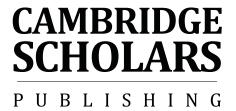So What? Now What?
The Anthropology of Consciousness Responds
to a World in Crisis

So What? Now What?
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to a World in Crisis

Edited by

Matthew C. Bronson and Tina R. Fields

**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS**
P U B L I S H I N G

We dedicate this volume to our noble ancestors in the Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness who have given us the gift of their wisdom and moved on to a higher calling. We walk in the light of Joseph Long, anthropologist and professor, a founder of the Society; Kay Rawlings, coal baroness, filmmaker, and founding member of KQED Public Television; Priscilla Lee, gifted educator and anthropologist; Galina Lindquist, whose research on shamanism in the former Soviet Union crossed so many lines; and Dan Moonhawk Alford, who walked the lonely intersection of consciousness studies, Native American language, physics, and linguistics, and came back to tell us about it. We honor all of you for your sacrifice and commitment, and we thank you for making our work possible.

We dedicate this book also to the new generation of scholars and advocates who will likely face even greater crises in the years to come. May you never waver in your steps toward a more humane, just, sacred, and sustainable world.

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Cover image: This collage by Tina R. Fields centers on a portrait of Nelson 'Atu of Dada'esalu village, West Kwara'ae district, Mala'ita island, Solomon Islands. It was taken by Karen Ann Watson-Gegeo in 1984, and restored by Daniel Ryman. 'Atu, who died in 1994, was *ara'i* (head) of the Ragito Kuarafi sub-clan. Born into a senior kin line, he studied traditional cultural knowledge from early childhood. Watson-Gegeo's research with, and for, the Kwara'ae people is described in the first chapter of this book. The earth as halo signifies a recognition of the immanent as sacred, and the sort of expanded conscience and consciousness this book hopes to foster.

FOREWORD

OF WHAT GOOD IS KNOWLEDGE IF IT IS NOT EMPLOYED?

JOHN BAKER, SAC PRESIDENT

In the spring of 2006, a group of individuals met in Asilomar, California and offered their answer to this question: not much. They also gave a reason for their answer: at this time of radical social, technological, and natural change, we do not have the luxury of pursuing knowledge that has no bearing on our present predicament.

The occasion for this meeting was the 26th annual conference of the Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness. The theme was "So What? Now What?—The Anthropology of Consciousness Responds to a World in Crisis." The papers presented at the conference covered a wide range of topics, and provoked a great deal of animated conversation. A number of them have been collected into this volume.

The Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness (SAC) grew out of a symposium on parapsychology and anthropology that was held at the 1974 annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association (AAA). Over fifteen years would pass between that conception and the actual birth of SAC as a section of the AAA. The gestation period was not easy, nor was it free of pain (Schwartz 2003). But the child (to continue the analogy) that appeared has matured into a free-thinking and wide-ranging field in its own right that is helping to push the boundaries of anthropology.

American anthropology has a long history of examining the human condition from multiple points of view. Scholars trained within this tradition are accustomed to considering our species and the things we do from the perspectives offered by the classic "four fields" of archaeology, biological anthropology, cultural anthropology, and linguistic anthropology. They have also been trained to consider the implications of their research and to apply the insights obtained through their work to improve the lives of the people they study and the people they teach.

SAC's members come from all four fields of anthropology as well as a broad spectrum of other fields, including psychology, education, and the health professions. What they share is a willingness to listen to one another and to be open to new ideas. These attitudes create a vibrant and fertile field that attracts people with such diverse interests as near-death experiences, quantum mechanics, visionary art, and sports.

You will gain some small insight into the diversity of interests encompassed within the field that is the anthropology of consciousness by reading the contributions in this volume. They demonstrate that consciousness is something that can be approached from the "inside" as well as the "outside," by considering its manifestations across time or in a specific space, and by focusing on either the individual or the social. If what you read entices you, you can learn more by perusing our journal, *Anthropology of Consciousness* (available through the online portal known as AnthroSource) and by visiting www.sacaaa.org.

When they were developing the theme of the conference that led to this volume, Tina R. Fields and Matthew C. Bronson were acutely aware of the challenges we face today. Their first question—"So What?"—reminds us that we each have responsibility for the future. Their second question—"Now What?"—calls us to step forward and take up that responsibility. There is no time to delay.

References

Schwartz, Stephen A. 2003. Boulders in the Stream: The Lineage and Founding of the Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness. http://sacaaa.org/Boulders_in_the_Stream.pdf (accessed December 2, 2008).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Every creative work involves collaboration, and this is perhaps nowhere as true as in the case of an edited volume.

We acknowledge and thank our authors first and foremost for their willingness to work with us as we shaped a coherent volume of their diverse contributions over many months.

