

## Bodies in Translation: Science, Knowledge and Sustainability in Cultural Translation

While Spaniards debated whether the natives had a soul, indigenous people in the Greater Antilles drowned captives to observe whether white bodies putrefied. Thus, Europeans inquired whether others had souls, while Amerindians wondered whether Spaniards had bodies that decomposed.

C. Lévi-Strauss. *Race and Culture*

This is a cross-disciplinary inquiry of translation as a cultural practice. We often tend to view translation in entirely discursive terms; that is, as the carrying over and rendering of one language into another. In the human sciences, however, questions concerning the commensurability of knowledge from different disciplines, places and times have long been associated with 'cultural translation'.<sup>1</sup>

The concept of 'cultural translation' was coined in the circle around the anthropologist Evens-Pritchard 'to describe what happened in cultural encounters when each side tries to make sense of the action of the other'.<sup>2</sup> Evans-Pritchard work on Azande witchcraft (1937), long served as a point of reference for disputes on 'rationality' and relativism that linked small-scale ethnography to the general issues of understanding and interpretation in anthropology, cultural history and the history and philosophy of science. In European conceptual history, moreover, translation has been understood to refer to movement, and replication, not only of words, but also of ideas, cultural practices and things. Early modern conceptualizations of translation in the West incorporated such extra-discursive aspects; *translatio* and *transfere* are the Latin translations of the Greek 'metaphora' and 'metaphero'. The terms refer to the act of carrying something across a boundary, without limiting this something to words. Thus, early modern notions of translation, also encompassed the transfer of

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<sup>1</sup> Ødemark, J. (2017). "What is Cultural Translation". *The Translator*. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13556509.2018.1411033>; Malmkjær, K. «Analytical Philosophy and Translation». M. Baker. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, and Severi, C. and W. F. Hanks.2015. 'Introduction.' *Translating Worlds: The Epistemological Space of Translation*, 1-17. Chicago: Hau Books.

<sup>2</sup> Burke, P. (2007): 'Cultures of Translation in Early Modern Europe', Burke, P. & Po-chia Hsia, R. *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge: 8.

both physical bodies and bodies of knowledge and power – like the *translatio* of Saints and the *translatio studii et imperii*.<sup>3</sup>

Lately, translation has also emerged as a key word in the lexicon of a range of disciplines. The turn to expanded notions of translation can be traced across a number of human sciences.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, developments in Actor Network Theory (ANT) and Science and Technology Studies (STS) have asserted that the productivity of translation is the very condition for all knowledge. Translation has also recently been institutionalized in natural science, especially in medicine where knowledge translation (KT) refers to a set of research activities bound together by the common goal of ‘bridging the gap’ between science in laboratories and clinical application, and more generally, putting research-based knowledge into practical care.<sup>5</sup> Such diverse expansions of translation have underscored that translation is never simply a discursive process, even when the objects transported are words.

In this project, we investigate various cultural and epistemic translation practices where sustainable health and the human body serve as a boundary object between natural and cultural inquiry. By experimenting with different models of and for translation, we hope to devise new approaches to the problem of commensurability between cultures and epistemic orders. We aim to reach this objective by analyzing a sample of early modern and cross-cultural cases designed to explore the historiography and translatability of the nature-culture distinction. Our cases thus revolve around cutting-edge issues in the history of knowledge, cultural history, cross-cultural studies and translations studies – and relate these issues to pressing issues of sustainability in the health sciences.

## 1. EXCELLENCE

### 1.1 STATE OF THE ART, KNOWLEDGE NEEDS AND PROJECT OBJECTIVES

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<sup>3</sup> Cheyfitz, E. (1997): *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from The Tempest to Tarzan*. University of Pennsylvania Press: 35.

<sup>4</sup> Ødemark, J., & Engebretsen, E. (2018). ‘Expansions’. *History of translation knowledge: A dictionary*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.

<sup>5</sup> Greenhalgh, Trisha et al. (2011). ‘Is it time to drop the “knowledge translation” metaphor? A critical literature review, *J R Soc Med*, 104, 501-509; Woolf, S. H. ‘The Meaning of Translational Research and Why It Matters’. *JAMA* 2008; 299. Graham, I. D., Logan, J., Harrison, M. B., Straus, S. E., Tetroe, J., Caswell, W., & Robinson, N. (2006). ‘Lost in knowledge translation: time for a map?’ *Journal of continuing education in the health professions*, 26(1), 13-24.; Straus, S. E., Tetroe, J., & Graham, I. (2009). ‘Defining knowledge translation.’ *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 181(3-4), 165-168.

[...]

