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## Introduction

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How does religious healing work, if indeed it does? What is the nature of its therapeutic efficacy? What is actually being healed by the performances of the shaman, the medicine man, or the faith healer? What is particularly religious about them in the first place? These questions have preoccupied anthropologists for a long while, and there have been two broad types of answer offered. Many early studies were primarily concerned with whether healers or shamans were themselves mentally ill, typically with schizophrenia or epilepsy. Whatever healing occurred was thought as likely to benefit the healer as it would those who came to him or her for help. Later, the question of whether healers were like mental patients was superseded by that of how they were like psychotherapists. This theme, present as early as Leighton and Leighton's (1941) discussion of Navajo healing and Messing's (1958) analysis of the Ethiopian *zar* cult, was given impetus in the 1960s and 1970s by the seminal works of Jerome Frank (1973, Frank and Frank 1991). For some, the efficacy of religious healing came to be assumed on the basis of what we may call the psychotherapy analogy: religious healing works because it is like psychotherapy, which also works.

This is hardly a satisfactory place to leave the issue, and not only because psychotherapy itself is a healing form whose efficacy cannot be taken for granted. Insofar as every culture must contend with emotional distress and mental illness, each is likely to develop its own forms of psychotherapy, some of which we can identify as religious healing. Likewise, most religions develop some stance toward human suffering, and

may go a step further and develop explicit systems of healing practice (cf. Numbers and Amundsen 1986, L. Sullivan 1989). It has become commonplace to observe that efficacy is contingent on the nature of problems addressed by different forms of healing, how those problems are defined in cultural practice, and what counts in cultural terms as their successful resolution. Given this set of issues, it has been argued on the one hand that ritual healing is invariably and necessarily effective due to the manner in which it defines its goals (Kleinman and Sung 1979), and on the other that it necessarily fails insofar as it is a treatment more of lifestyle than of symptoms (Pattison, Lapins, and Doerr 1973). Between these positions we are left with a disturbing lack of analytic specificity and a repertoire of hypotheses about how healing works. Let us briefly summarize.

The *structural* hypothesis posits an inherent power of correspondence or homology between symbolic acts and objects, metaphors, or cosmological structure on the one hand, and the thoughts, emotions, behavior, or diseases of those treated on the other. Research in this tradition, of which the paradigmatic example is Lévi-Strauss's (1966) discussion of a Cuna Indian birth ritual, are often successful at demonstrating the existence of a homology, but not in establishing why or whether the homology has an effect. The *clinical* hypothesis is based most strictly on the analogy between the religious healer and a doctor treating an individual patient with a specific procedure in expectation of a definitive outcome, as in Prince's (1964) paradigmatic discussion of indigenous Yoruba psychiatry. However, not only is it difficult to demonstrate definitive outcomes in religious healing, but a clinical approach tends to downplay the explicitly religious elements of such healing that give it its distinctive character. The *social support* hypothesis, best characterized by V. Turner's (1964) analysis of Ndembu healing and Crapanzano's (1973) discussion of the Moroccan Hamadsha brotherhoods, holds that the principal therapeutic effects of healing lie in enhancing community solidarity, resolving interpersonal tensions, providing an emotionally safe environment for suffering individuals, or providing the security of identity with a group defined by its healing practices. While these effects may in fact occur, studies that emphasize social support often go no further toward defining efficacy, remaining satisfied with a generalized functionalist understanding of healing. Finally, the *persuasive* hypothesis owes much to J. Frank's (1973) formulations about the cultivation of expectant faith through the personal influence of a healer and the rhetorical devices that bring about a shift in the

patient's "assumptive world." Healing ritual is understood not as liturgical repetition, but as intentional social action directed toward the quality and content of experience. However, while it thus takes account of meaning, it is less attuned to clinical issues such as the kind of emotional disorder addressed by healing.<sup>1</sup>

These hypotheses are not mutually exclusive. To be sure, although they represent different descriptions of how therapeutic efficacy is *evoked*, they tend to share a common understanding of how that efficacy is actually *constituted* by a limited repertoire of global mechanisms. These mechanisms include trance, catharsis, placebo effect, and suggestion. With few exceptions (e.g., Scheff 1979), accounts of healing under the hypotheses sketched above are based on inference from procedures carried out by healers to a nonspecific efficacy presumed to be inherent in one or more of these mechanisms. The mechanism itself remains unelaborated, a kind of biocultural "black box"—perhaps the patient goes into trance, but what it is that makes the trance therapeutic remains essentially ambiguous.

The reason for the lack of specificity is astoundingly simple: although anthropologists have produced volumes of descriptions of healing rituals, they have virtually never systematically examined the *experience* of supplicants in healing. The Navajo Chanter sings for nine nights, and we have a transcription of the songs; he creates an elaborate sandpainting, and we have a detailed description of it. Where experience comes into question, it is usually that of the healer. But what is happening for the Navajo supplicant who is repeating line for line after the chanter and who is made to sit upon the sandpainting? We may learn the nature of the supplicant's complaint and whether there is any apparent effect of the ritual, but that is about all. We will learn nothing about the imagery processes which, as I discovered when it occurred to me to ask, may occur during the ceremony. Of course, if we neglect to ask, we will conclude that the efficacy of healing is nonspecific.<sup>2</sup>

A premise of this book is that there is an experiential specificity of effect in religious healing—that transformative meaning dwells, to borrow a phrase from the poet William Blake, in the "minute particulars" of human existence taken up in the healing process.<sup>3</sup> To approach that specificity, we must identify the locus of efficacy, and this requires taking a step back toward generality before making a leap forward. My argument is that the locus of efficacy is not symptoms, psychiatric disorders, symbolic meaning, or social relationships, but the self in which all of these are encompassed. Our task is then to formulate a

theory of the self that will allow us to specify the transformative effects of healing. What is more, we require an idea of self that will be valid for comparative studies of healing forms ranging from conventional psychotherapy to the more exotic forms of shamanism and spirit possession cure. Finally, we require a theory of self that will allow for the experience of the sacred as an element of therapeutic process, indeed an element that constitutes one kind of the specificity that we seek. Our discussion, in short, must be an account of the cultural constitution of a sacred self.