We are grateful also to the Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness, a unit of the American Anthropological Association, for supporting the March 2006 conference and this book that has resulted; and to Amanda Millar of Cambridge Scholars Press for her ongoing, unflappable support.

Matthew wishes to express his profound gratitude to the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS) and colleagues Richard Shapiro and Angana Chatterji of the Anthropology department for their generous support of this project through a sabbatical leave and for modeling what relevant anthropology looks like in Orissa and Kashmir.

Thanks also go to CIIS from both of us for creating and nurturing the unique academic community that inspired and sustained this work.

We also each want to acknowledge the other co-editor for the synergistic, joyful way we worked together to create this book. We hope in doing so that we will not be accused of being self-congratulatory (or other-congratulatory?). It feels important for us to note that you hold in your hands a book whose process of creation has been congruent with its message of collaboration, deep dialogue, and engagement. Negotiating the demanding currents of such a large project over time can often make or break a friendship, but this collaboration enhanced ours. We leave with a much deeper appreciation and respect for one another than when we first began envisioning the 2006 conference that was to become its seed. For this, we both feel immense gratitude.

Finally, our very special thanks go to Anna M. Fitzpatrick of Together Editing, a wise woman with supernatural editorial skills who continually delighted us with her diligence and creativity. If writing a book is analogous to having a child, you are surely the midwife of this one.

INTRODUCTION

MATTHEW C. BRONSON AND TINA R. FIELDS

> The fundamental crisis of our times is a
> failure of the human imagination.
> –Editors

April 2009

In March 2006, a group of some eighty scholars and students gathered at the spectacular seaside conference grounds at Asilomar near Monterey, California to ask the question that inspired this volume, "So What? Now What?"[1] The question was posed quite specifically to the transdisciplinary group known as the Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness (see Foreword for a brief history), a community that had for three decades been exploring themes such as altered states of consciousness, healing, spirituality and religious practice, dreams, language and consciousness, death and dying, and shamanism from an anthropological and cross-cultural perspective. As long-time members of the Society, we felt that there was an opportunity to activate a "public turn," an explicitly emancipatory, applied, and criticalist thread within this vibrant and eclectic group. This was a chance to make an implicit connection more explicit, as our meetings had always emphasized actual experience of the phenomena being studied along with more formal empirical studies.

With all that was happening in the world in the early millennial period, with multiple wars raging, looming and actual ecological catastrophes, and the shadow-side of late modernity in stark evidence at every turn, we felt the urgency of realigning this fascinating, if seemingly exotic subfield, with a more general turn toward public anthropology—anthropology that serves the interests of publics beyond a purely academic audience. In this spirit we added to our opening question, "The Anthropology of Consciousness Responds to a World in Crisis." We wanted to emphasize

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[1] The theme for the conference and this volume's title originated in Fields' struggle to relate the anthropology of consciousness to the need for real-world social change that she saw daily in teaching environmental studies.

how the ethical exercise of inquiry in this subfield could be a form of capacity-building and knowledge construction that was directly relevant to the pressing problems of the times. Our choice of titles was somewhat prescient in retrospect, as a global economic crisis of unprecedented proportions emerged in 2008 and early 2009 as this book was being finalized, a crisis that was based in no small measure on errors in collective consciousness and a lack of accountability.

The conference program included many scholarly presentations but, in keeping with the tradition and mission of our society, interspersed were several workshops and performances that extended the discussion into the lived and applied realms. These experiences broadened and deepened our engagement with the conference, and led us to imaginal realms in which we gained new insights and perspectives that would have been unavailable had the conference been restricted to traditional academic modes of presentation.

As we view it, there is a fundamental crisis underlying the various breakdowns alluded to above—one of imagination. A broad study of history by a military historian has revealed that several "cognitive traps," for example, conflating causes and effects, are the reason that collective wisdom fails at critical junctures, resulting in the well-known catastrophes of history (Shore 2008). The war in Iraq stands as a signal example of a collective failure to adequately consider consequences and the folly of intervention that is completely ignorant of the "other." When imagination encompasses a compassionate concern with the other, it becomes empathy, a second factor identified by this historian as central to human resilience in the face of crisis. For the power of the imagination and empathy to be fully unleashed as resources, the well-worn grooves of thought that have brought humanity to its present state must be challenged strategically and mindfully. This is necessary in order to address what, at root, are issues of individual and collective consciousness (Bronson and Gangadean 2006). This volume aims to contribute to a scholarly and popular discussion concerning the shifts in consciousness that are now necessary in response to a world in crisis. Without delving into the complexities of defining "consciousness" once and for all (see Wilber in Rich 2007 for a discussion), we note that any single disciplinary lens or way of knowing will be insufficient to map the territory, especially if the aim is to identify those modes of inquiry and practice that are applicable to current systemic challenges.