Our aim, then, is to examine the wide semantic stretch (Lloyd) of ‘translation’ by relating it to health, sustainability and the human body in different cultural and disciplinary contexts: In the human sciences, translation has long been a key theoretical concept to tackle epistemic and cultural difference.<sup>6</sup> Besides, the sociology of translation developed as an analytical tool in ANT and STS, has also underscored that translation is never simply a discursive process, but a complex material and cultural practice. In contrast, KT denotes a scientific and (purportedly) non-cultural practice that defines culture as a ‘barrier’ to the transmission of scientific knowledge already formulated in the laboratory and confirmed by randomized controlled trials (RCTs). KT is accordingly little concerned with the entanglement of the cultural and the biomedical aspects of knowledge and its transfer to different sociocultural contexts. Hence, this view of translation and knowledge contrasts sharply with the celebration of difference and the productivity of translation in the human sciences. Like the sociology of translation established in STS, however, the aim is to bridge material, natural, and cultural phenomena in one analytical practice.

KT is clearly expressive of a certain cultural history and a certain ideology of knowledge and translation: it combines notions from aesthetic romanticism (translation is the art of ‘carrying across’ the genius of the original masterpiece), and an enlightenment model of knowledge dissemination (knowledge should trickle down from elite theory to popular practice). All translational shifts are unwarranted, since knowledge has already reached its culmination in the scientific source text (ST). Here, then, translation is – in line with the (now discredited) literary model – aiming at full equivalences between a source text (ST) and a target text (TT). Expanding upon our team’s earlier work, we claim that KT demonstrates the need for a concern with textual and cultural aspects of translation, even in a (purportedly) autonomous biomedical domain.<sup>7</sup> The *Lancet Commission on culture and health* (2014) identified a similar challenge. It pointed out that ‘the distinction between the objectivity of

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<sup>6</sup> Evans, Ruth (1998): ‘Metaphor of Translation’ in Baker, M. (ed.): *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, Routledge London, 149-153, Gal, Susan (2015): ‘Politics of Translation’, *The Annual Review of Anthropology*, 44: 225-40.  
<sup>7</sup> Ødemark, John, Henrichsen, G. F & Engebretsen, E. ‘Knowledge translation’, in *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Health*, Spisiak, E. et al (eds.). (in press); Towards a translational medical humanities: introducing the cultural crossings of care’. *BMJ: Medical Humanities*: Published Online First: 27 April 2020. doi: 10.1136/medhum-2019-011751, 2020; Engebretsen E, Ødemark, J, Sandset, T. ‘Expanding the Knowledge Translation Metaphor’. *Health Research policy and Systems*. <http://health-policy-systems.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12961-017-0184-x>

science and the subjectivity of culture is itself a social fact'.<sup>8</sup> Hence, the Lancet Commission maintained that there is a need for a radical questioning of the cultural (!) and historically produced distinction between the (purported) objectivity of science and subjectivity of culture.

Recent development in STS and the so-called ontological turn in anthropology, however, has also complicated the use of culture as an instrument for understanding and translating 'others'. The concept of '*culture*' has been considered a Eurocentric instrument of mistranslation, reproducing the asymmetrical opposition between the universally valid and unified logos of science and the notion of a plurality of cultures that offers divergent representations of the universal nature accessed by Western science. The unity of nature thus offers the ultimate (ethnocentric) yardstick for all cultural translation. The problem is still frequently phrased, however, as one of cultural translation.<sup>9</sup> For B. Latour, the asymmetry of the nature-culture distinction characterizing modernity's self-understanding is the precondition for the distinction between cultures (in the plural) – between 'scientific moderns' and (all) other cultures with a mere 'symbolic access to nature' (i.e. lacking science). Hence, *the problem of cross-cultural translation is a function of the nature-culture division. Indeed, this division, originating in the early modern period, is the one that current translational approaches aim to overcome.*

To explore these issues, we have organized the project around a set of work packages and case studies. Our objectives are

- 1 [*Theory & Method*] to develop new, interdisciplinary conceptualizations of, and approaches to, translation that merge cultural, textual and semantic concerns with meaning with material networks of transmission
- 1.1. to analyze medical knowledge translation with reference to broader cultural notions of translation, and develop concepts of medical knowledge translation (KT) able to cope with contemporary epistemic and cultural difference
- 2 [*Cases-studies*] to explore cutting-edge cases in cultural translation

We aim to reach the theoretical and methodological objectives by analyzing early modern and cross-cultural case studies. We see the cases as empirical 'places' to

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<sup>8</sup> Napier, D. The Lancet Commission on Culture and Health. *The Lancet* 2014; 384, 1607–1639, p. 1607.

