## Society for Psychological Anthropology



**Fall 2025 Newsletter** 

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### SPA at the AAAs

We hope to see you at these **SPA sponsored panels** at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting: Ghosts in **New Orleans** on **November 19th-23rd, 2025**.

### Lived Experience as a Lens for Understanding Displacement and Forced Migration

Thursday, November 20th | 8:30-10:00 AM | Roundtable/Town Hall

### Listening Back: Veteran Engagement and the Ethics of Recognition in VA Research

Thursday, November 20th | 10:15–11:45 AM | Oral Presentation Session

## On Ghosts and Haunting in Indigenous Health Research: Conversational Insights from Indigenous Research Methodologies and Community-Led Health Projects

Thursday, November 20th | 4:15–5:45 PM | Conversation/Debate

### Social Difference, Disability, Critique: Perspectives from Critical Phenomenology

Thursday, November 20th | 4:15–5:45 PM | Oral Presentation Session

### Cyborg Intimacies: Explorations in the Technological Mediation of Intimate Relationship

Friday, November 21st | 8:30-10:00 AM | Oral Presentation Session

### Political Subjectivities in a Time of Ontological Threats, Trauma, and Social Turmoil

Friday, November 21st | 4:15–5:45 PM | Oral Presentation Session

#### Repetition, Transformation, Annihilation: Ethnographic Encounters with the Psychoanalytic Drives

Saturday, November 22nd | 10:15-11:45 AM | Roundtable/Town Hall

## SPA at the AAAs, cont.

Regrets: Ghosts of the Past, Spectres of the Future Saturday, November 22nd | 12:45-2:15 PM | Roundtable/Town Hall

### What is Psychological Anthropology's Enduring Value for Anthropology and Psychology?

Saturday, November 22nd | 12:45-2:15 PM | Roundtable/Town Hall

#### **Ghosts and Other Unpredictable Others**

Saturday, November 22nd | 2:30-4:00 PM | Roundtable/Town Hall

### Keywords in the Anthropology of "Mental Health": Towards a Relational Mapping

FridSaturday, November 22nd | 2:30-4:00 PM | Roundtable/Town Hall

Ethnographic Discomfort: The Political and Ethical Project of Centering Experience in Research, Collaboration, and Writing

Sunday, November 23rd | 8:30-10:15 AM | Oral Presentation Session

### The Ghosts of Coloniality in Latin America: Old and New Specters Haunting the Continent

Sunday, November 23rd | 10:15-11:45 AM | Roundtable/Town Hall







## SPA at the AAAs, cont.

Please join us at the **SPA Business Meeting** at the 2025 AAA Meetings in New Orleans!

When? Saturday, November 22nd | 11:45 AM - 12:45 PM Where? Marriott Room: Studio 3

The annual business meeting of the Society for Psychological Anthropology is open to all current members as well as those interested in the society.

We will discuss SPA events and achievements during the past year, provide announcements and plans for the upcoming year, and present awards.

Help up celebrate our fantastic board members whose terms finish at the end of 2025 as we get ready to welcome our newest board members, including incoming President C. Jason Throop and incoming President-Elect Cheryl Mattingly.

But wait, there's more! Keep an eye out for a message from our listserv about **an informal evening gathering on Saturday, November 22nd** to celebrate the SPA.

## **Call for Applications**

### The SPA/Robert Lemelson Foundation Program Fellowship

**Due:** January 15th, 2026

**Contact:** Devin Flaherty – devin.flaherty@utsa.edu

The SPA/Robert Lemelson Foundation Fellowships are designed to provide **graduate students** working in the field of psychological anthropology with funding to pursue **exploratory research** for planning their doctoral dissertation research and/or methods training to prepare for their doctoral dissertation research. Research projects supported by the funding should have the potential of **advancing the field of psychological anthropology.** 

Normally, fellows receive their awards after their first or second year of graduate training as they begin to develop their dissertation research projects. Proposed exploratory projects are evaluated for viability and the potential of resulting in future dissertation research that will advance the field of psychological anthropology. Preference is given to applicants conducting exploratory **research abroad**. There will be a limited number of SPA/RLF awards available for the 2026 round. Each fellow is expected to receive between **\$3,000 and \$6,000** depending upon need.