Nevertheless, there are some broad distinctions worth making. As the Foreword notes, there are "inside out" approaches stressing the phenomenology of lived experience, more commonly associated with

qualitative and ethnographic research (Bronson, Fields, MacDonald, Turner, Watson-Gegeo, Willson). There are also approaches that focus on the neurological and somatic substrates of conscious experience ("outside in") or that integrate the two in some way (Winkelman). The anthropology of consciousness as a field has been characterized by a willingness to have a "big tent" approach to topics and methods and an encouragement of innovative trans- and inter-disciplinary inquiry. We use this name for the field in the spirit of the Society to encompass the big tent and to avoid excluding a priori those without formal anthropological training.

While this volume has an anthropological focus, we note that many of the authors are trained in other disciplines (neuroscience, ecopsychology, linguistics, public health, education, physics) and intend the contributions as a whole to be relevant to multiple communities-of-practice. We believe that scholars in the anthropology of consciousness and consciousness studies generally can find common cause with activists and popular movements in a process of "conscientization," (Freire 1974; Watson-Gegeo this volume) in which the capacity for individuals and groups to critically assess and re-imagine their lived worlds is expanded. As this shift is enacted, a more mindful and mutually beneficial alliance between the rarefied field of consciousness studies and the "real world" of grassroots community advocacy and activism is made possible. Our faith in the possibility of this shift in collective consciousness has been amplified by the recent regime change in the United States and the election of a president in 2008 who seems as dedicated to dialogue, imagination, and hope as his predecessor was to fear, conflict, and division. This change was effected in no small part by grassroots activists harnessing the power of social networking and community organizing.

Consciousness researchers can learn from people working on the front lines how to change some of the most entrenched patterns of thinking imaginable (e.g., militarism, racism, consumerism, sexism, homophobia, and classism); those working in the community can learn new models for action from cross-cultural studies of consciousness in various contexts. Shifting consciousness is itself a vital form of activism (Macy and Young-Brown 1998), and both scholars and activists will benefit by focusing on what works in effecting individual and social transformation (Bronson, this volume). Consciousness, in the expanded sense, is clearly at stake in the struggle for social and ecological justice in poor and indigenous communities (Fields, MacDonald, Willson), intercultural misunderstanding and communitarian violence based on ideologically induced "othering" (MacDonald, Parry and Duran), and the wholesale despoilment of the environment that threatens the very web of life that sustains our species

(Fields). We envisioned in the conference, and in the volume you are now reading that emerged from it, a revitalized anthropology of consciousness, one that could serve as an anthropology of conscience as well within the larger community (see the keynote address by Watson-Gegeo that follows this introduction). Our aim has been to contribute a unique set of perspectives and voices to an evolving dialogue among scholars and in the wider world.

The principal task of this introduction is to frame the volume in a way that maximizes its value for a variety of audiences and also provides an overview of key themes and connections relating to the "public turn" within the anthropology of consciousness. For a more detailed description of the contents of individual contributions, the reader is referred to the abstracts at the beginning of each chapter. Sections have been arranged thematically for coherence in reading and ease of access to those with special interests, but should not be seen as separate compartments; in fact, many of the key ideas are developed in important ways by authors working in very different contexts and with diverse aims and methods.

This book is intended to contribute to a variety of disciplinary and transdisciplinary conversations related to anthropology and its public face: the study of consciousness, linguistics, medicine and healing, and community development, among others. It is designed, in addition to serving as a reference for scholars, to provide source material for an upper division or graduate course in anthropology or interdisciplinary inquiry. With these aims in mind, we trace significant themes that will add coherence and aid the reader in navigating some of the key theoretical and methodological discussions that run through the chapters, then profile the sections and contents (see abstracts for more detail). A careful review of the Index and of the resources in the "Now What?" web site (http://www.sowhatnowwhat.net) will supplement more focused inquiry.

Raising the Consciousness of Anthropology

Since the anthropology of consciousness is the subfield dedicated to the study of consciousness, we claim it as an ideal place to open and sustain a critical discussion about the cognitive and affective resources that are deliberately cultivated by professional anthropologists and that can serve the public turn, the "conscientization" of the field. To do so we first situate the turn as a broad shift toward public, applied, and engaged anthropology.

Some aspects of consciousness are already well studied within anthropology; these are elaborated in the chapters that follow with a

special inflection. It is our assumption that the public turn will be enabled by explicit attention to imagination and empathy as resources that can be mindfully cultivated by scholars and communities. This raises the need for a continuing attention to the question of agency, of choice in human action and judgment, to which the chapters respond explicitly (Bronson, Willson) or implicitly without using this term (Parry and Duran). Altered states of consciousness or different ways of viewing the world, traditional topics for the Society, can also serve as resources for thinking in new ways about old problems (Bronson, Fields, Turner, Winkelman).