<sup>9</sup> Willerslev, R. (2016). 'Foreword: The Anthropology of Ontology Meets the Writing Culture Debate – Is Reconciliation Possible?' *Social Analysis*: 60: 1, vi.

generate questions about particular analytical topics.<sup>10</sup> WP 1 therefore examines state of the art issues relating to the body and the nature-culture distinction in early modern history. WP 2 tackles state of the art issues in cross-cultural studies, focusing upon nature, bodies and spirits in Amerindian cosmologies (a central reference for the ontological turn), 'indigenous' translations of their healing practices into the Western category of 'cultural heritage', and translations of mindfulness and shamanism to the 'West', as mind-body medicine. WP3 analyse KT with reference to broader cultural notions of translation in relation to sustainability and health, the Anthropocene and the Amazon.

## 1.2 NOVELTY AND AMBITION

We want to open a cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural space for translation and a bidirectional interrogation of both biomedicine (avoiding simplistic reductions of life to biology) and the humanities (shunning simplistic reductions of suffering and health injustice to cultural relativism). To do this we have devised a cross-disciplinary research design that cuts across the humanities and the sciences as well as historical and contemporary cultural and science studies.

We aim to keep open radical question of translation and cross-cultural understanding, but also to target these upon the purportedly non-cultural KT. Combining fundamental topics in cultural history and theory, translation studies, and the history of knowledge with pressing societal challenges makes BiT truly interdisciplinary and a high risk/high gain project. New knowledge about the *cultural* aspects of KT is exceptionally relevant in situations where medical encounters are often also cultural encounters.<sup>11</sup> By translating insights between the different cases, we aim to develop concepts of knowledge translation and cultural translation able to cope with epistemic *and* cultural difference. KT has a massive impact on global health governance. A critical examination of the cultural models underpinning KT will thus have broad societal implications. The projects potential innovation lies in the groundbreaking combination of theoretical *and* methodological questions concerning the translation of knowledge across disciplinary and cultural boundaries in combination with a cross-cultural and historical perspective.

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<sup>10</sup> Eriksen, Anne (2014). *From Antiquities to Heritage. Transformations of Cultural Memory*, Berghahn.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Hooker, Claire and Noonan, Estelle (2011). 'Medical humanities as expressive of Western culture'. *Med Humanities* 37:79-84.

### 1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES, THEORETICAL APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

If KT is seen as ‘problem solving’, the problem it aims to solve (how to relate hard science to healthcare practice, for instance) implies crossing over from nature to culture, and thus a translation between domains supposedly separated in early modernity. The early modern material and its historiography is thus a starting point for two main reasons. On the one hand, both conventional historiography and modernity theory has identified the emergence of modern schemes, like the nature/culture-divide, in an early modernity defined as a harbinger of mature modernity.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, salient trends in cultural history and the history of science have construed the early modern past as a ‘different country’, and thus – at least metaphorically – irrelevant to the archeology of our present knowledge landscapes. This has been accomplished by applying some version of a concept of bounded culture that encapsulated the past in different ‘epistemes’ (Foucault), ‘paradigms’ (Kuhn) or ‘styles of reasoning’.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, it has also discredited the notion of history as progress and questioned the commensurability of different knowledge cultures in time and space. In cultural theory and the history and philosophy of science alike, discussions about such issues has been labeled under the term ‘translation’.<sup>14</sup>

We will test out the notion that

(1) The cleavage KT aims to cross by ‘bridging the gap’ between science and society/culture is a solution to a historically produced problem. If KT is seen as ‘problem solving’, the problem it aims to solve – how to relate hard science to the soft, humanistic coefficient of healthcare and thus ‘implement’ science in practical care – is how to translate between epistemic and ontological domains, nature and culture.

(2) More comprehensive theories of translation and culture will lay the foundation for an *expanded* model of KT that incorporates a more adequate

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<sup>12</sup> Daston, Lorraine (1998): “The Nature of Nature in Early Modern Europe”. *Configurations*, 6.2.

<sup>13</sup> For the notion of “styles of reasoning” developed by Fleck, Crombie and Hacking, see e.g. Lloyd, G.E.R.: ‘Styles of Enquiry and the Question of a Common Ontology’, *Ancient worlds, modern reflections: philosophical perspectives on Greek and Chinese Science and Culture*. Clarendon Press/Oxford University Press: Oxford and New York 2004, pp. 76-92.

<sup>14</sup> Tambiah, S. J. (1990) *Magic, Science, Religion and the Scope of Rationality*. Cambridge.

description of the interdependency of scientific, cultural, textual and material practices. This also requires a

(2.1) Rethinking of theories of cultural translation in the human sciences (cf. 1.3.3)

## **Approaches and Methods**

We will explore translation and new approaches/methods by analyzing a sample of early modern and cross-cultural case studies (WP1 and 2). Through this casework, we will mediate between divergent notions of translation, and develop concepts of KT able to cope with contemporary epistemic and cultural difference (WP3). This will be based upon the following heuristics (1.3.1 & 1.3.2) – and a predicament about the ‘culture’ *of* and *in* cultural translation (1.3.3).