Let me say a few things about my orientation to the problems of "self" and "sacred." I have become convinced that a turn to phenomenology may go a long way toward answering the need we have just seen for a concept of self sensitive to experiential specificity. As M. Singer (1984:53) observes, the phenomenological approach to self has never been thoroughly developed, and in the 1960s was overshadowed by understandings of both culture and self as systems of symbols and meanings. Singer's observation is certainly correct, and I think it can be accounted for by the fact that we have not discovered the most useful variant of phenomenology for our purposes. At one end of the continuum, Husserl's work is dense enough that by the time an anthropologist made readers familiar enough with its terminological subtleties, the cultural substance of any account would be obscured in a whirl of methodology. Perhaps Hallowell (1955) sensed this when he went only so far as to acknowledge a phenomenological attitude in his important works on the self. At the other end of the continuum, the phenomenology of Schutz is perhaps the most formalist variant, such that Geertz's (1973) attempt to use it on Balinese material remains suspended between being a true phenomenological description and an exercise in applying analytic categories. If I were to claim a contribution for the present argument, therefore, it would be the grounding of culture and self in the phenomenology of the body—"embodiment"—a variant of phenomenology more identified with the work of Merleau-Ponty. Yet my intent is not to offer a strict alternative to the semiotic approach, but to bring phenomenology out of the shadow referred to by Singer. In other words, I understand cultural phenomenology as a counterweight and complement to interpretive anthropology's emphasis on sign and symbol.<sup>4</sup>

The problem of the sacred also falls within a cultural phenomenology of self. Phenomenologists of religion have defined their understanding of the sacred as a kind of modulation of orientation in or engagement with the world. Eliade (1958) defined the sacred as a mode of attending

to the world, and van der Leeuw (1938) observed that the object of religion is a “highly exceptional and extremely impressive Other.” The tenor of anthropological discussion, however, when not preoccupied with debate about the rationality or irrationality of religious “belief,” has again been predominantly semiotic. Every anthropologist is familiar with Geertz’s (1973) definition of religion as a system of symbols, and most would unhesitatingly add that these symbols are articulated in a system of social relationships. For a cultural phenomenology, the second, more obscure part of Geertz’s definition must be given equal weight—that religion acts to establish long-standing moods and motivations. I submit that the method to get at these moods and motivations is to be found in the phenomenologists’ notion of Otherness. The sacred is an existential encounter with Otherness that is a touchstone of our humanity. It is a touchstone because it defines us by what we are not—by what is beyond our limits, or what touches us precisely at our limits. In addition, and of primary importance for the coherence of our argument, we will discover that this sense of otherness itself is phenomenologically grounded in our embodiment.

We can now restate the theses advanced in the preface, specifying that this book is a cultural phenomenology of healing that seeks the locus of therapeutic efficacy in the self. The next step before introducing our empirical case is to elaborate our phenomenological approach to self and the specificity of self processes in cultural context.

### The Self: Embodiment, World, and Situation

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Let us begin by venturing a working concept of self, and then spend the rest of this section unpacking its theoretical meaning and methodological consequences.<sup>5</sup> Self is neither substance nor entity, but an indeterminate capacity to engage or become oriented in the world, characterized by effort and reflexivity. In this sense self occurs as a conjunction of prereflective bodily experience, culturally constituted world or milieu, and situational specificity or habitus. Self processes are orientational processes in which aspects of the world are thematized, with the result that the self is objectified, most often as a “person” with a cultural identity or set of identities.

Hallowell (1955) was the first anthropologist to propose a protophenomenological theory of the self based on “orientation” with respect

to self, objects, space and time, motivation, and norms, and this is a good starting point for what I mean by orientation in the world.<sup>6</sup> To understand how this orientation comes about, we must identify two concepts implicit in Hallowell's argument. *Perception* is the key concept implicit in his definition of the self as self-awareness, the recognition of oneself as an "object in a world of objects." Hallowell saw self-awareness as both necessary to the functioning of society and as a generic aspect of human personality structure. However, in defining the self as the product of a reflexive mood, he cast his analysis at the level of the already-objectified self. As we shall see in a moment, a fully phenomenological account would recognize that whereas we are capable of becoming objects to ourselves, in daily life this seldom occurs. Hallowell's implicit concern with what in more contemporary terms we would call *practice* (cf. Ortner 1984) is summarized in the term "behavioral environment," borrowed from the gestalt psychology of Koffka. Hallowell's protophenomenological approach accounts for an essential feature of the behavioral environment, namely that it includes not only natural objects but "culturally reified objects," especially supernatural beings and the practices associated with them. Understood in terms of perception and practice, Hallowell's concept of self thus did more than place the individual in culture. It linked behavior to the objective world, but defined objective in terms of cultural specificity. It linked perceptual processes with social constraints and cultural meanings, but added self-awareness and reflexivity.

Here we reach a critical point for our argument. For if perception and practice are central to the self as a capacity for orientation, we can identify the locus of the self as identical with the locus of perception and practice. For help we turn directly, as Hallowell could not, to the phenomenological thinkers. The philosopher Zaner, drawing on the phenomenological work of Hans Jonas, Erwin Straus, and Aaron Gurwitsch, suggests an answer:

My embodying organism is thus constituted as my *orientational locus in the world*, "my place," complexly articulated and membered by means of its ("my") sensorium. In the diversity of my sense I am *oriented* to the Other [in this case the other person] as one and the same, and the Other is positioned and *oriented* by (referenced to) my bodily placement (body attitudes, stances, place, movements, etc.). Hence the arrangement of the enviroing milieu of things is functionally correlated with my organism: the latter is the organizational, sensorial *center* for the actional and sensible display of surrounding objects. (1981:38, emphasis in original)

The critical point, and one which Hallowell missed in his discussion of orientation, is the grounding of the self in embodiment, our essential existential condition. And here is our answer: the specificity we are looking for can be found in the way self processes *grounded in embodiment* take up or engage fundamental psychocultural issues in the experience of ritual healing. The processes of orientation are the same as those which move experience from indeterminacy to what Hallowell referred to as “culturally reified objects.” Yet it is essential to note that Hallowell did not place the self *outside* the list of elements with respect to which it is oriented. Again implicitly, he recognized that the self is always already in the cultural world. However, for some reason he excluded the presence of other selves from his outline, and we will have to reinsert them.

