> when the subaltern speaks. By listening to the voices of these speakers, one may catch the traces or even glimpse the faces of the storytellers who cling to their stories. (301)

My question at the end of this review of two books, ostensibly similar, yet dissimilar in methodology and range, is speculative in nature: Could the two methods adopted by Sears and Blackburn meet? What if the incisive, specificity-based (though somewhat self-indulgent) research of Blackburn could be combined with Sears's historically horizontal (and somewhat diffuse at times), broad-based methodology? Of course, they would both be very different books—or maybe they would never be books at all, their size alone scaring off prospective publishers. But, in a perfect world, would it not mark a paradigmatic shift in studying "other" cultures (outside) in the Western academy? *Inside the Drama-House* and *Shadows of Empire*, seen as two ends of the same spectrum, point towards a new direction for cultural anthropology, or cultural and performance studies, as disciplinary fields—the possibility of looking at an "other" culture through myopic specificities from the inside out and, at the same time, from the vantage of a horizontal historical breadth.

—*Sudipto Chatterjee*

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The Performance of Healing. Edited by Carol Laderman and Marina Roseman. New York: Routledge, 1996. $59.95 cloth, $18.95 paper.

Performance studies and medical anthropology are both inherently interdisciplinary fields—a fact that both threatens to marginalize the scholarship done in their names and allows for its potentially radical innovation. The editors of *The Performance of Healing* suggest that the application of performance theory to ethnomedical research might, ironically, show the centrality of healing practices to the anthropological project. Such a volume would also seem to speak to more theatrically oriented students of performance by demonstrating the dramatic properties of all medical therapies. And yet the book will prove somewhat opaque to nonspecialists. While the technical rigor of many of the contributions is part of what makes it rough-going for the lay reader, the greater difficulty is its lack of a clear organizing principle. In fact, there is a logic to the order of these essays, but it appears to be tangential rather than theoretical or methodological.

The trajectory of the career of Victor Turner charts precisely the disciplinary border-crossing which this book promotes. A major innovator in the field of medical anthropology in the 1960s (see Turner 1967, 1968), and a founder of the field of performance studies in the '70s (see Turner 1974, 1979, 1982), Turner was an early proponent of the analysis of the performative elements of all meaningful social acts, including acts of healing. Many of the essays in *The Performance of Healing* wrestle with Turner's ghost, although this agon is not terribly explicit—and the range of maneuvers is as diverse as can be. The introduction acknowledges that symbolic anthropology "set the stage" (2) for much current work. But the editors imply that the collection of essays represents a harmonious contemporary perspective that complements Turner's interpretive strategies with attention to issues of linguistic performativity and embodiment. In fact, individual contributors propose performance models that are often in conflict with others. The ten essays describe a kind of arc that moves, roughly, from Turner, away, and back again. And yet there is, as I have said, a tangential kind of logic which, if you watch carefully for it, pulls you through these apparently contradictory positions.

Laurel Kendall's "Initiating Performance" recounts the failed attempt of a Korean woman to achieve the status of shaman. In an obviously Turnerian move, Kendall reverses the admonition of the '60s and '70s avantgarde that Western theatre must acknowledge its own shamanistic properties, demonstrating instead the theatricality of Korean shamanism. Likewise, Edward Schieffelin, in "On Failure and Performance," foregrounds the theatricality of ritual. And also like Kendall, Schieffelin illustrates his argument through a "failed" performance. But he complicates this perspective by juxtaposing this limited reading of performance (as theatricality) with a more expansive reading of performativity as the social construction of reality. The appeal of this doubling of performance perspectives is that it allows for a reading not merely of the shaman as performer, but also of the spirits as performers operating through humans—thus allowing us to take seriously the explanatory model of the people involved.[1] Thomas J. Csordas carries over the theme of a valorized, effective indigenous model in "Imaginal Performance and Memory in Ritual Healing." This essay comes closer than the editors' introduction to offering a framework for the various (in his view, confluent) theories of performance at play in the volume. Csordas examines Catholic Charismatic healing and concludes that symbolic and sociolinguistic models of performance neglect the efficacy of embodiment. The argument for an embodied approach is echoed in Carol Laderman's "The Poetics of Healing in Malay Shamanistic Performances." Here, "poetics" is shown to accrue efficacy through language's interaction with other, sensory performance modes.