**1.3.1 Instruments of translations:** In what has become a fruitful area of empirical research, scholars in the history of knowledge and STS have come to focus their attention on the work that goes into making replication happen ‘on the ground’. By following ‘science in action, it is thought that long established asymmetries between the universal and the local, nature and culture, science and the humanities, might be circumvented in favor of an approach that hunts for and tracks down the means by which scientific truths and cultural knowledge move.<sup>15</sup> Latour even maintains that his understanding of translation has done away with the old beast of relativism. He simply presents a pragmatic solution that points to the fact that cultures and natures have always been translated, and that the activity of relating/translating is undertaken with reference to yardsticks that do not belong to the ‘nature’ of the things related, but to the instruments of commensuration. Since ‘[n]othing is, by itself, either reducible or irreducible to anything else’, but always requires ‘the mediation of another’, how can one then ‘claim that worlds are untranslatable?’ Instruments of translation are inevitably produced, and in practice, the problems of commensurability will be solved. The task is therefore to *identify the instruments of translation at work in particular acts of commensuration.*

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<sup>15</sup> Wintraub, M (2015). Translations: Words, Things, Going Native, and Staying True. *The American Historical Review* (2015) 120 (4): 1185-12

**1.3.2. Culture and texts as instruments of translation:** A further methodological step is to define translation as an interdisciplinary object in the gaps between cultural history and translation studies. In cultural history, P. Burke has assimilated the task of the historian to that of the translator, and thus construed history as a kind of translation: ‘Historians mediate between the past and the present and face the same dilemma as other translators, serving two masters and attempting to reconcile fidelity to the original with intelligibility to their readers.’<sup>16</sup> The analogy between translation and history rest upon a notion of ‘culture’ taken from anthropology; the relation to present otherness in anthropology is a model for the relation to past otherness in history: ‘Like anthropologists [historians] translate from one culture to another’.<sup>17</sup> Paradoxically, translation studies took a cultural turn roughly at the same time that cultural history started to apply translation heuristically. Here, however, the importance of cultural factors in linguistic translation was underscored. A. Lefevere maintained that problems in translation are not primarily of a linguistic nature. Rather, questions of translatability have more to do with cultural factors, ‘discrepancies in the conceptual and textual grids’, than with ‘discrepancies in languages’.<sup>18</sup> Thus, if cultural historians modeled their interpretative practices on linguistic translation, scholars in translation studies identified conceptual schemes and genres – cultural framings ‘around’ sentences – as the most radical problem in translation. Responding adequately to ‘*es war einmal*’, for instance, requires cultural competence; it activates a textual grid (a genre), a conceptual scheme and an ontological commitment (‘fairytales!’). Such framings, however, cannot be read out of the sentence as mere linguistic data. Linguistic translation, then, also has to account for cultural factors, such as textual and meta-discursive framings.<sup>19</sup> Bearing this in mind, we can also identify an interdisciplinary convergence between Burke and Lefevere; an object of inquiry emerges with the need of a supplementary act of translation, when understating fails to come through ‘mere’ linguistic examination.<sup>20</sup> In both cases, an

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<sup>16</sup> Burke, P. (2007): ‘Cultures of Translation in Early Modern Europe’, Burke, P. & Po-chia Hsia, R. *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge: 7.

<sup>17</sup> Op. cit: 8.

<sup>18</sup> Lefevere, A. (1999): ‘Composing the other’. In Bassnett, S. & Trivedi, H., *Post-colonial translation: theory and practice*. Routledge; cf. Venuti, Lawrence (2008): *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation*. Routledge (2nd edition).

<sup>19</sup> On metadiscursive schemes and practices cf. Briggs, C. (1993): ‘Metadiscursive practices and Scholarly Authority in Folkloristics’, *The Journal of American Folklore*. Vol. 106, No. 422; on metadiscursive practices in relation to translation cf. Gal op.cit.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Burke: ‘How is it possible to be able to translate every word in a text from an alien (or even half-alien) culture, yet to have difficulty in understanding the text? Because [...] there is a difference in mentality, in other words different assumptions, different perceptions, and a different “logic” – at least in the philosophically loose sense of different criteria for justifying assertions – reason, authority, experience and so on’.

object of inquiry emerges with the need of a supplementary act of translation, when understating fails to come through ‘mere’ linguistic understanding of words.

Accordingly, this also testifies to the need for a concept such as ‘culture’ to name that particular object, a supplementary explanandum that manifests itself when the translated sentences still fail to make sense.