The anthropology of consciousness has its part to play in fostering effective dialogue across difference (Parry and Duran, MacDonald, Watson-Gegeo, Willson) and creating spaces where difference can live without a need to flatten or completely reconcile incommensurable realities (Rubin, Willson). Effective, deep dialogue requires reflection and metacognition on the part of practitioners (Bronson, Willson) and these deserve much further study in their own right. Still, the impact of all good intentions must be subject to interrogation and scrutiny. In this vein, many chapters consider the question of ethics, accountability, and assessment (Bronson, Krippner and Kasian, MacDonald, Watson-Gegeo, Willson).

These ideas are developed in the chapters at varying levels of detail and within particular contexts. We identify some of the specific expressions below.

Public, Applied, and Engaged Anthropology of Consciousness

Many of the chapters confront the question of public, applied, and engaged anthropology quite explicitly and help to situate the volume within ongoing debates about the role of anthropology in a world in crisis (Bronson, Fields, MacDonald, Rubin, Watson-Gegeo, Willson). At the 2008 meetings of the American Anthropological Association on the theme of "Engagement, Inclusion and Collaboration," medical anthropologist and public intellectual Nancy Scheper-Hughes relayed strategies for creating relevant knowledge that serves multiple publics while maintaining a viable career as a tenure-track scholar at a prominent research university (Scheper-Hughes 2008). She noted in this invited session on "Anthropology and the Publics" that the current structure requires that scholars with commitments beyond the academy and their own careers think strategically about how and where they present their work. As a professor at U.C. Berkeley, she is encouraged to publish in whatever (peer-reviewed) venue she sees fit, as long as she publishes. She has used this as

an opportunity to reach out to multiple communities-of-practice and to build alliances between the research community and those whom they study despite the fact that this goes against the grain of the academy as it is currently structured.

Public relevance is, however, not forbidden in a free society and she has fully exercised her academic freedom, publishing and presenting widely in both scholarly and public media. Her important work in the international trafficking of organs and commodification of the body (2003) has informed the public discussion on this issue. In her role as a consultant to the World Health Organization she is struggling to prevent the rationale of the free market from extending to the way organs are collected and distributed globally. This work may lead to more ethical protocols and increased enforcement in this under-regulated netherworld.

Dr. Scheper-Hughes' example as a public intellectual and the preponderance of similar panels and papers dedicated to the issue of relevance in the practice of anthropology (American Anthropological Association 2008) attest to the promise and perils of a "public turn" deeply rooted in the genealogy of the discipline. Cognitive anthropologists grappled with the question in their panel, "Theory, Relevance, Methods and the Future of Cognitive Anthropology." Gatewood (2008) showed how cultural modeling could inform sustainable development efforts in the Turks and Caicos.

A panel sponsored by the Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness explored the complexities of collaborative research and multivocality, providing case studies from fieldwork to exemplify the problems faced by researchers attempting to bridge multiple cultural frames and constituencies. One panelist, Marjorie Balzer (2008), posited that the "politics of healing" (Johnson 2004) had already been well described in sociocultural anthropology and that researchers working with sacred practitioners had a special responsibility to attend to such issues as appropriation and who owns native culture. In a paper describing her work in Post-Soviet Russia, Balzer (2008) complexified the question of engagement: "all responsible ethnographic research must be collaborative in various degrees, although I also acknowledge many different kinds of collaboration and 'engaged anthropology'" (1). She emphasized the particularity of her commitments and shifting identity (as patient, hostess, cultural impresario/translator, hostess, and colleague) and the ways in which, for example, her longstanding relationship with colleagues there had been mutually transformative, resulting in international educational and cultural exchanges and a higher profile for threatened cultures and languages.

Similarly, Amiras notes a critical moment in her fieldwork among the Tamazight people who are struggling to maintain their language against the forces of Arabization in Morocco. "You [Jews] got back your language and your land!" they said to her, suddenly shifting her role from anthropologist and scholar to a model-in-the-flesh for cultural revitalization and the assertion of land rights (272). Genuine collaboration is mutually and reciprocally transformative, and requires sustained mindfulness and the willingness of participants to let go of fixed maps and roles if it is to be effective (Parry and Duran).

The field of anthropology has always had both a public face and an inward gaze: "the self-critical attitude is what helps us (anthropologists) to adapt to what some call the incoherent conditions of accelerated history and new social forms that come with it" (Nader 2002, 1). Anthropology is a construction of social and economic forces, so "world events, the break with colonialism, the cold war and the acceleration of globalization all have changed anthropology and its publics in the last five decades" (1). Further,

> There is a dynamism that calls for the study of new transformations with unintended revolutionary effects. At century's end, whether the arguments came from one or another intellectual position, concern and urgency stemmed from a realization that, as I recall, Lionel Tiger once said, "as a species we are doing a bad job of running the global ecosystem which may lead to catastrophic results." (Nader 2002, 6)

Anthropology has a special part to play as an agent of public conscience:

> The central theme of anthropology is a common humanity. 21st-Century progress in the world (and in anthropology) may be construed as a common world in which we can all live together with our differences. (7)

Moreover, as one author in this volume articulates, when the "we" in "we can all live together" encompasses a more-than-human community (Fields), the struggles for social and ecological justice are united. The humanistic goals of the current public turn in anthropology can be extended to include addressing the ecological crisis, while remaining firmly rooted within its history as a discipline.