<u>https://spa.americananthro.org/funding-and-prizes/the-spa-robert-lemelson-foundation-fellowship-program/.</u>

## Research Feature

### Cultural Models Tools for Court-Involved Children in the U.S.

### **Eileen Anderson, Case Western Reserve University**

A Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) is a court-appointed advocate responsible for representing the best interests of a child in legal proceedings. Approximately one million children per year in the United States are represented by a GAL. These children, aged 0–17, are often undergoing significant instability due to abuse or neglect proceedings, high-conflict divorce, juvenile justice involvement, or medical complexity. Although the GAL program is federally supported, it is administered at the state level. In most states, a GAL must be a licensed attorney; however, only three states require that GALs have any formal background in child development, education, psychology, or related fields. Judges and magistrates tend to give substantial weight to GAL recommendations, and those recommendations are frequently adopted by the court.

I began interviewing GALs and families who had been assigned a GAL in Ohio several years ago. Early in this project – within the same week – I interviewed two white, mid-thirties GALs trained as JDs. During both interviews, I asked about how they navigated allegations of corporal punishment or physical abuse. I posed the same question: what happens if they suspect a parent is hitting a child?

**GAL 1:** "Well, my parents hit me, and I turned out fine...I mean, I have a JD and everything...Sometimes parents just hit their kids as part of discipline..."

**GAL 2:** "My parents hit me...It scarred me for life...I'm still in therapy...If I learn a parent is hitting a child, I recommend immediate removal of custody."

The stark contrast between these responses took my breath. Two children in similar circumstances could receive dramatically different recommendations

## Research Feature, cont.

based not on the facts of their case, but on the GALs' own personal histories and meaning-making. As my research continued, I encountered additional cases in which cultural assumptions shaped critical – and sometimes lifealtering – decisions for children. As a psychological anthropologist, I knew that GALs needed accessible, concrete tools to help elicit and examine cultural models informing their evaluations.

I contacted the program administrators at the Ohio Supreme Court and began collaborating with them on continuing legal education. Drawing on training from Robert LeVine and the precedent of Arthur Kleinman's cultural formulation questions in medicine, my team developed the Anderson Cultural Models Tools.

These tools consist of three structured questionnaires that assess cultural models regarding: (1) healthy child development, (2) caregiving and childrearing practices, and (3) adolescent wellbeing (see Figures 1–3). They have been taught to hundreds of GALs and related professionals, including Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) and magistrates, and have been refined based on feedback from diverse practice contexts across Ohio.

In every training, the first step is self-reflection: participants complete the questionnaires themselves. This process reveals how their own developmental and caregiving assumptions were formed and how strongly those assumptions may influence their interpretations of their clients' behaviors. Participants overwhelmingly report that they had not previously recognized the extent or impact of their previously unexamined beliefs.

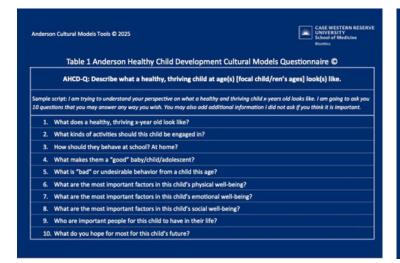
Beyond individual insight, the tools have helped reduce conflict in cases where involved parties hold contrasting cultural models, such as divorcing parents or biological and foster families. One GAL described using the tools to help a 10-year-old understand why expectations differed across households; this reframing facilitated greater flexibility and mutual understanding.

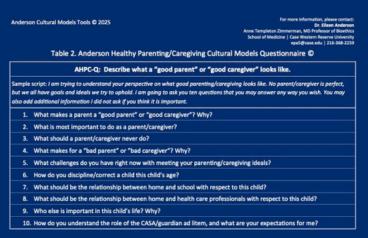
## Research Feature, cont.

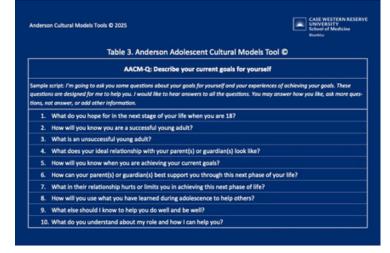
Another GAL reported using the tools to support a 13-year-old transitioning into foster care by helping both the child and foster family interpret differences as cultural variation rather than deficiency, which improved adjustment and emotional wellbeing.

Our team at Case Western Reserve University continues to translate theory, method, and data from psychological anthropology into applied resources for courts and child-serving professionals. Our next project, Kids' Health and the Courts, is a podcast scheduled for release in 2026. Our ongoing goal is to support improved training for GALs, CASAs, and others across all 50 states and beyond.