**1.3.3 Traces of history in cultural translation:** Many inquiries into the translatability of knowledge claims from different times and places have taken purified and bounded notions of cultures (or adjacent notion such as ‘paradigm or ‘episteme’ or ‘styles of reasoning’) as the point of departure. Often such theorizing uses anecdotal ethnographical evidence about ‘first contact’ to stage ‘fables’ about radical translation; contact situations where there are no manuals of translation (dictionaries, grammars) available.<sup>21</sup> Assumptions about bounded cultures were discredited in the 1980es. Now it was underscored that the bounded entities presupposed by the ‘classical’ formulation of the problem of translation in anthropology and the history of science were themselves already a product of different kinds of translation and connectivity.<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, strands of STS and the ontological turn in anthropology have regarded ‘culture’ as a Eurocentric instrument of mistranslation – often invoking philosophical criticism of the scheme/content dualism.<sup>23</sup> On the one hand, this is in line with the critique of representation and the culture concept in postcolonial and poststructuralist theory.<sup>24</sup> On the other, the concern with *representations* that characterized these positions has been seen as dubious reproductions of the modern notion of many cultures that offers divergent representations of the universal nature accessed by Western science, which thus offers the ultimate (ethnocentric) yardstick for all translation (cf. above). Indeed, these trends represent a valid critique of the ontological debunking of ‘others’; for instance by turning what appears to be literal

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Burke, P. (1997): *Varieties of cultural history*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press: 165, our emphasis.

<sup>21</sup> Hacking, Ian (2002) ‘Was there ever a Radical Mistranslation’, *Historical Ontology*, Harvard University Press; Basnett, S. & Trivedi, H., *Post-colonial translation: theory and practice*. Routledge.

<sup>22</sup> E.g. Moyn, S & Sartori, A. (2013) *Global Intellectual History*. University of Columbia Press, p. 9

<sup>23</sup> E.g. Davidson, D. (1984). On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme (1974) *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* (pp. 183-198). Oxford: Clarendon Press. For an argument for partial intranslatability pace Davidson e.g. McIntyre, A. (2010), ‘Relativism, Power, and Philosophy’, in Krausz, Michael, *Relativism a Contemporary Anthology*, Columbia University Press, New York, 415, and Forster, M. (1998) “On the Very Idea of Denying the Existence of Radically Different Conceptual Schemes,” *Inquiry* 41, pp. 133-85.

<sup>24</sup> Clifford, J. & Marcus, G.E., *Writing Culture – The Politics and Politics of Ethnography*, University of California Press: Berkeley.

statements into symbolic expressions of social and psychological realities (causal factors 'we' or science accept as real). However, it also threatens to purify cultural inquiry of its past by erasing the traces of prior translations that have become actants in the world through their effective history – along with the colonial, material and textual networks that made them possible. The last, the main-focus of post-colonial studies of cultural translation; thus, this potentially disregards the productivity of the human sciences (the effective history of concepts such as 'culture').<sup>25</sup> *Our aim is to explore the object of interdisciplinary inquiry (translation) identified at the intersection of language and culture (1.3.2) as a cross-cultural and historical problem, assuming that historical traces of inscriptions plays a formative role in present cultural and disciplinary practices – even in a scientific practice such as KT.*

[...]

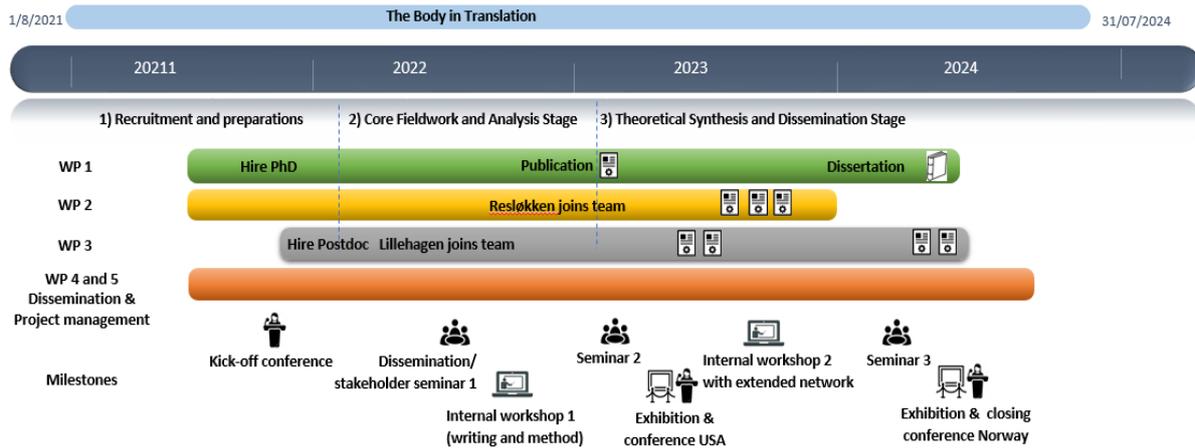
### **3.2 PROJECT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT**

[...]

