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*Adventure as Education*  
*John W. Bennett and Anthropology in the Early Twentieth Century*  
Laura L. Cochrane





# Adventure as Education

John W. Bennett and Anthropology  
in the Early Twentieth Century

Laura L. Cochrane



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## Acknowledgments

This project started with John W. Bennett's suggestion that he record his memories of his early education. My thanks therefore begins with John, who entrusted me with his personal history. The Department of Anthropology at Washington University in St. Louis was supportive of me working with John when I was a graduate student. Vanessa Hildebrand and Beth Townsend, who had worked with John on previous projects (see the Introduction), gave me valuable advice in this project. Lunches with John, Vanessa, and Beth were the best.

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colleagues gave John's narrative and my historical descriptions the additional depth they needed. I especially appreciate their willingness to read through and correct drafts of chapters and answer all sorts of questions, both consequential and mundane.

My historical explanations come from reading dozens of meticulously-researched studies of the time period covered in this book, carefully written obituaries of colleagues, and writings of those mentioned in the book. Working through this material was often eye-opening about my own discipline. I therefore thank a discipline that is reflective and critical of its past and present, and that works to record and make public its research.

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## Series Editors' Preface

### *Ethnography, Ecology, and Applied Anthropology: Implications for Medical Anthropology*

ANDREW STRATHERN & PAMELA J. STEWART\*

In his long and productive life John W. Bennett tackled many topics arising out of the four field traditions of American Anthropology. His lifetime spanned the works of many renowned founders of the discipline of anthropology in theoretical, methodological, and empirical arenas of work. In her compilation and review of this work, Laura Cochrane draws effectively on notes of her discussions with her erstwhile mentor to give us a rounded historical picture of Bennett and his manifold connections with the anthropology and sociology of the day. Chapters 6 and 8 of her book present the picture of Bennett as a scientist involved in engagement with the emergence of applied studies in general and ecological research in particular. One of the earlier figures to have included Bennett and moved him towards applied work seems to have been Margaret Mead, who shifted in her own career from ethnographic work on New Guinea and Samoa to a variety of applied studies in the USA, including a study of American diets intended to help government planning for the introduction of suitable diets in case of a need for food rationing once the USA became involved in World War II.

It is but a short step from any applied topic in anthropology to its implications for the health status of populations and individuals. This is why it is particularly interesting and relevant that Bennett hit on the importance of ecology. Ecology brings us closer again to medical anthropology and its engagement with the experience of illness and methods of combating it. This is perhaps most obviously true of epidemiological studies, but the point holds for food studies, methods of production, hospital procedures, the perception of the environment, and notions of exploitation and con-

servation of the environment. Ecology includes also what the anthropologist Roy Rappaport referred to as the “cognized environment” as well as the “operational environment” (Rappaport 1968: 237). Models of the cognized environment include the putative presence and influence of spirit entities within the landscape, so environment further implies religion. The operational model relates to objective or etic evaluations of processes of adaptation as measured by an outside observer. This distinction was perhaps not a part of Bennett’s scheme, but there is no intrinsic difficulty in connecting the two models since they both pertain to the domain of actions, and therefore they both belong to the category of study that Bennett espoused as “social ecology.”

For medical anthropology, the cognized versus operational model distinction falls partly into line with the fundamental distinction we have made in our own work between “curing” and “healing” (Strathern and Stewart 2010). Curing treats a physical condition of disease or disorder, healing treats the experience of illness on the part of the patient. Both processes are important, and both impinge on ecological adaption.

The importance of the concept of adaptations is even more salient now than when Bennett was working. This is because the ecological implications of climate changes have begun to hit populations all around the world, and the issues of how to achieve adaptation to these changes are thorny. In this context adaptation is paired with mitigation, mitigation referring to efforts to combat or ameliorate the impacts of climate change and adaptation to efforts to adjust cultural practices such as clothing patterns to the environmental changes.

With these ramifications arising out of John W. Bennett’s work, and the deft narrative that Dr. Cochrane has creatively woven about his scholarly life, we have included his story in our Medical Anthropology Series because of the strength of the social ecology approach as a way of entering into debates about climate change today.

*University of Pittsburgh, March 2019*

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- Strathern, A. and Pamela J. Stewart (2010). *Curing and Healing: Medical Anthropology in Global Perspective*, Second Edition. Durham N.C.: Carolina Academic Press.

\* Pamela J. Stewart (Strathern) and Andrew J. Strathern are a wife-and-husband research team who are based in the Department of Anthropology, University of Pittsburgh and co-direct the Cromie Burn Research Unit. They are frequently invited international lecturers and have worked with a number of museums to assist them with their collections. Stewart and Strathern have published over 50 books, over 80 prefaces to influential books, over 200 articles, book chapters, and essays on their research in the Pacific (mainly Papua New Guinea, primarily the Mount Hagen, Duna, and Wiru areas) and the South-West Pacific region, (e.g., Samoa, Cook Islands, and Fiji); Asia (mainly Taiwan, and also including Mainland China and Japan); Europe (primarily Scotland, Ireland, Germany, and the European Union countries in general); and New Zealand and Australia. One of their strengths is that, unlike some others working in the Mount Hagen among the Hagen people, they learned the language, Melpa, and used it to understand the lives of the local people. Their most recent co-authored books include *Witchcraft, Sorcery, Rumors, and Gossip* (Cambridge University Press, 2004); *Kinship in Action: Self and Group* (Prentice Hall, 2011); *Peace-Making and the Imagination: Papua New Guinea Perspectives* (University of Queensland Press with Penguin Australia, 2011); *Ritual: Key Concepts in Religion* (Bloomsbury Academic Publications, 2014); *Working in the Field: Anthropological Experiences Across the World* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); *Breaking the Frames: Anthropological Conundrums* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); *Sacred Revenge in Oceania* (Cambridge University Press, 2019). Their recent co-edited books include *Research Companion to Anthropology* (Routledge Publishing, 2016, originally published in 2015); *Exchange and Sacrifice* (Carolina Academic Press, 2008) and *Religious and Ritual Change: Cosmologies and Histories* (Carolina Academic Press, 2009), along with the updated and revised Chinese version (Taipei, Taiwan: Linking Publishing, 2010). Stewart and Strathern's current research includes the topics of Cosmological Landscapes; Ritual Studies; Political Peace-making; Comparative Anthropological Studies of Disasters and Climatic Change; Language, Culture and Cognitive Science; and Scottish and Irish Studies. For many years they served as Associate Editor and General Editor (respectively) for the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania book series and they are Co-Series Editors for the Anthropology and Cultural History in Asia and the Indo-Pacific book series. They also currently serve as Co-Editors of four book series: Ritual Studies, Medical Anthropology, European Anthropology, and Disaster Anthropology, and they are the long-standing Co-Editors of the *Journal of Ritual Studies* (on Facebook: at facebook.com/ritualstudies). Their webpages, listing publications and other scholarly activities, are: <http://www.pitt.edu/~strather/> and <http://www.StewartStrathern.pitt.edu/>.