Sensory experience is again the focus of Robert Desjarlais's "Presence," an essay on a Tibetan Buddhist people, the Yolmo Sherpa. Among them, Desjarlais argues, the shaman's power does not operate merely on a symbolic level, but rather at a sensory level. The essay reviews the "intellectualist" stance (that healing operates through a tacit, intellectual pact to acknowledge the authority of a proven technique), and the "symbolist" stance (that language is effective), finally proffering a notion of sensory healing, whereby the patient participates by listening not to intellect or language, but to his or her own body, which the shaman manipulates through the senses. Paul Stoller, an established representative of sensory ethnography (see Stoller 1989), pursues this line of analysis in "Sounds and Things: Pulsations of Power in Songhay." Stoller emphasizes the sensuousness of sound and its importance in healing and challenges ethnography, broadly speaking, to "come to its senses" (166).

Charles Briggs extends the challenge of nonlinguistic, nonsymbolic reading to posit that nonsemantic, even nonsensical healing can be meaningful. "The

Meaning of Nonsense, the Poetics of Embodiment, and the Production of Power in Warao Healing" claims that an indigenous Venezuelan healing rite disrupts any obvious causal logic. "Nonsensical" elements, overlaid with various other sensory modalities, are meaningful at the level of conferring power to the healer. (Here, not surprisingly, Briggs evokes and invokes Foucault in his emphasis on power as it is inscribed on the body.) Marina Roseman continues the consideration of healing and the body politic in "'Pure Products Go Crazy': Rainforest Healing in a Nation-State." In a Malaysian rainforest impacted by postmodern and transnational influences, healers use music and dance to negotiate healing power out of an invented "poetics from the clash of competing societies" (264).

After Briggs's poststructural and Roseman's postmodern analyses, Janet Hoskins's "From Diagnosis to Performance: Medical Practice and the Politics of Exchange in Kodi, West Sumba" reinvokes Turner to consider how politics is played out in theatrical terms in Indonesian healing strategies. The decision to effect a cure in a public, performative setting is a political decision—one which Hoskins suggests could have implications for Western medical philosophy. The Western model is in fact the subject of the volume's last essay, Megan Biesele and Robbie Davis-Floyd's "Dying as a Medical Performance." Here, an older Texan woman's terminal diagnosis is read as ritual—and effective—in its performativity. Biesele compares notes on this event with a !Kung healer during later, unrelated fieldwork, and the authors suggest that comparative medical ethnography could favorably impact biomedicine's understanding of the importance of performance in achieving humane ends.

The last two essays swerve away from theoretical complications raised by the preceding ones—and yet they engage more concretely with the moral issues that politicized theory brings up. In this sense, a coherence to the volume might be argued: where there are theoretical discrepancies, there are political sympathies. The path from symbolic drama through the sensate body and back to a politicized stage makes a certain bumpy sense. It would perhaps have been more helpful, however, for the editors to have acknowledged the disjunction from the start. Finally, readers accustomed to thinking about embodiment and the senses in other contexts might be disconcerted by the generally disembodied, technical tone of much of the writing. The disciplinary pressures exerted by both social and medical sciences are, it seems, not so easy to evade.

—*Barbara Browning*

Note

1. Arthur Kleinman has been a particularly forceful champion of indigenous explanatory models in medical anthropology (see Kleinman 1980). This argument continues to have great relevance for the most politically engaged of contemporary medical anthropologists (see Farmer 1988, 1992; and Martin 1987, 1994). While this issue is of central importance in current medical anthropological debates, the essays in this volume are by no means in agreement on it.

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More Books

Caught in the Act: A Look at Contemporary Multimedia Performance. By Dona Ann McAdams. New York: Aperture, 1996; 128 pp.; illustrations. $40.00 cloth.

Dona Ann McAdams has been recording New York's downtown performance scene since 1983, when she began taking photographs at the alternative arts space P.S. 122. In this handsome volume, 157 of her black-and-white duotone photos, supplemented by text excerpts, capture the raw, raucous, provocative energy of artists from Penny Arcade to the Wooster Group. *Village Voice* performance critic C. Carr provides a thoughtful, wistful glance backward:

> Sometimes I wonder if my so-called Golden Age was maybe the last good time in the cultural margin. Perhaps not, given that people have been mourning over lost bohemias for the past hundred years. [...] The photographs in this book answer the question of why, then, artists even do this work and why for some of us, it's a must-see. In the dynamism and the strangeness and the passion these photos reveal, there's a kind of incandescence, and you can almost feel it open up a window in your mind.
>
> —*Ann Daly*