This public turn is contiguous with, and analogous to, the "interpretive turn" of the 1980s characterized at that time by an increased concern with positionality, textuality, and the genres of ethnographic writing (Rubin). The criticalist strands that were activated in the 1980s have in some sense continued in the present postcolonial moment, where many scholars are

asking for and producing knowledge that matters to real people, especially those who live in oppressed and under-represented communities. Owing to the structures of capitalism and the conditions of most working scholars, this public turn may require reprioritizing the questions and methods one employs and bracketing in some measure one's desire for professional advancement and accolades from one's peers in favor of a greater good. It will also require a rethinking of the way scholarly work is evaluated and tenure is awarded at most universities. Nevertheless, the conscious and mindful embrace of the tension between one's professional commitments to the disciplines and to the communities with which one is collaborating is a source of possibility for new theory and not, as some would contend, a tragic career-ending descent into subjectivity (Hale 2006).

The need for such a conscious embrace of accountability within anthropology was starkly evident in the now infamous case of Neel and Chagnon's research among the Yanomami (Gregor and Gross 2004), which sounds on first reading like the exploits of two deeply sociopathic Indiana Joneses[2] run amok. Not only did they falsify data according to allegations, they also started a measles epidemic and incited villagers to make war during their fieldwork in the Amazon region of Brazil. An official investigation by the American Anthropological Association (AAA) found that the research in question had harmed the Yanomami but, curiously, that the researchers had not violated the code of ethics of the AAA. A critique of the investigation's seemingly contradictory findings concluded:

> The investigating task force did not observe reasonable standards of evidence, the targets of the investigation were not represented, and task force members were compromised by conflicts of interest. The investigation and its collateral activities reflect a culture of accusation and an anthropology uncertain of its ethical or scientific stature. (1)

Certainly, in raising the consciousness of anthropology, one must attend to how a deep sense of responsibility and empathy with the communities where one is practicing is essential in the training of new scholars (Willson). Perhaps an oath of "do no harm" analogous to the Hippocratic oath for doctors is in order for those who would practice anthropology professionally. Would an organization like "Anthropologists

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[2] For those unfamiliar with U.S. popular films, Indiana Jones is a fictional swashbuckling anthropologist/archaeologist who roamed the world in search of treasure and left a path of mayhem and destruction in his wake.

for Social Responsibility" be redundant or a necessary counterpoint to business as usual?

Scheper-Hughes' remarks and the public turn of which they are emblematic are wide-reaching in their implications, given the possibility for less critically-minded scholars to be complicit in supporting the very processes of oppression that others are attempting to challenge. Thus, study of the military can occur as an instrument for learning about target populations so that they can be pacified and dominated ("military anthropology") or within a critical frame that questions the foundational assumptions of society's penchant for war ("critical ethnography"):

> The "war on terror" has disturbed settled norms that anthropologists should not assist counterinsurgency campaigns, and for the first time since Vietnam, anthropologists are debating the merits of military anthropology versus critical ethnography of the military. (Gusterson 2007, 1)

A parallel concern within the anthropology of consciousness is voiced in this abstract:

> Consciousness studies is not just an academic field, it is an industry as well with active research programs in medicine, business, and the military. As advancements in technology offer more access to the brain, attempts to instrumentalize the resulting knowledge will shift the very definitions of consciousness. Consciousness of this process is a necessary first condition toward keeping consciousness studies from becoming merely a form of social and individual control. Understanding consciousness studies and such important guiding metaphors as information, and dynamics such as power, is an essential part of this process. (Gray 2007, 1)

How is the anthropology of consciousness to avoid unconscious complicity with dominant power structures and remain aligned with a humanistic, egalitarian, and ecologically responsible worldview? This seems a good question to ask precisely as consciousness studies itself is becoming a multi-billion dollar industry and the temptations to participate in work that directly benefits business or the military are increasing. What is its role as a subfield of anthropology and consciousness studies in initiating and maintaining the public turn? Some tentative answers and many more related questions emerge in the pages that follow.

