and, in some cases, to admit that a decision may not be possible. As it turns out, the latter generally seems to be true in the case of early Indo-European languages for which substratum influence has been proposed.

An early Indo-European subgroup for which external (generally Afro-Asiatic or North African) substratum influence has been frequently invoked is Insular Celtic. As Watkins (1962) has noted, with focus on the Celtic verb:

Without sure knowledge of the presence of such substrate populations, and without any notion of the nature of the languages they might have spoken, such a line of speculation is otiose: it is merely a displacement of the problem, a substitution of one unknown for another.

If, however, by the utilization of more recent techniques of linguistic analysis, we can account for the peculiar development of the Celtic verbal system, as a direct and unmediated successor of the Indo-European verbal system, then the necessity for recourse to such hypothetical substrata simply disappears.

In the study of early Slavic and Baltic, it has often been claimed that the use of the genitive with negation and to mark partitive objects reflects substratum influence from neighboring Uralic, which uses the partitive case under the same circumstances. On the Uralic side, the use of the partitive has been attributed to Baltic influence.

Under the circumstances, a principled decision as to which language was the source of the phenomenon may not be possible — although the similarities are certainly likely to result from contact. Situations of this sort, where we find structural similarities in neighboring languages without there being a likely (single) source for the similarities, are typical of convergence areas.

In the case of Sanskrit retroflexion, first addressed by Pott, as well as other features shared by Sanskrit/Indo-Aryan and other languages of South Asia, the general consensus is still that these features reflect Dravidian substratum influence. I have argued that the evidence for Dravidian substratum influence is not cogent, the features in question can be explained internally, and a case can be made for bi- or multilateral convergence instead of unilateral substratum influence. Further, Tikkanen (1988) points out that the Dravidian substratum hypothesis ignores the alternative possibility that an early form of Burushaski (or some other northwestern language) may have been the source of the "Dravidian" features of Sanskrit. Even in Indian English, there is evidence that a unilateral substratum account is not appropriate. In addition to extensive influence of Indian languages on English, we also find influence of English on the languages of South Asia.

Cases like the ones just discussed do not, of course, invalidate the possibility of substratum effects in early Indo-European languages. An area where such effects are quite likely is Anatolia; see e.g. Yakubovich (2010) on Hurrian and Luwian. Even here, however, one wonders whether the influence was unidirectional or bidirectional.

### Convergence as an alternative to substratum

We have seen in the preceding section that convergence, the phenomenon advocated by Trubetzkoy, must be considered an important alternative to the unidirectional process of substratum influence. Convergence can be briefly defined as an increase in structural similarity between different, distinct languages that are not necessarily related. To be successful, convergence requires extended bilingual contact, such that the

effects of contact can build up and differences in structure can over time be diminished.

Most important for present purposes are two additional aspects of convergence. First, in convergence areas it is typically impossible to single out one language as donor; rather, every language may contribute to the shared features. Second, features may be spread unevenly, with some found only in a portion of the area. This is the case for South Asia and the Balkans. Convergence areas, thus, are similar to dialect continua, and in this sense Trubetzkoy's claim that there is no difference between the two phenomena is borne out.

Except for Trubetzkoy's (1939) thought experiment, convergence has generally been an underutilized concept in studies of early Indo-European language contact. A major exception is Gamkrelidze and Ivanov's (1995) claim that lexical as well as structural similarities between Proto-Indo-European and Kartvelian and Mesopotamian languages show that PIE was spoken in a convergence area close to the Caucasus and the Near East. The "Glottalic Theory" however — perhaps the most important structural support for the hypothesis — remains controversial, and hence the argument loses its force.

### Convergence and Indo-European dialectology

As noted in the preceding section, convergence areas are similar to dialect continua, in that linguistic features are not evenly spread over the entire area but may cover only part of it. In fact, convergence areas tend to exhibit the same crisscrossing network of isoglosses as dialect continua.

This fact has consequences for Indo-European dialectology: If two neighboring varieties of Indo-European share particular features, it is not a priori possible to determine whether these features reflect common dialectal innovation (within a PIE dialect continuum) or secondary convergence at a point when the varieties have become distinct languages but have remained in contact.

A case in point may be the relationship between Baltic and Slavic. Before Meillet (1908) challenged

the view, Balto-Slavic was commonly recognized as a distinct subgroup of Indo-European. Since then, the debate whether the similarities between Baltic and Slavic should be attributed to descent from a common, Balto-Slavic ancestor or to contact between two distinct subgroups (Baltic and Slavic) has not come to a clear conclusion (see Klimas 1973 for a useful survey). Perhaps the issue can never be fully resolved, because, as is well known, there is no clear line of demarcation between different dialect and different language and hence between dialect and language contact. However, one common innovation of Baltic and Slavic, Winter's Law, might perhaps be considered too idiosyncratic to be attributed to language contact and would therefore be more likely the result of dialect contact. But it is difficult to be certain as to what constitutes a sufficiently high degree of idiosyncrasy to rule out language contact.

As the case of Baltic and Slavic shows, convergence may affect not just PIE and other, non-Indo-European languages, but also various Indo-European languages or subgroups. In fact, except for Turkish, which is only marginally involved, all the languages of the Balkan convergence area belong to the Indo-European family.

A recent paper by Garrett (1999) suggests an even greater relevance of convergence for early Indo-European. In his view, the usual classification of Indo-European into subgroups such as Anatolian, Indo-Iranian, Greek, Italic, Celtic, is anachronistic, reflecting 19th-century ideas of race, ethnicity, and nation. Instead we should conceptualize early Indo-European society as a relatively loose array of tribes, which affiliate and reaffiliate in numerous ways before finally crystallizing into more defined groups such as Anatolian or Greek. This interpretation makes it possible to account for, say, the similarity of the iterative-duratives in *-ske-* of East Ionic Greek with the identical category of Anatolian (specifically Hittite) and the agreement of Greek with Italic alone in their devoicing of the PIE voiced aspirates as the result of convergent developments at the early tribal level.

Garrett's approach holds out the promise of accounting for other similarities which cause difficulties under the traditional view of Indo-



European dialectology. One such case might be the early palatalization of labiovelars in Armenian, Albanian, and part of Greek, as in PIE \*kwetwores > Arm. -c `ork`, Gk. tessares '4' and \*gwhermo- > Alb. zjarm `fire`. The limitation of this palatalization to labiovelars (to the exclusion of plain velars) may be sufficiently idiosyncratic to rule out independent innovation. At the same time, the development affected only part of Greek; and the earliest form of Greek, Mycenaean, still had unpalatalized labiovelars. This makes it difficult to assume common innovation in a PIE dialect continuum, but would be explainable if we assume that Garrett's loose affiliation of Indo-European tribes persisted in some form beyond Mycenaean times and made it possible for Armenian, Albanian, and part of Greek to participate in a late convergent development.