We will take up the issue of other selves along with that of objectification, to which we have already alluded. For this, we turn to the contributions of Merleau-Ponty and Bourdieu. Merleau-Ponty (1962) can help understand embodiment with respect to perception and objectification. Bourdieu (1977, 1984) situates embodiment in an anthropological discourse of practice, and interaction with other selves. For Merleau-Ponty, the body is a “setting in relation to the world” (1962:303), and consciousness is the body projecting itself into the world. For Bourdieu, the socially informed body is the “principle generating and unifying all practices” (1977:124), and consciousness is a form of strategic calculation fused with a system of objective potentialities. I shall briefly elaborate these views as summarized in Merleau-Ponty’s concept of the *preobjective* and Bourdieu’s concept of the *habitus*.<sup>7</sup>

Merleau-Ponty objects to the empiricist position that the object we perceive is a kind of stimulus and that perception is an intellectual act in response to that stimulus. This is because the object of perception conceived as an intellectual act would have to be either possible or necessary, when in fact it is *real*. That is, “it is given as the infinite sum of an indefinite series of perspectival views in each of which the object is given but in none of which it is given exhaustively” (1964*b*:15). The critical “but” in this analysis requires the perceptual synthesis of the object to be accomplished by the subject, which is the body as a field of perception and practice (ibid.:16). Stated another way, Merleau-Ponty wants our starting point to be the experience of perceiving in all its richness and indeterminacy, because in fact we do not have any phenomenologically real objects prior to perception. To the contrary, “our perception ends in objects” (1962:67). This is to say that objects

are a secondary product of reflective thinking. On the level of perception we “have” no objects, we are simply “in the world.” But if perception ends in objects, where does it begin? Merleau-Ponty’s answer is, in the body. In other words, he suggests that we step backward from the objective and start with the body in the world.

However, since the subject-object distinction is a product of analysis, and since objects themselves are end results of perception rather than being given empirically to perception, we need a concept to allow us to study the embodied process of perception from beginning to end (instead of in reverse as would the empiricists). For this purpose Merleau-Ponty offers the concept of the “preobjective” or “prereflective.” His project is to “coincide with the act of perception and break with the critical attitude” (1962:238–239), for the latter mistakenly begins with objects. Phenomenology is a descriptive science of existential beginnings, not of already-constituted cultural products. If we can capture those existential beginnings in healing, we will be well on our way toward understanding its experiential specificity. Our goal is to capture that moment of transcendence in which perception and objectification begin, constituting and being constituted by culture.

It may be objected that a concept of the preobjective implies that embodied existence is outside or prior to culture. This objection would miss what Merleau-Ponty means by the body as “a certain setting in relation to the world” (*ibid.*:303) or a “general power of inhabiting all the environments which the world contains” (*ibid.*:311). In fact, the body is in the world from the beginning:

Consciousness projects itself into a physical world and has a body, as it projects itself into a cultural world and has habits: because it cannot be consciousness without playing upon significances given either in the absolute past of nature or in its own personal past, and because any form of lived experience tends toward a certain generality whether that of our habits or that of our bodily functions.

It is as false to place ourselves in society as an object among other objects, as it is to place society within ourselves as an object of thought, and in both cases the mistake lies in treating the social as an object. We must return to the social with which we are in contact by the mere fact of existing, and which we carry about inseparably with us before any objectification. (1962:137, 362)

By beginning with the preobjective, then, we are not positing a pre-cultural, but a preabstract. The concept offers to cultural analysis the open-ended human process of taking up and inhabiting the cultural world

in which our existence transcends but remains grounded in de facto situations.

In effect, Merleau-Ponty's existential analysis collapses the subject-object duality in order to more precisely pose the question of how the reflective processes of the intellect constitute the various domains of culture. If we begin with the lived world of perceptual phenomena, our bodies are not objects to us. Quite the contrary, they are an integral part of the perceiving subject. This has a very important methodological consequence. That is, on the level of perception it is thus not legitimate to distinguish mind and body. Instead, beginning from perceptual reality it becomes relevant to ask how our bodies may *become* objectified through processes of reflection. Merleau-Ponty felt that it was necessary to return to this level of real, primordial experience in which the object is present and living, as a starting point for the analysis of language, knowledge, society, and religion.

We have not yet arrived at other selves, however, and this is becoming urgent as we recognize that isolated reflection does not account either for the emergence of objects or for the way we become objects to ourselves. Others play a prominent role in objectifying us. In order to begin to grasp this issue, we must elaborate the idea of practice alongside that of perception. We have just seen that Merleau-Ponty's goal is to move the study of perception from objects to the process of objectification. Bourdieu's parallel goal for a theory of practice is to move beyond analysis of the social fact as *opus operatum*, to analysis of the *modus operandi* of social life. He finds this *modus operandi* in the concept of *habitus*, defined as a system of perduring dispositions.<sup>8</sup> This system constitutes the unconscious, collectively inculcated principle for the generation and structuring of both practices and representations (1977: 72). His definition holds promise because it highlights the lived, acted content of the behavioral environment. We could in fact say that the notion of *habitus* synthesizes behavior and environment in a single term. In Bourdieu's work, this synthesis is possible for the same reason that allows him to state that the *habitus* does not generate practices unsystematically or at random. This reason is his recognition that there is a

principle generating and unifying all practices, the system of inseparably cognitive and evaluative structures which organizes the vision of the world in accordance with the objective structures of a determinate state of the social world: this principle is nothing other than the *socially informed body*, with its tastes and distastes, its compulsions and repulsions, with, in a word, all its *senses*, that is to say, not only the traditional five senses—which never escape the structuring

action of social determinisms—but also the sense of necessity and the sense of duty, the sense of direction and the sense of reality, the sense of balance and the sense of beauty, common sense and the sense of the sacred, tactical sense and the sense of responsibility, business sense and the sense of propriety, the sense of humor and the sense of absurdity, moral sense and the sense of practicality, and so on. (ibid.:124)

For our purposes, the principal point is that behavioral dispositions are collectively synchronized and attuned to one another through the medium of the body. Bourdieu maintains this groundedness in the body even in discussion of the “sense of taste” as the cultural operator in his social analysis of aesthetics, insisting that it is “inseparable from taste in the sense of the capacity to discern the flavors of foods which implies a preference for some of them” (1984:99).