Mapping Consciousness

The anthropology of consciousness, broadly construed as the intersection of anthropology and consciousness studies, has a special role

to contribute to the public turn, beyond serving as a place for reflection and self-critique. It is especially well-positioned to offer a nuanced cross-cultural approach to the study of human consciousness that does not automatically revert to either naïve essentialism or anything-goes relativism. As one theorist and philosopher of consciousness notes:

> A lot of important broad developmental ways of consciousness do appear to be cross- cultural and far from forming a kind of judgmentalism that ranks other cultures inferior, it (inquiry into the developmental stages of consciousness) actually is a way to find certain common elements across cultures that bind people together. (Ken Wilber interviewed in Rich 2007, 46)

In this vein, Winkelman grounds the search for healing states and the rituals that bind us in a cross-cultural investigation of ancient shamanic practices in a variety of settings. MacDonald speaks to the question of negotiating dysjunct cultural realities. Bronson posits a developmental frame for thinking about how states of consciousness impact intercultural teaching and learning. Krippner and Kasian use an objective analysis of current practices around physician-assisted suicide to test universal notions of compassion and dignity as they apply to specific instances. Willson investigates how attention to difference and social context allows the advocate to build rapport based on shared underlying goals and values.

> To avoid a certain provincialism masquerading as universal good is to first try to do as complete a mapping of consciousness states as possible. One might do this, in other words, by looking at all the cultures that we have some sort of knowledge about, and looking at the states of consciousness that they would report as best we can possibly understand them. Obviously to some degree we're outsiders, and we try to take up a stance of sympathetic hermeneutic understanding, and we map out these hundreds and hundreds of possible psychological, spiritual consciousness states, and from that we develop a very broad cartography. Of course it will never be complete, though you try to make it as complete as you can. From that broad cartography of consciousness, you can then stand back and say okay, here are dozens of things that men and women over the centuries have considered good, or the good life. So if I'm going to come in and say happiness consists of, or wisdom consists of, a, b, or c, then I at least better have this whole cartography in mind, because I might be excluding something very, very important. (Ken Wilber in Rich 2007, 47)

Wilber emphasizes that it is essential to have a broadly construed investigation of consciousness in a variety of settings if one is to avoid announcing dubious universal truths based on a small culturally embedded

sample. Even though some might question as valid his search for a universal truth about human nature, his call for a broad and deep empirical knowledge base of the world's cultural practices related to consciousness should be less controversial, and is in the spirit of this volume.[3] We purposely include ideology as a constraint on consciousness within the purview of the volume, and authors offer critiques of such ideological constructs as the "West" (Parry and Duran) or "dead matter" (Fields) while attending to the silenced voices and contested spaces that have always existed and still exist within the geographical West (Rubin).

The geographical and cognitive states represented in this volume are diverse, with each chapter reflecting in some measure a desire to highlight one or several corners of the map of consciousness. Winkelman shows how shamanic states can aid healing by drawing from work in Mexico and South America in a cross-cultural neurocognitive frame. Rubin examines the affective experience of despair and alienation in an inner city emergency room. Willson and Rubin both remind us that consciousness means attending to some things and not others, and thus is always political. When one focuses on the impact of one's actions rather than on one's good intentions, a very different state of consciousness ensues. Willson's chapter questions the unconsciousness of privilege that leads so many development efforts awry, offering as a positive example a project with poor girls in Northeastern urban Brazil. The researcher's worldview and state of consciousness are also on the line when she is making the map, as other chapters elucidate (Fields, Turner).

Sometimes a good map is useful because it allows you to see connections that were otherwise missing. Bronson aims to connect the study of "altered states" of consciousness and rites of passage (canonical topics within the anthropology of consciousness) to the epiphanies of everyday life. This attempt to distill the essential elements of breakthrough moments traces one feature of the consciousness landscape, profiling how learners navigate from one stage to another with limited cognitive resources. The map is still quite partial, but the cartographer of consciousness will find some useful landmarks in many of the chapters.

Agency: Choosing a Different World

The question of agency or capacity for independent choice in human judgment and action has a long and rich history within anthropology

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[3] Wilber also seems to be saying that cultural insiders could not themselves be collaborators in the construction of the map, a potentially colonialist assumption, but that is another story.

(Ahearn 2001). Several authors specifically address the complexities of the issue, and provide examples from practice or the field where the tensions between individual choice, culturally sanctioned action, and official regulation are in evidence. Watson-Gegeo, MacDonald, and Willson all narrate attempts to empower communities to make the most of the options that are available to them in very dire circumstances. Many efforts such as an attempt to start a small business fail because of a mismatch with cultural practices (Watson-Gegeo). A refugee service agency strives to embody tolerance and choice for their clients while required by law to report on behavior that is sanctioned within immigrant communities but is illegal in the United States (such as spousal abuse; MacDonald). Great care is necessary to maintain local agency in community development; something as simple as who sits where in a meeting can determine who has the convening authority (Willson). A consideration of "critical moments" of learning and change exemplifies how learners must see meaning in their choices, evaluate available options, and try on a new behavior before they incorporate it as a routine part of their identity (Bronson). There is surely no more critical moment than one's own death; who decides when it is time for someone to die? (Krippner and Kasian).