BiT is structured into distinct analytical and organizational phases and interlinked WPs. As WPs 1 and 2 develops the theoretical and methodological 'challenges' for WP 3, we have organized them chronologically – while at the same time ensuring contact between researchers across the WPs. Hence, WPs 1 and 2 (except the PhD) starts and ends before WP3.

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<sup>25</sup> Baumann & Briggs op. cit., 5.



**WP 1.** This WP explores the history and historiography of the nature-culture distinction, and the notion that the divide between nature and culture, humanities and natural sciences originated in early modernity. We examine historical cases at the intersection between what present vocabularies would call medical, ethnographical and religious discourses. These categories are in the main present-minded. This, however, also enables us to examine our cases from different disciplinary perspectives – and turn them into comparables with which we can challenge KT. This approach, however, also enables us to examine our cases from different disciplinary perspectives – and turn them into *comparables with which we can challenge later notions of translation*. In L. Venuti's words we rewrite '[t]he foreign text [...] in domestic dialects and discourses, registers and styles, and this results in the production of textual effects that signify only in the history of the domestic language and culture'.<sup>26</sup> 1) Firstly, we focus on how the body was represented in medical texts, images and charts. The early modern period saw a growth of medical literature which recoded the human body along new lines with the help of new knowledge, as well as new material objects and practices. We see a shift from Galen to more optical and experimental discourses. The rhetoric of the eye and eye-witnessing play a powerful role in the construction of a general human body. Crossing into the other categories, and the interdisciplinary competence in the project, we also examine how a notion such as *autopsia* was developed in discourses on antiquarianism, how the bodies of saints had already been exhibited as relics in laboratory like showcases, and how

<sup>26</sup> Venuti, L. (2009). 'Translation, Community, Utopia', D. Damrosch et al (eds.), *The Princeton Sourcebook in Comparative Literature*, 362.

bodies of “indigenous” people were coded in relation to medical and cultural norms.<sup>27</sup> 2) Secondly, we turn to how evangelization aimed at ritually incorporating “foreign” bodies into the body of the Church, and deployed a translation vocabulary to describe the process. In Catholic missions, this involved preparing natives for the transubstantiation, the real presence of the body of Christ in their own bodies; bodies that in so far as they were human were created in the image of God. The sacramental notions propagated by Catholic missionaries, were, for instance, firmly rejected by reformers, such as Zwingli, who saw the “hoc est corpus meum” as a “mere” trope.<sup>28</sup> 3) Thirdly, we explore ethnographic texts the human body is always in double translation; the traveler/ethnographer goes “over there” and returns “over here” to produce a text authorized by his “being there”.<sup>29</sup> Such texts and encounters also calibrate new bodies of governance (“native inhabitants”) and new objects of inquiry (“primitives”). Furthermore, physical bodies circulate in colonial systems of exchange that create new identities that resemble, but are not necessarily identical to later notions of ethnicity and race. Nevertheless, the bodies of early modern “savages” (e.g. the Tupi in Montaigne’s “Of Cannibals”) were vital for the construction of a naked and noble savage, a “natural man” that furnished an antibody for the malaise of civilization.

**WP 2.** This WP tackles state of the art issues in cross-cultural studies, focusing upon nature, bodies and spirits in Amerindian cosmologies, ‘indigenous’ translations of their healing practices into the Western category of ‘cultural heritage’, and translations of mindfulness and shamanism.

**2. 1)** The first part, is a study of a tale from the early modern Spanish chronicler Gonzales Fernández de Oviedo’s *Historia general y natural* often invoked by scholars associated the ontological turn: While Spaniards debated whether the natives had a soul, indigenous people in the Greater Antilles drowned captives to observe whether white bodies putrefied. Viveros de Castro have read the anecdote as an example of an encounter between Western multiculturalism (the assumption

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<sup>27</sup> Bono, James J. (1995) *The Word of God and the Languages of Man. Interpreting Nature in Early Modern Science and Medicine, Ficino to Descartes*, The University of Wisconsin Press; Jardine, N. et al. (1996) *Cultures of Natural History*. Cambridge University Press; Fudge, Erica (2002): ‘Seeing All Their Insides: Science, Animal Experimentation and Aesop’ in *Perceiving Animals. Humans and Beasts in Early Modern English Culture*, University of Illinois Press.

<sup>28</sup> Muir, Edward (2005) *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (New Approaches to European History), Cambridge University Press; second edition.