Learn more here: <a href="https://case.edu/news/kids-courts-and-care-how-cwru-professor-eileen-anderson-protects-vulnerable-youth-across-ohio">https://case.edu/news/kids-courts-and-care-how-cwru-professor-eileen-anderson-protects-vulnerable-youth-across-ohio</a>



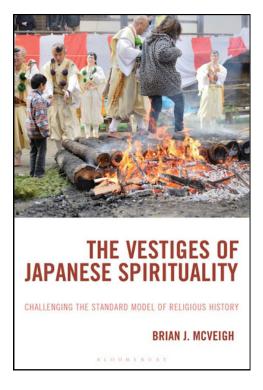


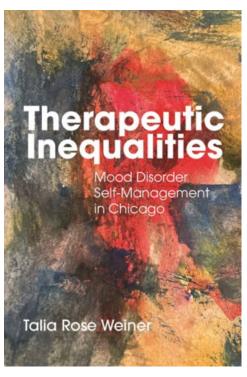


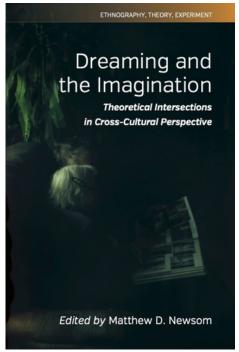
Anderson Cultural Models Tools © 2025		For more information, please contain.  Area Templeton Zameneman, North Observation of the Medicine   Case Western Reservations of the Medicine   Case Medicine   C		
ACM-Q Sample Summary Sheet				
Consider	Caregiver 1	Caregiver 2	Child/Adolescent	
Caregiving Model*				
Exceptions to Model?		1-		
Red Flags?				
Additional Resources to Offer?				
Additional Consults Needed?			100000	
Similarities, Caregiver 1 and 2				
Differences, Caregiver 1 and 2				
Potential Red Flag Problems in Differences				
Child/Adol Strengths with Each Caregiver				
Child/Adol Triggers/Red Flags with Each Caregiver				
Other Notes:				

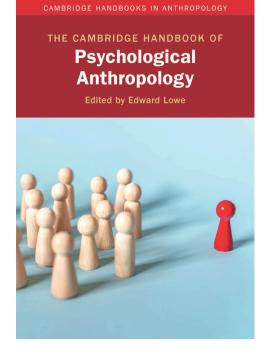
### **Featured Books**

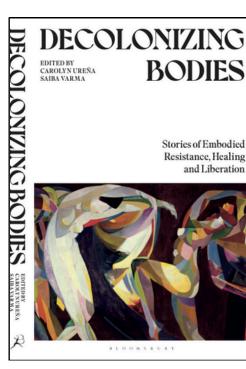
We are thrilled to spotlight the recent and upcoming publications of SPA members!













# THE VESTIGES OF JAPANESE SPIRITUALITY

CHALLENGING THE STANDARD MODEL OF RELIGIOUS HISTORY

**BRIAN J. MCVEIGH** 

## The Vestiges of Japanese Spirituality: Challenging the Standard Model of Religious History

Brian J. McVeigh

### **Bloomsbury Press**

By positioning Japan within a global perspective, Brian J. McVeigh challenges the "black-box" approach to psyche that dominates studies in the history of religion. He employs cultural psychological analysis by first highlighting how the sociohistorical forces that shape mental processes are ignored. Next, by exploring shamanism, oracular activities, and mountain asceticism or Shugendō, he presents the historical background of Japanese religion. By investigating spirit possession—a vestige of an obsolete neurocultural arrangement—McVeigh argues that the current practices of Japan's new religions are relics of an earlier mentality that have been creatively renovated and re-adapted for the present-day. Unlike other works, this book treats possession as a legitimate topic in and of itself, requiring explanatory analysis rather than dismissing it as a mere epiphenomenon. This genuinely interdisciplinary work transcends mainstream academic fields and will appeal not just to Japanese and Asian religion specialists, but to anyone interested in the psychology of religion and the history of spirituality.

### https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/vestiges-of-japanese-spirituality-9781666977936/

**Brian J. McVeigh** works in private practice as a licensed mental health counselor and is Senior Researcher and Advisor at the Julian Jaynes Society. He was awarded a PhD in anthropology from Princeton University. He researches how humans adapt, both through history and therapeutically and has published extensively on psychotherapy, the history of Japanese psychology, the origins of religions, the Bible, ancient Egypt, spirit possession, art and popular culture, linguistics, nationalism, and changing definitions of self, time, and space. His current projects include *Ghosts and Gods of Ancient Rome: What They Say about Human Psychology, Julian Jaynes: A Guide for the Perplexed*, and a work of fiction, *The Abyss Speaks*.