### Conclusions and outlook

Of the various effects of linguistic contact briefly discussed in this article, convergence is probably the most interesting and exciting for Indo-European linguistics. Lexical borrowing has been dealt with in great detail for at least 150 years. Substratum explanations have often been approached with considerable caution; and we have seen some of the reasons for this caution. In several cases we have seen that convergence may be a more appropriate approach. More important yet, convergence is still an underutilized concept in Indo-European linguistics and for that reason alone deserves greater attention. To this must be added the exciting further insights promised by Garrett's hypothesis of intertribal convergence to account for phenomena that do not fit comfortably into the traditional distinction between language and dialect contact. <>

[Mind Beyond Brain: Buddhism, Science, and the Paranormal](#) by David Presti with Bruce Greyson, Edward F. Kelly, Emily Williams Kelly, and Jim B. Tucker [Columbia University Press, 9780231189569]

Among the most profound questions we confront are the nature of what and who we are as conscious beings, and how the human mind relates to the rest of what we consider reality. For millennia, philosophers, scientists, and religious

thinkers have attempted answers, perhaps none more meaningful today than those offered by neuroscience and by Buddhism. The encounter between these two worldviews has spurred ongoing conversations about what science and Buddhism can teach each other about mind and reality.

In [Mind Beyond Brain](#), the neuroscientist David E. Presti, with the assistance of other distinguished researchers, explores how evidence for anomalous phenomena—such as near-death experiences, apparent memories of past lives, apparitions, experiences associated with death, and other so-called psi or paranormal phenomena, including telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition—can influence the Buddhism-science conversation. Presti describes the extensive but frequently unacknowledged history of scientific investigation into these phenomena, demonstrating its relevance to questions about consciousness and reality. The new perspectives opened up, if we are willing to take evidence of such often off-limits topics seriously, offer significant challenges to dominant explanatory paradigms and raise the prospect that we may be poised for truly revolutionary developments in the scientific investigation of mind. [Mind Beyond Brain](#) represents the next level in the science and Buddhism dialogue.

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## Index

Excerpt: When I first met a few years ago with the researchers who contributed to this book, I was excited to learn about their work. These different areas of study—near-death experiences, memories of past lives, apparitions, siddhis—reflect a principle that Tibetan Buddhists have explored for centuries. We believe that mind is not just conditioned by the physical brain and body, or even by the properties of time and space. Mind is also beyond all these. Even after the dissolution of the physical body at the time of death, Tibetan Buddhists believe that mind persists and is reborn continuously into new forms.

Mainstream science has been slow to acknowledge the dimensions of study described in this book. Given the relevance of these topics to the contemporary encounter between Buddhism and science, in 2010, I invited these researchers to participate in a Buddhism-science conference at Serenity Ridge, Virginia—the retreat center where I focus my own worldwide efforts in research, study, and teaching (Ligmincha International). This setting permitted engaging in open, lively dialogue, and the presentations at that conference were the inspiration for this book.

This gathering was a realization of some of my own longtime interests. From age ten, I was trained as a Bön monk in Menri Monastery near Dolanji, India. I entered the Dialectic School at Menri, and after finishing twelve years of study there toward my geshe degree, I traveled to the West and discovered here a completely different world. I was excited to explore on an informal basis everything from psychology to neuroscience to quantum physics. In particular, I have always been interested in how ancient spiritual practices can bring about not only profound shifts in consciousness but also physical health benefits.

Around 1993 I met some clinicians at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, and we opened discussions around the relationship between meditation practice and pain management. This eventually led to projects in which we observed the mental and physical effects of Tibetan practices—of the body (such as the Tibetan yogas of tsa lung and trul khor), of breath (various breathing and sound-healing exercises), and of mind (including

meditation practices involving imagery and visualization)—on the relief of suffering in cancer patients. Ancient Tibetan tantric and dzogchen texts tell of a wide variety of benefits from these practices, based on centuries of observation in meditation.<sup>1</sup> I believe that practices of the body, breath, and mind will one day be acknowledged by conventional medicine as potent treatments for physical disease, and will be prescribed for specific bodily symptoms as well as to improve the health of the psyche.

The researchers in this book have been observing and cataloging unusual phenomena that are difficult or impossible to explain based on current scientific theory. Near-death experiences bring up the question of how we can reconcile a brain that appears not to be functioning with a mind functioning better than ever. Cases of the reincarnation type suggest that memories and emotions can carry over from one life to the next. Apparitions associated with death indicate that the process of dying may be far more interesting and revealing than simply the cessation of the physical functioning of the body. Investigation of extraordinary powers or attainments (siddhis) such as telepathy, clairvoyance, and psychokinesis presents yet another perspective on an expanded view of mind and reality.

It is well accepted in the Tibetan traditions that body, energy, and mind are inseparably related, and that the mind itself has extraordinary power not only to ease physical suffering and prevent and heal sickness, but also to dissolve the entire physical dimension. For example, through practices of wind (grana, chi, lung), one is able to deconstruct the energetic blockages within one's bodily tissues until those blockages dissolve and one enters a spacious state that is free of discord and pain. Enlightenment itself is said to come about when one deconstructs the dualistic sense of ego identity to the point that one attains a pure state of consciousness (kunzhi, the base of all consciousness) that is beyond all conceptuality and even physicality. In the Tibetan dzogchen tradition, there are records of people whose physical bodies at the time of death dissolved entirely or almost entirely into light, with the exception of hair, fingernails, and toenails. This

highest attainment of dzogchen practice is known as the body of light, or rainbow body (gya lü).

On a more practical and achievable level, when presenting these practices to students and cancer patients I have focused on deconstructing the sense of ego identity so that one identifies, essentially, as a totally new person with a much healthier, more open, and caring relationship to pain. I have seen over and over how the warmth of loving kindness toward one's mental, emotional, or physical pain can ease and even eradicate pain and sickness.