<sup>29</sup> Certeau, Michel de (1988): ‘Ethno-Graphy: Speech or the Space of the Other: Jean de Léry’, *The Writing of History*, Columbia University Press, 209-243.

that the world consists of different cultures that construe the same nature differently) and Amerindian multinaturalism (the assumption that all living beings share the same soul, but that their external natures, their bodies, differ).<sup>30</sup> There is little concern with the broader network of inscriptions around the various debates about the humanity of Amerindians. The source theoretical texts is Lévi-Strauss, who relates an ‘anecdote’ that is actually a fusion of two different texts: One from Oviedo, who tells about one event occurring one time in one place (natives drowned one Spaniard to decide if they should go to war). Thus, a singular event is traditionalized, and turned into a cross-cultural instrument of translation by being made into a paradigm for a particular order. The other text is a condensed version of the Spanish debate about the ‘Indian problem’. This, went on for decades, and culminated in the disputatio between Las Casas and Sepúlveda— the latter arguing that Amerindians were natural slaves, movable parts of the master’s body lacking rational souls. Moreover, such debates were focused upon both body and soul, were disseminated in various genres and media, and restricted by various textual and conceptual grids.<sup>31</sup> In the reception, then, there is little concern about textual and conceptual grids in the source text, and the broader textual and material networks of translation around the various debates about the anthropological status of Amerindians in the early modern period.<sup>32</sup> Two lines of inquiry organize this study: Firstly, the textual instruments of translation used in making Oviedo’s tale into a cross-cultural analogy (‘science’ as the *symmetrical* instrument of translation) are examined. Secondly, the early modern genealogy of the translated tale is explored. How is the tale informed by textual and conceptual grids from natural history (a genre concerned as much with natural bodies as with souls) – and by Oviedo’s use of Pliny as a model for his scientific authority? How is it translated into cultural theory and used as an example of deep-rooted ontological difference, seemingly ‘beyond’ translation?

**2.2.)** The second case study relates the contrastive notion of Amazonian/Amerindian cosmologies and ontologies to ethnopolitical pragmatics in contexts where indigenous healing practices, in Talamanca, the Venezuelan, Columbian and Brazilian Amazon, are translated by indigenous agents into objects of

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<sup>30</sup> Latour, B (2004): ‘Whose Cosmos, Which Cosmopolitics’, *Common Knowledge* 10:3, 2004, p. 450-453; (2009): ‘Perspectivism: ‘Type’ or ‘bomb’? *Anthropology Today*, vol.25, issue 2,1-2; Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo (1998) Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism, *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (Sep., 1998), 469-488.

<sup>32</sup> Ramos, Alcida Rita (2012): ‘The Politics of Perspectivism’, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 41.

cultural heritage, and thus the language/ontology of ‘multiculturalism’ – *and to contexts where calls for health justice with reference to health inequalities are made.* Having or representing a ‘distinct culture’ or ‘heritage’ implies translating into the conceptual schemes of the ‘West’ – or, passing from being ‘culture in itself’ (e.g. in the discourse of cultural studies) to having ‘culture for themselves’, i.e. turning ‘culture’ into a category of self-identification.<sup>33</sup> Here we thus study different appropriations of the language of culture and heritage, and the *different analogies of culture and semantic histories* from the point of view of local languages and traditions, and thus exploring the great pragmatic flexibility of actors and ‘ontologies’.

**2.3.)** will examine how the practice of mindfulness and shamanism in its Western and Norwegian trajectories takes separate paths with respect to this simultaneous distinction between nature and culture and the “West and the rest”. As ideal typical contrast this can be formulated as follows: (i) The proponents of mindfulness has increasingly sought to naturalise and de-culturalize, i.e. detach the promoted practice from its zone of cultural and religious origin and align it with the ontology of Western medicine and natural sciences, and in the process defining the “core” of Buddhism as psychology, not religion. (ii) In contrast, the legitimating of shamanism as a healing mind-body technique deploys the idiom of cultural heritage to argue for, and market, the practice. Both practices are, however, also based upon cultural techniques “imported” from “foreign” cultural and religious contexts (Buddhism, “indigenous religions”). Thus, both share the trait of being “culturally foreign” at the moment of attempted translation. Furthermore, at different points in the attempted institutionalization the “wisdom of the other” – an old Western topos identifying the “fallen- and forgetfulness” of the present state of culture – has been deployed as a rhetorical resource. Both practices seek to supplement biomedicine at its least understood fringes – the relation between mind and body. Both stress the healing powers of the mind, and are critical of an ontology that makes to rigid a demarcation between the domain of the interior and the exterior. Nevertheless, both practices have also used natural scientific practices of laboratory measurement to argue for their effectiveness as mind-body “hybrids” that heals the body on the basis on mental practices (brain scanning, measurement of blood pressure).

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<sup>33</sup> Cf. Carnheiro da Cunha, M. 2009. «Culture» and Culture: *Traditional Knowledge and Intellectual Rights*. Prickly Paradigm Press, 3.