Amiras discovers how the gendering of the arts and resulting devaluation of women's creativity has allowed for a flourishing Tamazight "literature" of their forbidden language preserved in tapestry, pottery, and on the women's bodies themselves in the form of tattoos. Attending to agency foregrounds how minority people can successfully resist dominant regimes and transcend their officially marginalized status to maintain dignity and tradition even in the direst circumstances.

In other places, agency is evoked more implicitly but is nevertheless in play as a concept. What happens when agency is ascribed to other-than-human actors? Fields invites us into a world where even stones can serve as repositories of wisdom and teachers, thus challenging the dominant view of nature that posits humankind as the only animate force worthy of respect. In a reanimated world, as Fields portrays, the storied land itself can serve as a source of guidance toward a more sustainable relationship with the web of life. Similarly, an acknowledgement of the reality of spiritual experiences requires ascribing agency to elements of an invisible world that are sometimes manifest in sensory experience (Turner). To exclude such experiences from serious study and to a priori demote spirits to mere metaphors (Bronson 1992) would leave the "cartography of consciousness" alluded to earlier sorely incomplete.

The choices people have are always constrained by the institutions they are inscribed in. The public turn will be facilitated by sustained attention

to the genealogy of the institutions and ideologies that frame late modernity in particular contexts, such as urban emergency rooms (Rubin). Race, class, and gender are always present as factors that mediate equitable access to agency. In the absence of researchers' critical awareness of their own privilege—for example, that which accrues to white researchers working with non-white populations—well-intentioned interventions are bound to replicate the status quo inequities. Amiras reminds us of the price of historical amnesia. The historical dialectic between the settled center and the wild periphery has created an archetypal and recurrent meta-narrative in the Middle East; would-be interlopers in this ancient conversation have ignored its lessons at their peril.

Perhaps no biases are as entrenched as those encoded by the grammar of one's native tongue (Alford). What agency does the native speaker have in her decision to employ the morphological categories of English to describe reality? It is possible to evaluate the blind spots in one's own maps and begin to think differently only by reference to alternate maps of experience, such as those provided in Native America. A diversity of perspectives enhances agency by presenting possibilities and choices that the actor never knew she had.

Getting Beyond "Ordinary" States of Consciousness

The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift.
—Albert Einstein.

Imagine that you are driving home on a road you know well, maybe listening to some pleasant music and enjoying a gentle play of images, feelings, and dialogue in your inner world, perhaps an anticipated reunion with family or a nice warm meal ahead. Suddenly, you find yourself pulling up your driveway with no particular memory of the drive. Who was driving? Is it safe to say that you were on automatic pilot, a form of "auto-hypnosis" or selective attention that allowed you to safely drive while focusing on more engaging topics in your internal world? Even "ordinary" states of consciousness such as those associated with reading, driving, and the "flow" (Csikszentmihalyi 1990) of engaged activity can be approached as a form of trance or altered state. Studies of hypnosis indicate that there is no clear-cut neurological footprint for an "altered state"; one well-controlled study found "no discernible EEG markers" of an altered state for 13 out of 14 subjects (Fromm and Nash 1992, 47). The anthropology of consciousness can widen the cartography of human

possibility and amplify the relevance of the field by extending its traditional scope to include consciousness in its more mundane manifestations. A fundamental question for the field should be: how does one tap the possibilities of human consciousness to create a "new normal," an ordinary state that encompasses an expanding field of imagination and empathy and a deepening of experience? How does one drive while attending to the real joys and hidden costs of the trip?

The anthropology of consciousness has been characterized by an interest in altered or non-ordinary states of consciousness such as those associated with religious ecstasy, meditation, spiritual practice, dreams, shamanism, and the use of entheogens.[4] This volume explores some of these traditional themes quite concretely (Fields, Turner, Winkelman) but goes on to explore the "big tent" of consciousness studies by making connections with what are generally considered "ordinary" states of consciousness. Thus, Willson describes anthropological training and fieldwork as a form of socialization that inculcates certain predispositions and states of consciousness. For example, the ability to reflect critically on one's own assumptions and to deeply empathize with a cultural other are essential resources to the professional anthropologist.