Some of the effects of these practices are so profound and subtle that they are difficult to measure. And some of the research presented in this book faces similar challenges of measurement. But I truly believe the time will soon come when these areas of research will be well accepted. The contributors in this book are courageous to openly explore their research in the face of skepticism by many of their peers, and I think it is important they continue. What we can learn from these investigations may be applied to something much more important than trying to read someone's mind, talk to spirits, or determine one's previous lives. Investigation into mind and its relationship with our physical world, which has been conducted since ancient times by countless wisdom traditions, can not only expand upon the current limits of our science, but can offer something very concrete in meeting the needs of modern society. This book serves as an excellent vehicle in bringing very important material more fully into the contemporary encounter between Buddhism and science. It is good to see this happen.

#### Prologue: Deepening the Dialogue

The explanatory scenario of contemporary science is one of awesome power and beauty. This grand human enterprise has described many natural phenomena in stunning detail—from subatomic particles to the diversity of living organisms, from neural signaling in brains and bodies to exploding supernovae deep in space. Within this framework, much can be calculated, computed, predicted, engineered, and constructed. Applications extend from automobiles and rockets, to integrated circuits and communications technology, to agriculture and medicine. Most of us are immersed all day every

day in products derived from our scientific understanding of the world.

Yet, many mysteries remain. One of the premier academic forums for the publication of scientific research is the journal *Science*. In celebration of its 125th anniversary in 2005, the journal assembled a list of 125 outstanding unanswered scientific questions.<sup>1</sup> The first two questions on this list concerned the nature of the universe and the nature of mind or consciousness.

The nature-of-the-universe question was formulated in terms of the concepts of dark matter and dark energy, used to describe the fact that the standard model of Big Bang cosmology is unable to explain the matter and energy character of what is estimated to be 96 percent of the observable universe.<sup>1</sup> This question could be reformulated as: what is the nature of the physical universe, where did it come from, and where is it going? Or, more broadly: what is the nature of reality?

The consciousness question was formulated in terms of understanding how brain processes relate to conscious experience.<sup>1</sup> This question is essentially asking: what is the nature of the human mind? Whence comes our capacity to have thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and awareness—the qualities of conscious experience? Or, more broadly: who are we, really, and how are we related to the rest of the physical universe?

#### Dialogue Between Buddhism and Science

This book deals with those topics: the nature of reality and the nature of mind. It is offered as a contribution to the evolving dialogue between the traditions of science and of Buddhism, a dialogue that seeks to bring together the best parts of these complementary approaches to the study of mind. Western science (which has now become global science) has emphasized third-person, objective measures, in which the system being investigated is observed, probed, and measured from the "outside," using procedures that can be replicated by other scientists. Buddhism, on the other hand, has developed highly refined first-person observation of subjective experience, using procedures that can also be replicated.

The interaction of Buddhism with science is an important aspect of Buddhism's encounter with modernity. It may be dated as beginning in the mid-nineteenth century and it has many facets.' Nonetheless, the dialogue between Buddhism and science achieved new levels of promise and prominence when, in the 1980s, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama began a series of conversations with scientists from the West. Initially taking place between the Dalai Lama, psychologists, cognitive scientists, and neuroscientists,' the dialogue soon expanded to include physicists, educators, and environmental scientists.' New directions of research in the neuroscience of meditation and in the psychology of emotion have emerged from these interactions.

The Dalai Lama has been interested in science since he was a young boy. He has spoken and written of his childhood fascination with gadgets and of his wish to understand how things work, and he has long appreciated that both science and religion are associated with understanding the nature of who we are and how we are related to the rest of what we call reality. He has also recognized that the complementary approaches to observation and analysis employed by Buddhism and modern science may each have things of value to offer. He summarizes his perspective on the current conversation in his book [The Universe in a Single Atom: The Convergence of Science and Spirituality](#).

With an eye toward increasing knowledge about contemporary science among those who are already expert in Buddhist philosophy and practice, the Dalai Lama has initiated or inspired several programs designed to introduce science education into Tibetan Buddhist monastic communities in India." This is a remarkable achievement and the Dalai Lama has indicated that his contribution to increasing dialogue between Buddhism and science is, in his opinion, among his most important accomplishments. In 2012, the Dalai Lama received the Templeton Prize, an award recognizing exceptional contribution to humankind's spiritual dimension. In announcing this award, specific mention was made of the Dalai Lama's fostering of "connections between the investigative traditions of science and Buddhism as a way to

better understand and advance what both disciplines might offer the world."

#### The Present Book in the Context of the Ongoing Dialogue

This book grew from a day-long symposium that took place in October 2010 at the Serenity Ridge Retreat Center of the Ligmincha Institute near Charlottesville, Virginia. Ligmincha Institute was founded and is guided by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, a master teacher in the Tibetan Bön tradition. While the Bön tradition traces its lineage to the shamanic culture of pre-Buddhist Tibet, there is much similarity between Bön as currently practiced and the various schools of contemporary Tibetan Buddhism. All are concerned with analysis of the nature of mind, and with the development of ethical behavior, compassion, and equanimity.

Tenzin Wangyal was born in India and received monastic education there. In 1991 he came to the United States and in 1992 founded the Ligmincha Institute in Virginia. In 2009 he became acquainted with the very unusual but also highly relevant work of a small research unit in the psychiatry department of the University of Virginia Medical School in Charlottesville—the Division of Perceptual Studies (DOPS).

DOPS was founded in 1967 by Ian Stevenson (1918-2007). At the time, Stevenson was Chair of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Virginia Medical School. During his more than half-century at the University of Virginia, Stevenson carried out pioneering work in the empirical investigation of the mind-body connection, focusing on phenomena suggesting that contemporary scientific hypotheses concerning the nature of mind, and the mind's relation to matter, may be seriously incomplete. Stevenson authored a dozen books and more than two hundred scientific publications related to this work.

Stevenson was a meticulous scientist and conservative in his interpretation of data. At the same time, he was a true visionary, and courageous in his study of phenomena that lie outside the current scientific mainstream. Under Stevenson's leadership, DOPS became the largest and longest-running university-based group in the United States devoted exclusively to empirical investigation of

phenomena that are not easily encompassed by the current paradigm in the biophysical sciences for understanding the mind. This paradigm maintains that consciousness is entirely generated by, or emerges from, the physical processes of the brain and body, and can in no way be more than that (chapter 1).

One line of research conducted by DOPS involves "near-death experiences" (NDEs)—powerful and transformative events sometimes experienced by individuals who come close to death (chapter 2). Many NDEs take place under extreme physiological conditions such as cardiac arrest or general anesthesia, conditions for which contemporary neuroscience would predict that conscious experience ought to be severely diminished or abolished altogether. Some NDEs also include reports that experiencers are able to accurately perceive their physical situation from a perspective outside their own body, a phenomenon that is impossible to explain within the current neurobiological descriptions of mind-brain connection.