The cultural locus of Bourdieu’s habitus is the conjunction between the objective conditions of life and the totality of aspirations and practices completely compatible with those conditions. To be consistent with what we have learned from Merleau-Ponty, we must recall that what Bourdieu refers to as objective conditions must already be the product of perceptual consciousness. This fact is implicit in Bourdieu’s recognition that objective conditions do not cause practices and neither do practices determine objective conditions:

The habitus is the universalizing mediation that causes an

individual agent’s practices, without either explicit reason or signifying intent, to be none the less “sensible” and “reasonable.” That part of practices which remains obscure in the eyes of their own producers is the aspect by which they are objectively adjusted to other practices and to the structures of which the principle of their production is itself a product. (1977:79)

In other words, as a universalizing mediation the habitus has a dual function. In its relation to objective structures it is the principle of generation of practices (ibid.:77), whereas in its relation to a total repertoire of social practices it is their unifying principle (ibid.:83). With this concept Bourdieu offers a social analysis of practice as “necessity made into a virtue” (ibid.:77), and his image of human activity is Leibniz’s magnetic needle that appears actually to enjoy turning northwards (1984:175).

Our methodological “step backward” has now led us to the core of a theory of self grounded in embodiment. The question about therapeutic efficacy as an operation on the self now appears continuous with the question of how orientation takes place upon the ground of embodied

existence. One consequence of this formulation is to recognize a continuity among normal experience, emotional distress, and psychiatric illness.<sup>9</sup> The self processes of orientation and engagement are the same in all cases, and what we are concerned with is the redirection of those processes, taking embodiment as our starting point. Here we must elaborate another theme in our definition, namely that the self is an *indeterminate* capacity of orientation. Above all, it is not a question here of biocultural nonspecificity, but of experiential indeterminacy. To consolidate this idea let us follow Merleau-Ponty as he argues that existence is indeterminate

in so far as it is the very process by which the hitherto meaningless takes on meaning, whereby what had merely a [for example] sexual significance assumes a more general one, chance is transformed into reason; in so far as it is the act of taking up a de facto situation. We shall give the name "transcendence" to this act in which existence takes up, to its own account, and transforms such a situation. Precisely because it is transcendence, existence never utterly outruns anything, for in that case the tension which is essential to it [between objective world and existential meaning] would disappear. It never abandons itself. What it is never remains external and accidental to it, since this is always taken up and integrated into it. (1962:169)

This transcendence described by Merleau-Ponty is not mystical, but is grounded in the world, such that existential indeterminacy becomes the basis for an inalienable human freedom (1962, part 3, chapter 3).

For Bourdieu, as for Merleau-Ponty, the synthesis of practical domains in a unitary habitus is predicated on indeterminacy, but this variant of indeterminacy does not lead to transcendence as it does for Merleau-Ponty. Instead of an existential indeterminacy, Bourdieu's is a logical indeterminacy, which

never explicitly or systematically limits itself to any one aspect of the terms it links, but takes each one, each time, as a whole, exploiting to the full the fact that two "data" are never entirely alike in *all* respects but are always alike in some respect.

[Ritual practice works by] bringing the same symbol into different relations through different aspects or bringing different aspects of the same referent into the same relation of opposition. (1977:111, 112)

Logical indeterminacy is the basis for transposition of different schemes into different practical domains, forming the basis for the polysemy and ambiguity that allows for improvisation in everyday life.<sup>10</sup>

Although a shared paradigm of embodiment thus leads both theorists

to a principle of indeterminacy, there remains a critical difference insofar as Bourdieu's logical principle becomes the condition for semiotic improvisation whereas Merleau-Ponty's existential principle becomes the condition for phenomenological transcendence.<sup>11</sup> In sum, Merleau-Ponty sees in the indeterminacy of perception a transcendence which does not outrun its embodied situation, but which always "asserts more things than it grasps: when I say that I see the ash-tray over there, I suppose as completed an unfolding of experience which could go on ad infinitum, and I commit a whole perceptual future" (1962:361). Bourdieu sees in the indeterminacy of practice that, since no person has conscious mastery of the *modus operandi* which integrates symbolic schemes and practices, the unfolding of his works and actions "always outruns his conscious intentions" (1977:79).

Whereas they are both predicated on the centrality of embodiment, there is an important difference between these two notions of indeterminacy, a difference that is relevant for how we construe orientation *among* selves or *within* a collectivity. The locus of these differences is Bourdieu's rejection of the concepts of lived experience, intentionality, and the distinction between consciousness in itself and for itself. Although we need not elaborate each of these notions, we must observe the methodological consequence of this wholesale rejection of fundamental phenomenological concepts. In effect, it requires Bourdieu to ground the conditions for the intelligibility of social life entirely on *homogenization* of the habitus within groups or classes (1977:80), and to explain individual variation in terms of *homology* among individuals. The result is that individuals' systems of dispositions are structural variants of the group habitus, or deviations in relation to a style (1977:86). Merleau-Ponty, in contrast, insists on the a priori necessity of *intersubjectivity*, pointing out that any actor's adoption of a position presupposes being situated in an intersubjective world, and that science itself is upheld by this basic doxa. This is perhaps the methodological moment at which semiotics and phenomenology diverge, but it is by the same token the moment where they meet, and we will have occasion to return to this moment at various points in our argument.