Mood Disorder
Self-Management
in Chicago

Talia Rose Weiner

# "Self-management" approaches ask the mostfrom those with the least

Therapeutic Inequalities offers a powerful and timely critique of the U.S. mental healthcare system, uncovering how structural disparities are maintained—and often hidden—through the widespread promotion of "self-management."

Drawing on two years of ethnographic fieldwork and community-engaged research, the volume traces how "self-management"— a treatment model that encourages patients to regulate their own conditions—has gained prominence in the care of mood disorders like depression. It calls for a radical reimagining of both mental health and personhood—one that values empathy, community, and the recognition of our shared vulnerabilities.



Use code NYU30 for 30% off

AVAILABLE JANUARY 2026

# Dreaming and the Imagination

Theoretical Intersections in Cross-Cultural Perspective

Edited by Matthew D. Newsom

## Dreaming and the Imagination: Theoretical Intersections in CrossCultural Perspective

### edited by Matthew D. Newsom

### **Berghahn Books**

Of all the human behaviors anthropologists consider, perhaps the most conceptually challenging are those that cannot be directly observed. This volume draws from rich ethnographic data to offer theoretical and methodological tools for mapping the intersections between two such behaviors: dreaming and imagination. Although Western perspectives tend to cast these as personal experiences contained within individual minds, each contributor explores diverse cultural and historical contexts to demonstrate how these behaviours are always in some sense cultural and influenced by social others. The cross-cultural approach suggests theoretical flexibility and expands the study of imagination across multiple disciplines.

#### https://www.berghahnbooks.com/title/NewsomDreaming

**Matthew D. Newsom** is an Assistant Professor of anthropology in the Department of History, Sociology, and Anthropology at Southern Utah University. His research on the topics of dreaming and collective memories among young German adults has appeared in several edited volumes, including New Directions in the Anthropology of Dreaming (Routledge, 2020).

### THE CAMBRIDGE HANDBOOK OF

## Psychological Anthropology

**Edited by Edward Lowe** 



### The Cambridge Handbook of Psychological Anthropology

### edited by Edward Lowe

### **Cambridge University Press**

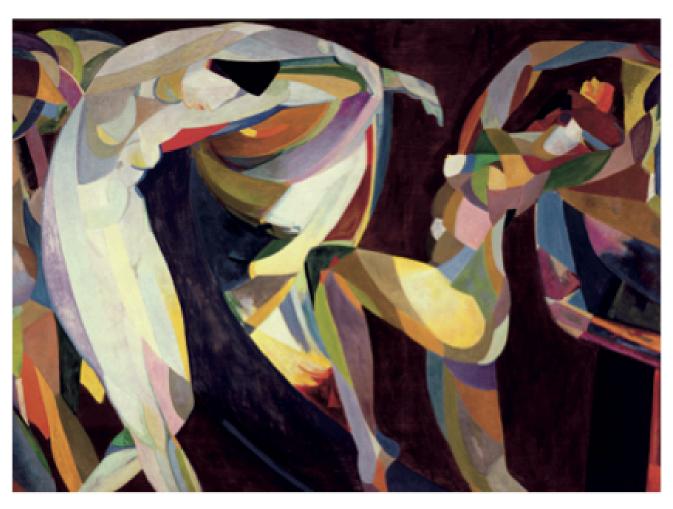
Bringing together contributions from a global team of renowned scholars, this Handbook provides a comprehensive guide to the dynamic field of psychological anthropology. It is divided into five parts and includes a critical updating of the theoretical foundations for psychological anthropology, covering cognitive, psychodynamic, linguistic, phenomenological views. It provides the first-ever lifespan perspective on human development in culture from the perspective of anthropology and also contains sections that connect the biological dynamics involved in human experience through to social, cultural, and historical perspectives. It considers important political-economic concerns for psychocultural studies, including Indigenous perspectives and expert voices from the global south. By showing how researchers can break out of the disciplinary silos that separate important fields in the human sciences, like anthropology and psychology, it emphasizes the importance of working collaboratively together in order to enrich our understanding of the human condition.