Another major program of research at DOPS focuses on "cases of the reincarnation type" (CORT), in which small children, generally ages two to five years, begin to speak and act as though they are remembering persons, places, and events from another, usually recent, previous life (chapter 3). These memories can sometimes be investigated, and occasionally the stated details prove verifiable to a considerable and startling degree. Cases have included, for example, extremely unusual birthmarks or birth defects corresponding to injuries or fatal wounds associated with the remembered previous life.

Another arena of work at DOPS involves studies of mediumship, crisis apparitions, and deathbed visions—phenomena suggesting that the connection between mind and body manifests in unusual ways around circumstances involving death or other physical crises (chapter 4).

Finally, DOPS houses a state-of-the-art neuroimaging facility devoted to laboratory-based studies of "psi" phenomena, such as telepathy and precognition, as well as altered states of

consciousness that appear to be conducive to these sorts of events (chapter 5).

In general, within the academic community of scientists and scholars, there is little awareness or appreciation of the amount and quality of data supporting phenomena such as NDEs, CORT, mediumship, apparitions, and psi. However, there is a great deal of empirical evidence suggesting that these phenomena do happen. Knowing this, Tenzin Wangyal invited the principal DOPS researchers to come to Serenity Ridge for a one-day meeting to present and discuss their various research activities.

The topics presented in this book are deeply embedded not only within Buddhism, but also within many other religious and spiritual traditions. An in-depth discussion of these topics might have already taken place within the Buddhism-science dialogue as it has evolved so far, but it has not. Very early on in the encounters between the Dalai Lama and groups of scientists—in 1989 during the second of what are called the Mind & Life conferences—the Dalai Lama initiated a discussion of rebirth and the possibility of memories from prior lives. He indicated that there is credible evidence for what appear to be memories from other lives and presented an example with which he was familiar. From the record of this discussion, the neuroscientists with whom he was having the conversation appeared to not appreciate that such phenomena could be investigated using the methods of science, nor were they informed about attempts to study such phenomena within the world of Western science." While some of these topics arose again in subsequent meetings, there has yet to be an in-depth discussion.

The phenomena discussed in this book present a serious challenge to the dominant hypothesis in contemporary neuroscience—that mind derives entirely from the local physical functioning of the brain and body in some relatively straightforward, though still largely unknown, manner. It is clear that such a hypothesis cannot account for things like veridical reports of memories from other lives, or out-of-body experiences in which a person is able to accurately describe perceptions from locations well outside his or her body. It is also clear that if the standard neuroscientific model of mind is

correct, then things central to many spiritual traditions simply are not possible.

In an excellent essay characterizing the current dialogue between Buddhism and science, Thupten Jinpa, scholar of Buddhism and long-time translator of the Dalai Lama, writes that:

the more metaphysical aspects of the two traditions—the concepts of rebirth, karma, and the possibility of full enlightenment of Buddhism; and physicalism, reductionism, and the causal enclosure principle on the part of the scientific worldview—are left bracketed.

Here "bracketed" means these concepts are not part of the discourse—they are off the table as possible topics of discussion. The presumed reason for this is that being "more metaphysical" they are situated outside the scope of the scientific method. We disagree, as will become clear. Jinpa goes on to say that:

[an] objective in this critical engagement with science has to do with responding to the perceived challenges being posed by the scientific worldview to key Buddhist concepts. What is the status of the concept of rebirth? What does the closure principle, which states that the only causes that operate are material, imply for the Buddhist theory of karmic causation? How does Buddhism respond to the widely assumed regulative principle in cognitive science that mind equals brain and that all mental states are, in the final analysis, merely brain states?

Excellent questions. In a companion essay, scholar of Buddhism Donald Lopez writes that:

... karma, rebirth, and the possibility of full enlightenment are among the most important foundations of Buddhist thought and practice. Physicalism, reductionism, and the causal closure principle also are highly important, especially in neuroscience. These are precisely the topics that must be unbracketed and confronted in any discussion of Buddhism and science. It is also among these topics that the most intractable disagreements likely lie.

We heartily agree. It is time to bring these concepts onto the table for discussion and to shake up the conversation a bit. If the dialogue is to truly flourish, then, says scholar of Buddhism José Cabezón, it must be understood that Buddhism and science are "systems that can both support and challenge each other at a variety of different levels—no monopolies, no holds barred!"

As will become clear to readers of this book, we believe that the science of mind is poised for the entrance of revolutionary new ideas—and perhaps on the verge of a paradigm shift such as only occurs very infrequently in the history of science. Delving into places of extraordinary challenge and "intractable disagreement" can surely contribute to catalyzing this process. Our book is offered in this spirit—in hopes of alerting readers from both sides of the dialogue to scientific research that focuses strongly on the deepest and most challenging aspects of the conversation.

#### Science and Spirituality

Questions about the nature of mind can easily evoke associations to spirit and soul, and the many different definitions, connotations, and emotional reactions people may have related to these terms. Investigation—even solid scientific investigation—of who we are and how we are related to the rest of the universe can bring one close to what is often considered the domain of religion, and apparently outside the domain of science. This proximity can be disturbing—to individuals in either camp.

Opinions about dialogue concerning science, religion, and spirituality vary widely. At least in the Western world of European and American culture, there is often a perception of tension between science and religion. Galileo's persecution by the Roman Catholic Church in the 1600s for his defense of the idea that the earth moves around the sun stands as an oft-quoted and overly simplified example. And these days, prominent scientists and other authors have written best-selling books dismissing religious belief as toxic and delusional. Others have spoken of a middle path, describing science and religion as non-overlapping domains of practice. However, none of this does justice to the far more nuanced and complex relationship science and religion have had over the centuries, and all the way up to the present time. Even the very

categories of what we now call science and what we now call religion are, it can be argued, relatively recent distinctions.

Questions regarding the ultimate nature of reality and of mind are of interest both to modern science and to religious and spiritual traditions. And it may be that the evolving dialogue between science and spirituality in its various forms represents the major intellectual challenge of our present era. <>

[The Buddha's Wizards: Magic, Protection, and Healing in Burmese Buddhism](#) by Thomas Nathan Patton [Columbia University Press, 9780231187602]

Wizards with magical powers to heal the sick, possess the bodies of their followers, and defend their tradition against outside threats are far from the typical picture of Buddhism. Yet belief in wizard-saints who protect their devotees and intervene in the world is widespread among Burmese Buddhists. [The Buddha's Wizards](#) is a historically informed ethnographic study that explores the supernatural landscape of Buddhism in Myanmar to explain the persistence of wizardry as a form of lived religion in the modern era.