For the present I will argue for preserving the notion of intersubjectivity, and speak for the reconcilability of the two positions. Again I do so following Merleau-Ponty, for whom intersubjectivity is not an interpenetration of isolated intentionalities, but an interweaving of familiar patterns of behavior:

I perceive the other as a piece of behavior, for example, I perceive the grief or the anger of the other in his conduct, in his face or his hands, without recourse to any “inner” experience of suffering or anger, and because grief and anger are variations of belonging to the world, undivided between the body and consciousness, and equally applicable to the other’s conduct, visible in his phenomenal body, as in my own conduct as it is presented to me. (1962:356)<sup>12</sup>

In short, because body and consciousness are one, intersubjectivity is also a copresence.<sup>13</sup> Another’s emotion is immediate because it is grasped preobjectively, and familiar insofar as we share the same habitus. To paraphrase Merleau-Ponty, another person is perceived as “another myself” that tears itself away from being simply a phenomenon in my perceptual field, appropriating my phenomena and conferring on them the dimension of intersubjective being, and so offering “the task of a true communication” (Merleau-Ponty 1964*b*:18). Just as we do not perceive our own bodies as objects, other persons can become objects for us only secondarily, as the result of reflection. The conditions under which selves become objectified can only be identified empirically, as we are about to do in our cultural phenomenology of the self in religious healing. Finally, this notion of intersubjectivity offers an insight into the relation between self and sacred. That is, the preobjective character of another person as “another myself” is a major part of what distinguishes our experience of the social other from our experience of the sacred other, for the latter is in a radical sense “not myself.”<sup>14</sup>

We can consolidate this understanding of self as the indeterminate capacity for orientation by comparing our notion of indeterminacy with Fernandez’s concept of the inchoate. For Fernandez the inchoate is “the underlying (psychophysiological) and overlying (sociocultural) sense of entity (entirety of being or wholeness) which we reach for to express (by predication) and act out (by performance) but can never grasp” (1982:39). As a first approximation we could say that whereas a concept of the inchoate is essentially concerned with the problem of form out of formlessness, a concept of indeterminacy is concerned with that of specificity out of flux. Likewise, as a matter of emphasis we could suggest that the inchoate is a starting point for examination of affect and identity, whereas indeterminacy leads us to issues of perception and practice. At a deeper level, the difference is in Fernandez’s emphasis on the sense of entity that we reach for but can never grasp. The notion of indeterminacy accounts precisely for why we cannot grasp it—“it” being the self itself—because there is in fact no “entity” as such to be grasped.

This is not to say, however, that the self as indeterminate capacity for orientation and engagement has no characteristics, and this brings us back to the inclusion in our definition of reflexivity and effort, which Zaner (1981) refers to as “fundamental moments of self.” The self-referentiality of the whole that is composed of bodily experience, habitus, and world is a kind of “inwardness” that results in the awakening of the senses of presence in the world and of copresence with others. This situated reflexivity is accompanied by an effort which is precisely the effort to become oriented in the face of the vertigo of essential indeterminacy encountered in this awakening. Reflexivity and effort are necessary characteristics of self. One advantage of identifying them the way we have is that it allows us a better feel both for the proper place of self-awareness and objectification in our understanding of self. It shows why we eschewed self-awareness as a starting point in our consideration of Hallowell, and the already-constituted world of objects as a starting point through our reading of Merleau-Ponty. A second advantage is that it recognizes self-awareness and objectification (i.e., the creation of culture) as inevitable—there can be no other consequence of reflexivity and effort. Yet, and this is its final advantage, insofar as reflexivity and effort are respectively grounded in the indeterminacy of perception and practice, the orientation process is never complete. Zaner summarizes this point with a term borrowed from Gabriel Marcel, suggesting that the self is constantly “en route.”

Having identified reflexivity and effort, we are prepared for the last element of our definition, that self processes achieve the self-objectification of persons. We turn again for contrast to Fernandez, for whom the inchoate is the ground of emotional meaning, moral imagination, identity, and self-objectification, all of which are characteristics of persons. The person already objectified is a culturally constituted *representation* of self. The preobjective self, however, is a culturally constituted mode of *being in the world*. In the constitution of persons, Fernandez’s functions of predication and performance are parallel to the domains of perception and practice that we have identified as loci for the constitution of self. To be precise, with predication we recognize that perceiving is perceiving *as*, and with performance that practice is practice *as if*. With predication reflexivity becomes self-awareness, and precisely because it is based on predication it is necessarily self-awareness of a specific cultural kind (cf. Shweder and Bourne 1982). With performance effort becomes agency, but again, because it is based in the efficacy of perfor-

mance, it is not necessarily the agency of a solitary ego often presupposed in our own culture.

Recognizing the inchoate as the existential ground of the person means emphasizing that there is always some form in which the self is objectified. Acknowledging indeterminacy as the ground of self means emphasizing that form itself is indeterminate. On both analytic levels one must admit, along with Fernandez, the critical importance of metaphor as the epitome of what Merleau-Ponty referred to as our human “genius for ambiguity” (1962:189). For present purposes we need not elaborate the notion of metaphor other than to observe how it relates differentially to person and self.<sup>15</sup> Because the person is a kind of representation, however, the feature of metaphor likely to be stressed is a textual one, namely its richness of meaning. Because the self is a mode of being in the world, the feature that must be stressed is a feature of embodiment, namely the instability of attention directed toward any one dimension of a metaphor’s meaning. To observe self processes, or processes of self-objectification, in perception and practice is then not only to observe a striving for a sense of entity through predication and performance, but to examine a series of shifting construals of relationship among bodily experience, world, and habitus.

### The Sacred Self in a Charismatic World

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No matter how much conceptual sense our definition of the self makes, it remains empty theorizing unless it is capable of dialogue with concrete phenomena. We must then work out our insights in the empirical thickness of healers’ and supplicants’ experience, specifying the transformation of suffering<sup>16</sup> and distress as the transformation of self. This will require phenomenological description of particular culturally elaborated self processes as they are addressed to situationally relevant psychocultural themes. Yet it was important that we present it first, before our description of the Charismatic Renewal as an “object” of analysis. To do otherwise would have been disingenuous, presupposing that we could somehow describe the movement in terms devoid of theory before then subjecting it to analysis. Since all description is implicitly theoretical—the result of objectification—our dialogue has necessarily already begun. Accordingly, our introduction to the movement in this final section of the chapter already bares the conceptual

scaffolding on which it is constructed. As an introduction, however, it is the first step toward grounding our argument in Blake's "minute particulars" of existence.