A traditional concern with rites of passages in far-flung cultures may inform studies of everyday learning and change such as occur in higher education (Bronson). Indeed, given the vast diversity of individual perspectives and states of consciousness that are possible for human beings, it is hard to maintain the fiction that there is a single prototype for what constitutes an "ordinary state." An additional opportunity exists in finding ways to use multiple ways of knowing in the construction of knowledge and narrative (Fields, Rubin). As Einstein famously stated, one cannot solve a problem using the same mode of thinking that created it. The field as an emancipatory source of possibility will be enhanced only to the extent that scholarship does not automatically prioritize a disembodied and rarefied rationality as the final arbiter of truth—as the only right way to make maps. Intuition, meditation, inspiration, and other transpersonal experiences are more than objects of scholarly study that must prove themselves in the court of reason (Ferrer and Sherman 2008; Zajonc 2006). They are a priori valid modes of constructing knowledge about self and world, and even hold the power for a potent critique of everyday reason: the kind of reason that has brought the planet to its present precarious state (Bronson and Gangadean 2006, 2009).

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[4] For numerous exemplars of such studies, view past issues of the Society's journal, *Anthropology of Consciousness*, available on Anthrosource, informational site at: http://www.wiley.com/bw/journal.asp?ref=1053-4202&site=1.

What does it mean, after all, to be "well adjusted" or "ordinary" in a deeply dysfunctional world? The full integration of non- or supra-rational ways of knowing—as Einstein suggests—is more a nascent possibility than an active research program within anthropology at this point. Further exploration is required if the field is to claim its potential as a site for rethinking some of the deepest issues in the Human Sciences. To explore this new territory will require an acutely reflexive attitude, one that compels scholars and practitioners to continually question their own heartfelt assumptions and even their identities (Bronson) in light of new experience and learning. The most rigorous reason is one that can interrogate its own roots and admit when other aspects of cognition such as emotional or holistic awareness are better suited to the task (Taylor 2008; Zajonc 2006).

Reflection and Metacognition

Among the modes of consciousness on display in these chapters, the capacity for reflexivity, or reflection upon one's own thoughts and actions as the instrument of the research is salient. Reflexivity has a long tradition within anthropology and is considered an important component of ethnographic fieldwork. The criticalist or interpretivist turn of the 1980s sharpened the critique of dominant positivist treatments of the human sciences, which aspired to objectify human experience and obscure the role of the researchers' own biases in the research process (Nader 2002). "Standpoint epistemology" (Hartsock 1983) from feminist thought is emblematic of the critique: all research contains a point of view that will foreground certain aspects of any "reality" while backgrounding others. Responsible scholars let the reader know how they come to their knowledge claims and inflect the text consciously with signals of their positionality and biases.

For example, Willson interweaves her own story as an evolving subject with her official account of external events to create a transparent narrative so that the critical reader can evaluate her claims. MacDonald articulates the thought processes behind his attempts to launch a community development project. Watson-Gegeo describes her internal struggle to find relevant interventions for her family-by-marriage in the Solomons. Amiras presents her research in two voices, narrating a first-hand account of discovery and transformation (personal) while placing the narrative within an historical and intercultural genealogy (scholarly). She reports having missed critical information about the Amazigh resistance due to her scholarly bias toward official textual information over the materiality of

everyday life. Rubin reveals the personal stake he has in health-care issues given his life-threatening diagnosis. Good practice in the anthropology of consciousness and related areas requires not a lack of subjectivity, but a rigorous subjectivity, one that lays bare how the knower came to know what she knows. This will necessarily involve attention to the self but need not fetishize the self (Montuori 2006).

Feminist ethnographers (Behar 1993; Visveswaran 1994) continue to challenge the boundaries of what counts as academic writing in the service of greater transparency, vulnerability, and accountability. The conscious transgression of traditional academic genres and experiments in scholarly voice (Amiras, Rubin) are necessary components of the public turn. The demand of relevance to multiple publics requires new genres: new modes of writing that are at once more accessible and more rigorously and transparently constructed. The anthropology of consciousness can take advantage of the experimental moment in ethnographic writing to more explicitly articulate its special mission.

Thinking about one's own thinking or metacognition is clearly a resource for learning and change (Bronson). While not an active topic of research within anthropology,[5] it should be. To what extent is the capacity for metacognition a reflection of culture or developmental stage? How can it be cultivated as a resource for critical reflection among students, scholars, and public audiences? What are its neurological substrates and how are they activated? We suggest that more transdisciplinary research on metacognition would be a valuable contribution to a world in need of new modes of thinking, and that anthropologists should be among those at the table.

Dialogue Across Difference

Given the partial nature of every map, no single discipline, individual, or community can rightfully claim to have a monopoly on "truth." As noted earlier, humans are creatures of habit and, in the absence of a challenge or breakdown, we will construe the world in terms that are coherent with our language, socialization, and previous experience. Several authors stress the importance of dialogue as a way to intervene on the habits of thought and "tacit infrastructure" (Parry and Duran) that support a fixed and dogmatic view of reality. When one listens deeply to another with radically different experiences, stories, and points of view,

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[5] A search on the keyword "meta-cognition" returned exactly one entry in Anthrosource as of this writing, a book review (Kurzban 2001).