Thomas Nathan Patton explains the world of wizards, spells, and supernatural powers in terms of both the broader social, political, and religious context and the intimate roles that wizards play in people's everyday lives. He draws on affect theory, material and visual culture, long-term participant observation, and the testimonies of the devout to show how devotees perceive the protective power of wizard-saints. Patton considers beliefs and practices associated with wizards to be forms of defending Buddhist traditions from colonial and state power and culturally sanctioned responses to restrictive gender roles. The book also offers a new lens on the political struggles and social transformations that have taken place in Myanmar in recent years. Featuring close attention to the voices of individual wizard devotees and the wizards themselves, [The Buddha's Wizards](#) provides a striking new look at a little-known aspect of Buddhist belief that helps expand our ways of thinking about the daily experience of lived religious practices.

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Passing out from a 105-degree fever, I collapsed onto the floor of my Burmese language tutor's home after a late dinner. What happened thereafter was mostly a blur, but I was eventually able to piece together the following series of events. The Buddhist nunnery in which I was living was twenty miles away, too far for me to get to in my current state. I had forgotten to bring my passport with me, thus making it impossible for me to stay at a hotel for the night. In 2006, it was against the law for a foreigner to spend the night at the home of a local. Fearful that the local authorities would learn that a foreigner was illegally staying at his home and unable to find a doctor at such a late hour, my tutor had an idea. Propping me up in the back of his motor scooter, he drove me to his parents' home nearby. "You'll be safe there," I remember him saying. "My father has developed a severe case of paranoia and has turned his home into a walled fortress in fear of imaginary robbers."

When we arrived, his parents were sleeping. My tutor woke them while I sat on their sofa in agonizing pain. I overheard the father refuse me refuge because he feared I was a CIA agent who had been about the weizzā. To those I spoke with in the hospital, it was a moment when, to use Robert Orsi's words, "the transcendent broke into time."

Admittedly, magical wizards with supernatural powers flying around the world healing the sick, taking over the minds and bodies of men, women, and children, and defending the religion from the forces of evil did not fit with the vision of Buddhism that I had when I first began doing research in Myanmar. But this is exactly what I encountered in a country where the majority of people abide by

Theravada Buddhism—a form of Buddhism often perceived, by people both in and outside of the religion, as stoic and staid, lacking religious devotion and elements of the supernatural.

Based on a decade of fieldwork in Myanmar and a cross-disciplinary approach (religious studies, anthropology, history), this book explores the last one hundred years of Burmese Buddhists' devotion to Buddhist wizards, known in Myanmar as *weizzā*, to argue that understanding their protective power in the lives of the devout is the key to understanding their persistence in the modern period? The wizards who are believed to possess such magic, and their devotees who harness it, are thought to manipulate the natural world around them to enact real changes. To make this point, I situate religious narratives, magical practices, and ritual works involving Buddhist wizards and their devotees within a broader landscape of Burmese Buddhist traditions and contemporary social dynamics in Myanmar, as well as within the more intimate setting of devotees' lives.

I explore the performance of Buddhist thought and ritual through practices of magic, spirit possession, image production, sacred protection, and healing through a variety of genres and media to learn about the construction, contestation, and maintenance of the Burmese Buddhist wizard-saint phenomenon specifically, and religion in contemporary Myanmar more broadly. Potency, especially the power to affect the world, explains the continuing presence of wizards in the lives of Burmese devotees, and by examining the intimate bonds that devotees form with various wizard-saints, I show that these relationships and the perceived benefits gained from them are formed in an ongoing, dynamic relation with the realities and structures of everyday life in particular times and places. The devotees' experiences reveal insights into the interface between ordinary individuals and a larger network of forces—social norms and expectations, religious constructs, economic and political pressures, and historical conditions—and how these forces are expressed through the bonds formed with the wizards. For instance, the wizards' protective power and devotees' visionary experiences can take on aggressively affective tones in moments of political crises and social

upheaval. Moments of being possessed by a wizard or having wizard-laden dreams during periods of familial or medical hardships are thought to imbue the devotee with certain supernatural powers that can be used to change their lives for the better. Therefore, *weizzā* devotees do not simply act; they narrate themselves as actors in an attempt to make sense of the world they live in. The stories they tell and interpret are part of their engagement with the world, and it is necessary to study beliefs and practices together with the people who use these ideas in the definite circumstances of their everyday lives.

Although the Buddha is considered dead and the Pāli Canon of Buddhist scriptures closed, revelation is still ongoing for those devotees who enter into relationships with Buddhist wizard-saints. The *weizzā* appear in dreams, in visions, in person, or through spirit mediums to impart new teachings, meditation practices, magical spells, iconography, and, in some cases, supernatural powers. I examine the experiences, perceptions, and revelations that have arisen from these relationships to show that they develop from a specific set of social and practical engagements and draw upon particular cultural repertoires. Moreover, this book investigates *weizzā* devotees' visionary and emotionally charged experiences that occur at their interfaces with the wizards to show how both the felt anomalous nature of such experiences and the attribution processes through which they are considered special are shaped into religious ideas and stable teachings and institutions in contemporary Myanmar.

#### Affective Turn to Religion

In this book, I trace the intimate bonds between wizard-saints and their devotees to argue that seeing religion in these relational terms allows for a great deal of fluidity and variation. Not everyone has the same kind of connections, needs, or aspirations in their religious practices, and examining these personal relationships can uncover the experiences devotees consider central to their lives, along with the varied rituals and practices that make up their personal religious expressions.<sup>1</sup> From this approach, we can begin to understand contemporary patterns of religiosity in Myanmar.



Grappling with the complexities, apparent inconsistencies, heterogeneity, and untidiness of the range of religious practices that people in any given culture partake in and find meaningful and useful is valuable, for it reveals important things about religious traditions and the ways people incorporate them into their daily lives that we might not otherwise recognize.

Focusing on relationships, experiences, and expression leads, then, to "affect." I attempt to understand how it "feels" to be in a relationship with a wizard-saint. The study of affect is, at its heart, the study of people and their relationships. By using "affect," I am referring to the name we give those intuitive forces "beneath, alongside, or generally other than conscious knowing, that drive [a body] to act and be acted upon." Affect includes nonverbal modes of transmitting feelings and influence between bodies and how they influence the ways bodies flow into relationships with other bodies.<sup>1</sup> As we will see throughout this book, this refers to more than just human bodies or even sentient bodies. Weizzā devotees enter into relationships with, affect, and are affected by immaterial bodies (spirits, apparitions, and dreams), and material bodies (images, statues, and pagodas). In this sense, affect makes up the relations the devotees create and by which they are created.