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal is a movement within the Roman Catholic Church which incorporates Pentecostal practices into Catholicism. Contemporary Pentecostalism began around the turn of the present century, and until the 1950s was a predominantly working-class religion practiced in denominations such as the Assemblies of God (Bloch-Hoell 1964, Hollenweger 1972, Synan 1975). Through the influence of these "classical" Pentecostals, Catholics and "mainline" denominational Protestants occasionally underwent the spiritual experience of being "baptized in the Holy Spirit." These neophytes would typically leave their churches and join Pentecostal ones. Beginning with the Episcopalians in the 1950s and culminating with the Catholics in 1967, however, many of those who underwent the Pentecostal experience decided that it was not incompatible with their faith. They began to join together in "neo-Pentecostal" groups, originating "charismatic renewal" movements within their denominations.

The moment in which the Roman Catholic movement originated coincided with the beginning of the "post-Tridentine" epoch of church history. The Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) marked the end of a regime of doctrine and practice that had lasted four hundred years since the Council of Trent (1545–1563). Changes instituted in the wake of Vatican II created the conditions of possibility for the Charismatic Renewal in several respects. The Council's position on the theoretical possibility of "charisms" or "spiritual gifts" opened the way for the adoption of the Pentecostal phenomena in their already-developed ritual forms. Reinterpretation of the sacraments, wherein penance or confession became the sacrament of reconciliation (rather than of guilt) and extreme unction, or the last anointing, became the sacrament of the sick (rather than of the dying) opened the way for Charismatic faith-healing. Changes in liturgical form such as turning the altar to face the congregation and adopting vernacular language in place of Latin opened the way for paraliturgical innovation such as the Charismatic prayer meeting. The new biblicism has been taken up wholeheartedly by Charismatics, sometimes to the point of fundamentalism, and the movement is a stronghold of lay initiative and ecumenism.

These changes within Catholicism also coincided with the culmination of the post–World War II era in the cultural ferment of the 1960s. Its racial strife, the morally devastating Indochinese war, and mass col-

lege enrollments of the “baby boom” generation spawned movements of black power, feminism, and eventually the “new age.” Catholics had a variety of options ranging among the Christian Family movement, marriage encounter, the Cursillo, the Christian Worker movement, the “underground church,” discussion and encounter groups, home masses with avant garde liturgies, and the political thought of liberation theology. Many of these were characterized by motives of community and renewal. Pentecostalism was a catalyst that added a totalizing enthusiasm and experience of the sacred, precipitating a new movement out of postwar, post–Vatican II Catholicism.

The movement attracted a strong following among relatively well-educated, middle-class, suburban Catholics (Mawn 1975, Fichter 1975, McGuire 1982, Neitz 1987). Since its inception it has spread throughout the world wherever there are Catholics.<sup>17</sup> The Church hierarchy has cautiously but consistently recognized the movement’s legitimacy, apparently tolerating its theological radicalism for the sake of encouraging its increasing political conservatism. Although it has been predominantly a movement of the laity, substantial proportions of nuns and priests have participated, including several bishops and one cardinal.

From 1967 to 1970 the movement was a collection of small, personalistic groups emphasizing spontaneity in prayer and interpersonal relations, and loosely organized via networks of personal contacts. From 1970 to 1975 it underwent rapid institutionalization and consolidation of a lifestyle including collective living, distinctive forms of ritual, and a specialized language of religious experience. From 1975 to the end of the decade the movement entered an apocalyptic phase based on prophetic revelation that “hard times” were imminent for Christians. The turn of the decade brought recognition by the movement that its growth had virtually ceased, and marked an increasingly clear divergence between Charismatics gathered into tightly structured intentional communities who wanted to preserve the earlier sense of apocalyptic mission and those who remained active in less overtly communitarian parochial prayer groups. By the end of the eighties some among the former considered themselves a distinct movement. Among the latter, boundaries between Charismatics and conventional Catholics became somewhat ambiguous, as many who no longer attended regular prayer meetings remained active in their parishes, while many Catholics with no other movement involvement became attracted to large public healing services conducted by Charismatics.

Over the course of its twenty-five-year history the movement has

also undergone a demographic transition. Not only have Charismatics themselves aged, but they have attracted increasingly older members such that the modal age of participants is at present in the fifties. The Charismatic Renewal is no longer the vanguard movement it conceived itself to be in its first phases. It has a stable bureaucratic organization, and by the late 1980s had become one among other conservative movements in contemporary Catholicism.

What constitutes an identity as a Catholic Charismatic? The first element is cultivation of a particular style of relationship to divinity. The Charismatics claim to offer a unique spiritual experience to individuals, and promise a dramatic renewal of Church life based on a spirituality of "personal relationship" with Jesus and direct access to divine power and inspiration through a series of "spiritual gifts" or "charisms." Directly relevant to the issue of a sacred self, the notion of a relationship to the deity is a template for orientation in the world, and the exercise of spiritual gifts is a template for self processes that bring about that orientation. Despite the currency of the notion of being "born again," Charismatics are more likely to say that religious experience allows them to discover their "real self" than to claim that they have been given a "new self."<sup>18</sup> Identity is expressed as a sense of coming to know "who I am in Christ."