A 20% discount is available using the code **TCHPA2025** when purchasing from the Cambridge University Press Store.

https://www.cambridge.org/us/universitypress/subjects/anthropology/anthropology-general-interest/cambridge-handbook-psychological-anthropology?format=HB&isbn=9781316515679

# DECOLONIZING EDITED BY CAROLYN UREÑA SAIBA VARMA BODIES

Stories of Embodied Resistance, Healing and Liberation



\*Decolonizing Bodies reveals both resilience and vulnerabilities of the sensuous bodies as the foundation of meaning, experience, and transformation. The rich collection of personal, scholarly, and artistic stories invites the readers to engage their own bodily awareness to sense and feel with the authors. The book is a call for reimagining the way we embody our communities and relationships through decolonial healing." SACHI SEKIMOTO, MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO, USA

"Ureña & Varma's generative, wide-ranging, multi-genre collection puts flesh and blood on decolonizing as a mode of being-perceiving-theorizing that reorients our attunement to self and world and conclusively transforms our creative and scholarly practice. Whether analyzing urban gardens in Kashmir and Colombia, reading racist US archives or mapping a process-driven exploration for a film in progress, each contribution enacts a vital aspect of the reclamation and reinterpretation integral to decolonizing knowledge."

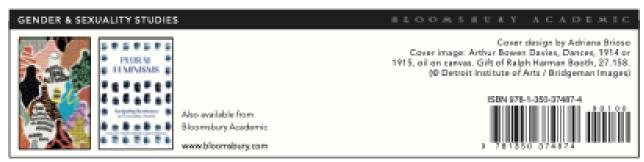
LATA MANI, AUTHOR OF MYRIAD INTIMACIES AND DIRECTOR OF THE POETICS OF FRAGILITY

Decolonizing Bodies offers novel theorizations of how racial capitalism, colonialism, and heteropatriarchal violence erode the bodily schema and experiences of racialized and colonized populations, profoundly constraining their being in the world. The book invigorates embodiment studies by centering the experiences and struggles of Black, Indigenous, colonized, disabled, queer, and racialized subjects, showing how they live these displacements and disintegrations.

The volume powerfully demonstrates how racism and colonialism sediment in bodily and habitual registers that are active, ongoing, made and remade. Bodies, the contributors argue, powerfully register the impacts of colonial and racialized violence, but through practices of embodiment, they also digest, expel, and transform them. In centering non-normative subjective experiences and making space for different kinds of embodied knowledge, Decolonizing Bodies also takes a step toward decolonizing academic knowledge.

CAROLYN UREÑA is the Director of Academic Advising in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania, USA.

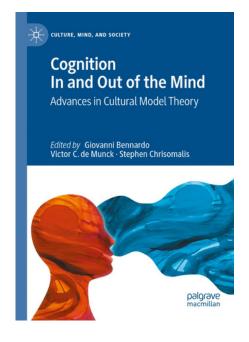
SAIBA VARMA is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, San Diego, USA.

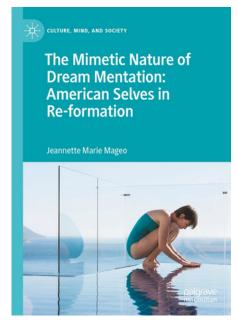


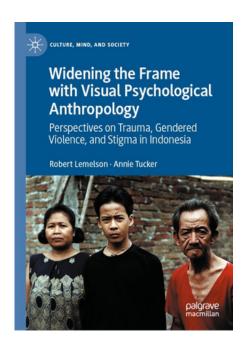
## Invitation: Culture, Mind, and Society Book Series

The SPA invites you to submit manuscripts to our <u>Culture, Mind, and Society Book Series</u>, published by Palgrave Macmillan (part of the Springer Nature Group)

The SPA – a section of the American Anthropology Association (AAA) – and Palgrave–Macmillan aim at publishing innovative research that explores the interface of human subjects (emotions, thoughts, and experiences) and their material, social, cultural, and political milieus. Psychological Anthropology is broadly defined in this book series. It includes all research in the diverse fields of psychology, biomedicine, psychiatry, and anthropology that examines human emotions, cognitions, ideas, actions, interactions, and their work in social microlevel sites and in connection with broad social fields, organizations, institutions, nation–states, and other power structures.







## Culture, Mind, and Society Book Series, cont.

The series welcomes proposals for either monographs or edited volumes – in the form of short books (25,000–50,000 words) or full-length (70,000–120,000).

Please see the series description and guidelines on the Palgrave website: <a href="https://link.springer.com/series/14947">https://link.springer.com/series/14947</a>.

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Palgrave editors regularly attend international conferences and meetings, including the AAA and EASA, to promote recent publications in the series and the Anthropology program broadly.

Potential authors can contact Meredith Keffer, Commissioning Editor at Palgrave Macmillan (<a href="mailto:meredith.keffer@palgrave-usa.com">meredith.keffer@palgrave-usa.com</a>), or Yehuda Goodman, our book series editor and SPA board member (ygoodman@huji.ac.il).







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