When I use the term "affect," I am also referring to emotion.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, I would argue that emotion is such a central component of peoples' religious lives that, following the advice of John Corrigan, "the study of religion must attune itself to the emotional realities of its practitioners if it is to grasp the complex textures of lived religion."<sup>2</sup> For many weizzā devotees, the recognition of the emotional tone of the relationship they have with the wizard-saint is a religious goal in itself. I came to see that the stories devotees share about their relationships with the weizzā, the images and objects they use to remind them of or interact with the weizzā, and even the dreams and visions they experience of certain weizzā evoke a wide range of emotions, and are, to use Jennifer Scheper Hughes's words, "bearers of affective memory." The means by which devotees interact with the weizzā are "repositories

of emotion" whereby religious feelings are encoded in these affective bodies themselves.

While affect theory has recently been applied to a number of fields of research, including cultural studies, sociology, neuroscience and cognitive science, gender and sexuality studies, and politics, it has rarely been applied to religious studies. The only full-length work employing affect theory in the study of religion is Donovan Schaefer's recent book, *Religious Affects*.<sup>1</sup> I have been particularly influenced by Schaefer's affective turn, especially in asking, "In what ways is religion ... about the way things feel, the things we want, the way our bodies are guided through thickly textured, magnetized worlds?"<sup>2</sup> Following Schaefer, I argue that people's religious beliefs and practices are intimately tied with their bodies. Such embodied, affective processes and responses are instant and instinctive, working at both the conscious and unconscious levels.<sup>3</sup> The affective turn in religious studies is important because it provides a means, outside of language, texts, and beliefs, for examining the transmission and operation of power, which, in this book, pertains to the power of protection: protection of the Buddha sāṣana (the teachings of the Buddha and the institutions and practices that support them), protection of the mental and physical well-being of weizzā devotees, and protection of the nation of Myanmar. Acknowledging that power resides in "the body's affects" and that one's religion is intimately interwoven "with a complex of material sensations emerging out of an affectively driven, embodied practice" highlights "the many modes in which religion, like other forms of power, feels before it thinks, believes, or speaks."

While this book is both an affective and an emotive turn to the study of Buddhism in contemporary Myanmar, it constitutes a material and pictorial turn as well. *The Buddha's Wizards* provides some of the first forays into the study of Burmese Buddhist material and visual culture. Indeed, as Justin McDaniel points out in his study of material and visual culture in Thai Buddhism, the "stuff" through which beliefs are articulated have been "overlooked in the study of religion, even in many studies in the growing field of material culture and religion," and Burmese Buddhist studies is no

exception." Burmese Buddhist meditation and monasticism have been popular subjects for scholars of religion in Myanmar, but given that the majority of Buddhists in the country neither meditate nor ordain as monastics, it is surprising that more attention has not been given to statues, chromolithographs, photographs, Buddhist telling beads, amulets, religious magazines, and pagodas, among other "stuff," that matter a great deal to everyday Buddhists.

Inspired by the work of David Morgan, I show how material and visual objects help create and preserve the worlds in which the wizard-saints and their devotees reside. The objects and images devotees use in their engagements with the weizzā are, in Morgan and Promey's words, "nonverbal articulation of space, property, the past, present, and future, kinship, status, value, power, authority, friendship, alliance, loyalty, affection, sentiment, order, ethnicity, class, race, gender, sexuality, eating, dying, birthing, aging, memory, and nationhood—among other things." I take this approach one step further, however, by applying affect to the study of the "lives" of religious bodies and the ways these bodies evoke and shape emotion in those they come into contact with. As I mentioned above, these bodies do not refer to sentient beings only. In chapters 3 and 5, for instance, we will encounter material and visual objects that, although not sentient, are nonetheless understood by weizzā devotees to possess energy and agency. This "vital materialist" approach, as Jennifer Schepher Hughes refers to it, attributes "agentic potency" to objects that are not merely symbolic representations of internal mental states but have the power to affect "social relations, behaviors, and outcomes" and are "subject-actors within particular religious communities" in their own rights"

Finally, the affective turn to religion allows me to "become attentive to the nimbus of affects whose dynamics move along and make worlds, situations, and environments." To this end, I am choosing to look at affect at the intersection of weizzā devotees' experiences that arise from interaction with material and visual objects; from dreams and visions; and from encounters with weizzā in apparitional or flesh-and-blood forms. Using Ann

Taves's theoretical work on anomalous experiences, I have chosen to focus on those experiences, feelings, visions, etc. that weizzā devotees themselves consider anomalous and worth taking note of. The Burmese words that devotees use to describe the emotionally charged experiences that arise from their unions with the weizzā can be translated into English as "unusual," "strange," and "special," and their relationships often involve gaining "supernatural powers" as a result of "following a path." Likewise, Taves's recent work on religious studies theory reframes religious experiences as those that people deem "anomalous," "strange," or "special" and are often associated with "nonordinary powers" that are attributed to a goal-oriented "path." Some experiences, sensations, feelings, and emotions are more important than others and are what devotees share with one another in person, in hospital rooms, on Internet websites, and in the pages of monthly magazines. The importance lies in their anomalies, or "things that people consider special because they are strange or unusual or in some way violate people's ordinary expectations." This "specialness" encapsulates what both the reader and my interlocutors may have in mind in terms of what might be considered magic, paranormal, spiritual, and mystical. Applying Taves's theory involving unusual events, places, objects, and experiences, the book explores both the felt anomalous nature of such experiences and the attribution processes through which these experiences are considered special and, in some cases, shaped into religious ideas and stable teachings and institutions in contemporary Myanmar. As a result, this book contributes to Taves's call for "a cognitively and/or affectively based typology of experiences often deemed religious." And this opens up potential comparative work with other religious traditions whose devout experience similar kinds of anomalies...

#### Chapter Outline

The chapters in *The Buddha's Wizards* are arranged so that the book moves thematically and chronologically. Thematically, each chapter is a window into how and why the weizzā and their devout interact to enact change in the world around them. The book looks at different displays of magic, visionary experiences, and spirit

possession to address the themes of protection, religious propagation, wish fulfillment, healing, and political manipulation. Chronologically, it begins in the late nineteenth century, tracing the possible origins and evolution of the figure we now refer to as weizzā. The book continues with a discussion of the initial formation of wizard-saint associations as a response to threats from colonial rule and moves on through the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century to show how devotees' relationships with wizard-saints transformed in response to the changing sociopolitical situation.