This sense of orientation and of self process does not exist in a cultural vacuum, however. The Charismatic sacred self is elaborated with respect to psychocultural themes already salient in the North American milieu. These are themes in the sense introduced by Opler (1945) to describe global preoccupations of a culture. In a phenomenological sense they are also issues thematized or made salient in the orienting processes of self-objectification. The themes of *spontaneity* and *control* were already identified by Clow (1976) as central to traditional Pentecostalism, and have been preserved and elaborated in the Catholic movement. In addition, the theme of *intimacy* is vivid both in the notion of a personal relationship with the deity and in the emphasis placed on a sense of community in Charismatic groups. Let us briefly elaborate these three psychocultural themes and their relevance to Charismatics.<sup>19</sup>

Participants experienced the Charismatic Renewal as an opportunity to achieve that spontaneity sought after in American culture both as a personal trait and as a feature of interpersonal relations. The notion that mental health is related to the "spontaneity of the self" is found in some versions of professional psychological theory (Greenberg and Mitchell 1983:200). The kind of American who initiates or at least

participates in “impromptu gatherings” or events is valued, and middle-class Americans often lament not having the kind of personal relations where friends feel free to “drop over anytime” (cf. Varenne 1986).<sup>20</sup> One may even see the desire for spontaneity in the current popularity of comedy clubs where patrons seek to be startled or shocked into laughter. Charismatics, also reacting to the ritualistic Catholicism in which many were raised, are highly motivated by the ideal of spontaneity in spiritual experience as well as interpersonal interaction. Indeed, in the early 1970s when I began fieldwork among them, Charismatics would react negatively if I referred to an interest in their “ritual” life, associating the term with formalism and lack of spontaneity or freedom. Some movement participants would reject being labeled as such because it violated their sense of spontaneity, saying that they could not *be* Charismatics because it was “not an organization but a movement of the Spirit.”

The theme of control is likewise prominent in the cultural psychology of Americans. Crawford (1984), for example, has analyzed the American concept of health as a symbol that condenses metaphors of self-control and release from pressures. It is consistent that the popular imagination has been captivated by an illness like anorexia nervosa, in which “the main theme is a struggle for control, for a sense of identity, competence, and effectiveness” (Hilde Bruch, quoted in Bell 1985:17). Gaines (1992) has identified control as a prominent cultural theme in formal psychiatric diagnosis, and Lutz (1990) shows that the language of control pervades everyday emotional discourse. A common complaint by middle-class Americans when their affairs are not going well or they feel under stress is that “my life is out of control.” My impression is that Americans are less bothered by the breach of decorum in losing control of their own behavior than they are in not being able to control their situation: one may indeed “fly off the handle” if it appears impossible to “do something” that is causing frustration.<sup>21</sup> Charismatics thematize both positive and negative aspects of control. On the one hand, they learn not only that they should “surrender” themselves to the will of God, but that overwhelming situations can be “given to the Lord.” On the other hand, the influence of evil spirits is suspected precisely when negative behaviors or emotions are out of control.

Finally, intimacy is a prominent American psychocultural theme. It is vivid in the ideal for relations between spouses, summarized in the notions of romantic love and close communication (Bellah et al. 1985, Levine 1991). When an American refers to a group of friends or co-

workers as “like a family,” the connotation is more likely to be that members are intimate and so close that one can “tell them anything” than that they are loyal solely because an obligatory social relationship exists. This contrasts with Japanese culture, for example, in which intimacy is cultivated among peers of the same age group but not typically between spouses, and where in general the values of continuing nurturance and harmony often “take precedence over the actualization of intimacy in relationships” (Devos 1985:163, 165, 167). Although intimacy is not an exclusively “Western” cultural characteristic, it has been described, especially among Americans, as the “most precious commodity in life” (Hsu 1985:36). Charismatic self processes of intimacy are found in their motive toward community, in the body technique of laying on hands, in the form of an intimate relationship (cultivated by means of a private “prayer life”) with a divinity conceived explicitly as a “personal God,” and in the genre of ritual language known as “sharing” the intimacy of one’s life experiences and thoughts. Westley (1977) has shown that speaking in tongues is not a necessary and sufficient criterion of being Charismatic. In her study, “individual members saw the moment that they began sharing as the moment of their rebirth,” and members stated that until they began sharing their prayer group was not a Charismatic one (*ibid.*:929).

Charismatics are not unique among Americans who address their preoccupation with such self-related psychocultural themes through ritual healing. Meredith McGuire (1982, 1988), who has studied a wide spectrum of middle-class American healing groups including that of Catholic Pentecostals, points out that for many of them “‘health’ is an idealization of a kind of self, and ‘healing’ is part of the process by which growth toward that ideal is achieved” (1988:244). She suggests that Christian healing is relatively distinct in that it cultivates a self in a subordinate relationship to a transcendent deity and in conformity to group norms, while many other forms of contemporary religious healing cultivate a flexible self freed from learned constraints and open to new possibilities and potentials (*ibid.*:238). Nevertheless, for McGuire the general condition for this concern with self is that contemporary society has approached the “limits of rationalization” of the body, emotional experience, and styles of moral evaluation and legitimation, limits at which there is change in “the very practices by which self is symbolized, shaped and expressed” (*ibid.*:251–252). Her argument suggests that these limits are not being retreated from, surpassed, or abolished, but that internal social system tensions occurring at those limits generate

a basic reorientation. Whether or not one accepts the hypothesis about limits of rationalization, McGuire's observations reinforce our premise that therapeutic specificity can be identified in orientational self processes addressed to psychocultural themes such as spontaneity, control, and intimacy in ritual healing.

Among Charismatics, the self processes addressed to these three themes become operative within a coherent ritual system. Catholic Charismatic ritual performance is characterized by a marked linguisticality, in that most of what goes on is verbal. In this sense it is a religion of "the word." Bound by the mortar of oral performance, ritual events become the building blocks of Catholic Charismatic life in a manner distinct from societies typically encountered in the anthropological literature. Anthropological accounts of traditional societies customarily treat ritual as a window on the nature of society, as events that throw light on underlying cultural and structural patterns: *society creates ritual as a self-affirmation*. In a movement like Catholic Pentecostalism, this relation between society and ritual is inverted. Ritual events like prayer meetings are both historically and structurally prior to the generation of distinctive patterns of thought, behavior, and social organization. The events provide the earliest models for the organization of community life: *ritual creates society as a self-affirmation*. Prayer meetings, initiation ceremonies, and healing services are the three main classes of ritual event.