**WP3.** This WP analyses KT with reference to broader cultural notions of translation in relation to sustainability and health, the Anthropocene and the Amazon. Chakrabarty has maintained that the Anthropocene necessitates thinking and writing across the divide between natural and human history.<sup>34</sup> He calls for interdisciplinary translations across nature and culture. L. Danowski & E. Viveiros de Castro argues that Chakrabarty's deployment of the genre of natural history and the notion of the Anthropocene, requires 'a little more ethnological comparativism and *translative curiosity*'.<sup>35</sup> We will relate this tension between forms of knowledge, science and culture, to KT and Sustainability.

**3. 1)** With the SDGs, ratified by the UN in 2015, sustainability has become a universal obligation, supposed to affect all aspects of healthcare. Sustainability has thus become a key word in modern medicine that has influenced various aspects of healthcare and discussions about social determinants of health, as well as planetary health initiatives aiming to think about health outcomes in broader and less anthropocentric terms. The first part is concerned with central documents that establish sustainability and planetary health. In particular, *Safeguarding human health in the Anthropocene epoch*, the foundational text within the field of planetary health, will be examined. By following how this document is cited and translated into practice, we explore how planetary health is articulated as a form of KT. The transfer of sustainability into medicine challenges a linear or vertical model of KT (from biomedical research to clinical practice). Articulated with sustainability KT becomes multi-dimensional, involving translations between different epistemic domains (e.g. biomedicine, ecology, social science), as well as between various forms of practical know-how and implementation (e.g. politics, agriculture, veterinary medicine, human medicine). Moreover, the directionality of the translational chain is no longer given since planetary health is supposed to contribute to human, animal and environmental well-being on equal terms. Hence, the translation of sustainability into medicine also requires a rethinking of the nature/culture divide inherent in traditional KT logic.

**3.2)** The second study, will explore the role of the Amazon in current discourse about planetary health policy. The Amazon functions as the prime locus for negotiations between health, social and environmental concerns. In environmentalist

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<sup>34</sup> Chakrabarty, Dipesh (2009) op. cit., p. 201ff.

<sup>35</sup> Danowski, L. & Viveiros de Castro, E. (2017): *The Ends of the World*. Cambridge: Polity, p.82.

discourses, its planetary function is often modelled in biological and medical metaphors (e.g. as ‘the living heart of our planet and the heat pump of our global weather system’ [Amazon Watch]). This is the case both in the environmentalist language of NGOs and in official discourses on sustainability. These metaphors underscore the interdependency of human and cosmological bodies (Gaia) and facilitate translation into medical discourse. Moreover, the metaphors are premised on a certain functionalism and/or system theory of the body (e.g. the cardiovascular system) and the planet (the climate as a system). In addition, indigenous communities have been given a central role in this system as guardians of the forest, and thus «our species» and the planet. We will study the entanglements of medical and climate metaphors in the mentioned discourses in both official and NGO texts, and in selected indigenous discourses about health, the human body and the forest. As such, the Amazon functions as an exemplary case for exploring how knowledge is translated between various spheres ranging from political, medical, and environmental to popular and indigenous discourses. Emphasis will be on how local discourses (included voices of indigenous people and forestry workers) react to, use, change or disregard various policies regarding health and ecological conservation

**3. 3)** The Notion of the anthropocene calls for new ways to inscribe and narrate collectivities and temporalities comprising human and NON- human beings. The sociology of translation was born as an attempt to describe natural and cultural actors symmetrically, but what happens to symmetry when/if humanity becomes a geo-historical force? Most discourses of sustainability have a strong anthropocentric bent. The aim of this paper is to begin to mediate between political discourses of sustainability and STS notions of translation. We will do this by examining the role of inscription and actant in STS. By turning to the intellectual traditions that influenced but also was left behind by STS, we aim to construct a model of sustainable translation seeing the anthropos as both *distributed and at the centre* of politics in the Anthropocene (Mialet).

**3.4)** This final study will generalize theoretically and formulate the methodological implications of the cases studied in a collected volume. The general aim is to develop an approach to translation between medicine and the humanities that can account for continuity and productivity, difference and sameness, in translation. “Translation” is suitable for this task as it already marks out the problem of commensuration and commensurability, and the issue of radical translation, in

theory and philosophy, and a discourse on KT. Besides, translation in the linguistic sense also allows for a relation to an original source (the historical source, the scientific content in KT) that can never be fully recovered by the target text and target culture. It is such translational shifts – assumed to be inevitable results of the translational process in linguistic and cultural theories of translation – that KT defines as “barriers” – and seeks to control. Our approach to translation does not imply that we suspend all concerns about the source text. On the contrary, the researchers’ ethical and epistemological relations with, and obligations to, sources and informants, as well as the science behind KT, are maintained.