Chapter 1 begins with an introduction to the weizzā, their powers, and their appearances in the world as understood by their devotees. Drawing upon historical accounts from Burmese Buddhist popular magazines, biographies of wizard-saints, and devotional tracts, the chapter concentrates on the power of protection by showing how the wizard-saints and their devotees believe that they have been, and still are, on the frontline in the battle for both Myanmar's and Buddhism's survival against perceived forces of evil. The chapter examines how the wizards and their devotees organize paramilitary secret associations, or what I call "Buddhist Salvation Armies," whose goals are to use Buddhist rituals and magic spells to fend off, and in some instances violently destroy, their targets. Since the early twentieth century, groups of Burmese Buddhist wizards and their followers have taken on the duty of guarding the Buddha's sāsana from colonial, ideological, and religious threats. Sāsana (the teachings of the Buddha and the institutions and practices that support them) and how it should be sustained in the face of its inevitable demise has been a central concern of these societies expressed in their textual, oral, and visual representations. In particular, the chapter analyzes the factors and strains of discourse that have shaped religious motivations for national defense (both violent and metaphysical) and how these wizard societies have responded to different historical circumstances and perceptions of threats by colonial, ideological, and non-Buddhist forces.

In chapter 2 I analyze how an old man named Bo Min Gaung (1885-1952) with severe psychological disorders could have risen to the rank of "Chief Wizard," second only to the Buddha, in such a short

period of time. The chapter focuses on this most revered Burmese wizard-saint in order to understand what about this figure, and others like him, inspires such faith and devotion among everyday Burmese. Drawing from biographies of Bo Min Gaung, interviews with people who knew him personally, and the experiences of his devotees, the chapter examines the biographic process through which the figure of Bo Min Gaung has been created in publicly circulating oral and written sources to show that his devotees expand his biography through their own experiences of him. I discuss how his elevation to the status of wizard-saint was tied up with the events of World War II when Allied air forces bombed his village, Japanese soldiers attempted to assassinate him, and Burmese Communist insurgents imprisoned and interrogated him. From these events, his devotees began to transform his biography after the war into something very personalized, with an expansiveness of the past, present, and future linked to their understanding of their own experiences, karmic biography, and aspirations. The chapter ends by explaining how the selective appropriation of visual images of Bo Min Gaung and physical engagement with these images reveals another dimension of the personalized relationship to the saint, as well as revealing how Bo Min Gaung as icon becomes a powerful focus for personalized affect.

Evoking visions, possessions, and healing, chapter 3 examines the Burmese cultural atmosphere in which magazines, devotional literature, and other forms of popular media all recognize, endorse, and publicize the ways certain Buddhist wizard-saints interact with their mostly female devotees to heal specific illnesses. The chapter argues that these female devotees becoming possessed by a saint and carrying out his bidding can be seen as a creative yet culturally sanctioned response to restrictive gender roles, a means for expressing otherwise illicit thoughts or feelings, and an economic strategy for women who have few options beyond traditional wife or daughter roles. Young women who can channel the spirit of a powerful male weizzā, for example, are able to renegotiate the often silent and passive roles assigned to them by the religious and medical culture by setting the experience of sickness into a

new narrative framework where the wizards are the source of all healing. Women express their own needs and desires and, through their relationship with the saints, find the strength to insist on them. On another level, illness is recast as a sacred drama in which the healing power is understood to come ultimately from the wizard-saints, whether they are entreated or not. Though the women never directly challenge the social structures that oppress them, through the power of their wishes and within the flexible parameters of devotional practice, they are able to enact significant and positive changes in their lives and the lives of those around them.

In the spring of 1958, on a small farm in western New York State, the first Burmese Buddhist monk to ever set foot in the United States erected the very first Theravada pagoda on American soil. It wasn't any ordinary pagoda. It was a weizzā pagoda that the monk had constructed at the behest of Bo Min Gaung, the wizard-saint who figures throughout this book. In chapter 4, I focus on the main themes raised in the preceding chapters, namely, sāšana protection, the cult of Bo Min Gaung, and devotees' anomalously embodied experiences of the wizard-saints, in order to examine the roles they play in the lives of devotees who engage in one of the most common, yet powerful, activities thought to help manifest the wizard-saints' teachings here in the world: pagoda construction. Devotees dedicate extensive amounts of time, energy, and especially money—perhaps more than to any other activity—to erecting pagodas in various parts of Myanmar and, as the Burmese diasporic communities continue to grow, the world. Such religious structures are believed to protect the Buddhist religion and its adherents wherever they may reside, help harness and make physically manifest the wizards' power here on Earth, and help usher in a new era of peace and prosperity.

Chapter 5 takes up issues of weizzā devotion marginality in contemporary Myanmar by examining reasons for expressed hostility and mistrust toward the wizard phenomenon from segments of Myanmar's governmental and ecclesiastical authorities, and how such notions have begun to change in light of a renewed interest in

the wizard-saints among large segments of the affluent lay population. I proceed with an examination of the belief among devotees that the most powerful Burmese Buddhist wizards have used their magic to manipulate the recent political and societal turn of events in Myanmar. Like a Burmese-style Illuminati, the wizards are thought to have clandestinely orchestrated a series of events starting with the 1988 nationwide popular pro-democracy uprising and continuing with the opening up of Myanmar today, and to be ultimately responsible for the political, social, and economic transformations that have taken place. <>

[Radically Happy: a User's Guide to the Mind](#) by Phakchok Rinpoche and Erric Solomon, graphics by Julian Pang [Shambhala, 9781611805277]

East meets West in this fresh, modern take on a timeless challenge: how to find contentment and meaning in life.

In [Radically Happy](#), a meditating Silicon Valley entrepreneur teams up with a young, insightful, and traditionally educated Tibetan Rinpoche. Together they present a path to radical happiness—a sense of well-being that you can access anytime but especially when life is challenging. Using mindfulness techniques and accessible meditations, personal stories and scientific studies, you'll get to know your own mind and experience how a slight shift in your perspective can create a radical shift in your life.

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Foreword by Daniel Goleman and Tara Bennett-Goleman

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A Daily Plan for Interconnected Happiness

Excerpt: This his book is about happiness.