The prayer meeting is the central collective event for Catholic Charismatics, and indeed the organization of prayer groups and communities evolved directly from the organization of prayer meetings. A small casual prayer group is likely to gather around a lighted candle in the living room of a private home. A large group may meet in a gymnasium, with several instrumentalists to accompany group singing, a public address system for the speakers, and control by leaders over which participants will be allowed to "prophecy" or "share."

Initiation to the Pentecostal experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit is intimately tied to initiation into the Charismatic group. Initiation typically occurs in a series of seven weekly "Life in the Spirit" seminars. The first four weeks explain the "basic Christian message of salvation" and the meaning of baptism in the Spirit, the fifth week is devoted to prayer with laying on of hands for the baptism, and the final two weeks are "oriented towards further growth in the life of the Spirit."

Healing may take place in large public services or in private, one-on-one sessions. In the former, each supplicant is typically prayed for

briefly with the laying on of hands. The latter are similar to sessions of psychotherapy, although of a form that alternates periods of counseling with periods of prayer. Healers tend to specialize in one of several forms of healing, including healing from physical illness, “inner” or emotional healing, and “deliverance” from the influence of evil spirits.

Ritual language within any of these classes of events is constituted by a system of four major genres. These genres are named, formalized speech varieties used with regularity in ritual settings, and frequently regarded as verbal manifestations of the sacred. They include prophecy, teaching, prayer, and sharing. Prophecy is a first-person pronouncement in which the “I” is God; the human speaker is merely the divinity’s mouthpiece. For Catholic Charismatics prophecy is a kind of divine revelation, a means of access to the mind of God. Teaching is understood as ritual utterance that clarifies some spiritual truth, and thus enables its hearers to lead better Christian lives. Teachings are often detailed elaborations of key terms and concepts that recur in less elaborated form in the other ritual genres. Prayer includes four basic types: worship (with subcategories of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving); petition or intercession on behalf of another for a special purpose such as healing; “seeking the Lord,” or prayer for divine guidance; and “taking authority,” or praying in the form of a command for evil to depart from a person or situation. Finally, sharing is similar in form to ordinary conversation except that its contents must have some spiritual value or edifying effect. These contents may be experiences, events, problems, or thoughts that have some significance for a religious understanding of daily life.

Whereas performance of ritual genres can be understood as a rhetorical means of ordering experience and directing attention, the concrete character of the Charismatic world can be found in the movement’s specialized *vocabulary of motives* (Mills 1940). The motives are words with specialized religious meaning which are constantly circulated in the genres of ritual language. They play a role in orientational self processes insofar as their use both anticipates the situational consequences of participants’ actions and implies strategies for action. The motives of Charismatic ritual language name and identify the following features of Charismatic life: (1) forms of relationship among individuals or between individuals and God; (2) forms of collectivity or collective identity; (3) qualities or properties of individuals or relationships; (4) activities or forms of action essential to life within the movement; (5) negativities or countermotives that refer to threats to the Charismatic ideal.<sup>22</sup>

The Charismatic ritual system is embedded in a behavioral environment that includes several types of culturally objectified persons. We have already briefly mentioned the sense in which the person can be understood as a cultural representation, specifically as an objectification of self. Parallel to the way in which the self extends beyond the biological individual to encompass relations among body, habitus, and world, the person as representation extends beyond human beings to play a major role in the semiotic constitution of the behavioral environment. Hallowell (1960) showed that among the Ojibwa persons are many phenomenologically real beings that inhabit the cultural world, and with which human beings presumably may come into interaction. Among Charismatics, the domain of person includes not only human beings, both adult and child, but first of all God. The Charismatic deity is really three persons, each with a character corresponding to one of the three parts of the tripartite human person. Thus Father, Son, and Holy Spirit correspond with mind, body, and spirit, and implicitly each divine person is most congenial with its matched subfield within the human person.<sup>23</sup> Also considered persons in this sense are deceased human spirits, and at the opposite end of the life course, human embryos and fetuses. Relative to societies in which they are actively propitiated, ancestral spirits are largely neglected, except insofar as they are occasionally the cause of some affliction (see chapter 2). Unborn spirits are, however, a cause célèbre that lead Charismatics to intense political involvement in the North American cultural debate about abortion.

Evil spirits or demons also populate the Charismatic behavioral environment, though Charismatics would doubtless prefer not to grant them the “dignity” of being persons, and instead use a term like “intelligent entities.” One healer was on such disrespectfully familiar terms with her adversary (ultimately Satan, despite the multiplicity of individual demons under his dominion) that she referred to him as “the old boy” and “the creep.” Other spiritual persons are of decreasing salience for interaction with humans. The importance of the Virgin Mary is proportionally less in “ecumenical” groups where Catholic devotees demur out of politeness to their Protestant fellows, whose traditional culture excludes defining Mary as a person who interacts with humans. Saints are not prominent actors even in predominantly Catholic groups, in this case not out of deference to Protestants, but largely because they become relatively superfluous as intermediaries in a religion that cultivates direct “person-to-person” interaction with the deity. Michael the Archangel is invoked as a protector against evil spirits or as a reinforce-

ment in episodes of “spiritual warfare” against them, but angels as a class of spiritual person are conspicuously absent from the Charismatic world, appearing but rarely in healing or prophetic imagery.

Our search for specificity of therapeutic process in Charismatic healing can only succeed by taking into account the features of the Charismatic world that we have sketched out in these too-brief paragraphs. In the following chapters we will identify culturally elaborated self processes of imagination, memory, emotion, and language. We will examine how, in the conjunction of these self processes and the three psychocultural themes with respect to which they are oriented, the indeterminate self is objectified and represented as a particular kind of person with a specific identity. This self is sacred insofar as it is oriented in the world and defines what it means to be human in terms of the wholly “other” than human (van der Leeuw 1938, Eliade 1958, Otto 1958). The sense of the divine other is cultivated by participation in a coherent ritual system. This ritual system is embedded in, and helps to continually create, a behavioral environment in which participants embody a coherent set of dispositions or habitus. These are the elements that constitute the webs of significance—or of embodied existence—within which the sacred self comes into being. To be healed is to inhabit the Charismatic world as a sacred self.