Okay, we probably should stop right now, because we can hear what you're thinking. And yes, we know: Who needs another book on happiness? And on top of that, who needs another book on happiness from a couple of Buddhists? If the goal of Buddhism is to become completely enlightened, why do you need a book about a trivial, fleeting mood like happiness?

Well, we think we could all use a bit more happiness. And this book offers something different: a real path to happiness. We don't explore just one single solitary thing called happiness—as if it were a bronze statue in the town square—but the different kinds and the different dimensions of happiness, because happiness is a beautiful and many-splendored thing.

We are Buddhists, and it's true that Buddhism speaks mostly about enlightenment. But without a solid foundation of contentment, basic sanity, and a decent self-image, you can't flourish in life—either as a spiritual practitioner or as a practitioner of daily life. Not everyone wants to become a Buddhist, but doesn't everyone want to be able to flourish and enjoy what life has to offer? We all want to be able to cope, without losing our shit when things don't work out. And that last point is the heart of what radical happiness really is. It's a subtle sense of well-being we can always access, especially when things are not so great (as in, when they really suck).

How can we experience this kind of happiness? By making a slight but radical shift in the way we live our lives. The root of happiness is found not in specific circumstances; it's found in the way we relate to all of our experiences—including the chaos and confusion we might find ourselves in the middle of. So learning how you can shift, moment to

moment, the way you relate to the world and to all the crazy stuff that runs through your mind—that is what this book is about. We'll also encourage you to have a few good laughs along the way, as you learn to make the shift.

What we offer here is a user's guide for your mind. (The mind is the most important device you have in your life, and nobody helps you figure out how to use it!) We will guide you through thought experiments, contemplation exercises, and meditation practices to help you get the most from your mind. This book also comes from a unique perspective: it is the result of a meeting of minds between a Silicon Valley entrepreneur and a Tibetan Buddhist guru. East meets West, ancient wisdom meets modern science, and what you end up with is a truly original perspective on how to actualize life's full potential.

Radical happiness is not theoretical. It's something we've tested on ourselves, our family, our friends, and the thousands of other people who have come to our workshops, retreats, and seminars. Like all good app developers, we did a lot of beta testing, made some big mistakes, and then worked on getting the bugs out. And that helped us figure out how to make the process of mastering our mind something everyone can do—and enjoy.

Oddly enough, our explorations and experimentation have taught us that happiness starts with unhappiness. So, let's start there. Let us introduce ourselves with some of our stories of unhappiness—how our struggles with anger and dependency led us to some important changes in our own lives.

### Discovering the Wisdom of a Lion

As a small child I was chosen, in a traditional Tibetan fashion, as an incarnation of a highly respected and powerful meditation teacher. Therefore, when I went to school in the monastery, my professors had big expectations for me. They put a lot of pressure on me to live up to the example of this great master from the past. But rather than rise to the occasion I, like many teenagers, rebelled against all the expectations and pressure. I just became more and

more angry about everything and everyone. Behind my back, the other monks called me the "anger ball," and when I was in a bad mood everyone tried to get as far away from me as possible. It was no fun.

I thought, "just because you think I am an incarnation of some meditation teacher doesn't mean anything to me. I don't even know if I believe everything the Buddha says."

Even though I was studying lots of philosophy, which I found gratifying to my intellect (for it was like solving a difficult puzzle), I didn't seem to be getting a direct experience of the meaning of the great works I was studying. This only angered me more, and made me think I wasn't really much of a Buddhist, let alone that revered old meditator everyone said I was supposed to be. In fact, the only use I had for philosophy was that I got better and better at debate, and so I could easily defeat my peers, which gave me a great opportunity to channel my aggression towards other people. I guess beating them at debate was at least better than punching them out, which was a constant theme of my fantasies when I was seventeen.

Eventually, I couldn't keep it all bottled up anymore, so I went to my main meditation teacher, a great master named Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche, and told him how I felt. His response was to teach me a meditation practice on loving-kindness. He told me that every day I should strongly wish that everyone could be happy. And then, to take that further, imagine that everyone was becoming more and more happy. Not just one or two people, but every single person.

I practiced like that every day. And it seemed okay at first. My anger was subsiding. But then one day I asked myself, "Why do I need to wish for everybody's happiness if they don't really care about me? Why should I care about them, what's in it for me?"

This way of thinking only managed to irritate me even more. I also noticed that while my anger grew, any feelings of contentment and joy completely evaporated. I was becoming more and more

miserable. I took a close look at myself and started comparing myself to my teacher. My parents and my teacher's generation were refugees who escaped Tibet and settled in exile in Nepal and India. They had to go through tremendous hardship leaving their homeland and adapting to a new country. My teacher particularly had to leave everything behind and spent most of his life in extreme poverty, lived very simply, and had very challenging health problems. I, on the other hand, had a nice place to live, plenty to eat, and many of the creature comforts of modern civilization. Yet, he was always radiating so much peace and joy that I loved to just sit in the same room as him. I figured it was worth speaking to him some more since not only did other people want to avoid me, I could barely stand being with myself.

I went to him and asked what I should do about my seemingly infinite capacity for anger and aggression.

His reply, "Stop behaving like a dog. Behave like a lion!"

"What does that mean?" I asked, "Should I roar? How will that improve my life and calm my mind?"

"When you throw a stone at a dog what does he do?" he asked.

"The dog chases the stone," I replied.

He said that was exactly what I was doing, acting like a dog—chasing each thought that came at me. I considered that for a moment. It was indeed true that when I had a first thought—for example, "That person pisses me off"—I would chase after it. Without even noticing, I would dwell on that thought, looping it over and over again, justifying it, coming up with all the reasons to be angry, and, in so doing, I would become the thought. Rinpoche pointed out to me how I was chasing after my angry thoughts, just like the dog chases after the stone.

"When you throw a stone at a lion," he continued, "the lion doesn't care about the stone at all. Instead, it immediately turns to see who is throwing the stone. Now think about it: if someone is throwing

stones at a lion, what happens next when the lion turns to look?"

"The person throwing the stone either runs away or gets eaten," I said. "Right you are," said my teacher. "Either way, no more stones!"

This lesson is at the heart of this book. The point here is for you to learn how to refrain from habitually chasing every thought that comes through your head. By engaging in the exercises presented in the coming pages, you will become familiar with just being present, undisturbed by any thoughts and emotions that may arise. Furthermore, by wholeheartedly considering the welfare of others, your own mind will be more content, and it will be easier to be fully present. One supports the other.

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