



Foreword from the editors

Pascale Bonnemère, James Leach, Borut Telban

► To cite this version:

Pascale Bonnemère, James Leach, Borut Telban. Foreword from the editors. *Anthropological Forum: A Journal of Social Anthropology and Comparative Sociology*, 2017, Matter(s) of Relations: Transformation and Presence in Melanesian and Australian Life-Cycle Rituals, 27 (1), pp.1 - 2. 10.1080/00664677.2017.1290521 . hal-01509242

HAL Id: hal-01509242

<https://hal.science/hal-01509242>

Submitted on 16 Apr 2017

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



PRE-COPYEDITED VERSION — PUBLISHED AS

Bonnemère, Pascale, James Leach and Borut Telban 2017. Foreword from the Editors.
Anthropological Forum, 27(1) : 1-2.

Downloaded from <http://www.anthropologicalforum.net>

COPYRIGHT

All rights held by Bonnemère, Pascale, James Leach and Borut Telban. You need to get the author's permission for uses other than teaching and personal research.

Foreword from the editors

Pascale Bonnemère¹, James Leach¹ and Borut Telban²

1: Aix-Marseille University, CNRS, EHESS — CREDO, Marseille

2: Institute of Anthropological and Spatial Studies Research Center of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences, Ljubljana, Slovenia

As the reader will rapidly discover, this Special Issue is edited by three of us, but the introduction is single authored. The explanation for this configuration lies in the history, both individual and collective, of the issue.

The story began in Marseilles, at the Centre de Recherche et de Documentation sur l'Océanie (CREDO), where Pascale Bonnemère and Sandra Revolón organised a workshop on life cycle rituals and relational transformations in 2014. They wanted to share the results of the analyses they had undertaken of different life-cycle rituals, in particular male initiations of the Ankave people of Papua New Guinea and mortuary rituals of the Owa people of the south-east of the Solomon Islands. Although these rituals were of different types, the analyses intersected at several points, suggesting the value of a wider discussion.

The rationale of the workshop was to investigate how life-cycle rituals are moments of transformations affecting relations between persons or between persons and supernatural

entities. This argument entailed a second and novel hypothesis: that a relationship cannot be transformed if the terms that compose it are not present, either directly, as in initiations (Bonnemère 2008, 2014), or mediated through objects, as in mortuary rituals (Revolon 2007).

James Leach and Borut Telban, who participated in the 2014 workshop, offered to assist Pascale (Sandra being unable to pursue the project) in proposing a session at the 10th conference of the European Society for Oceanists held in Brussels a year later. Considering the central argument, it was agreed that we needed to focus on *how* these transformations occur. That is, to look for the modalities and devices (material or otherwise) used to enact, operate, stage, and shape the relations. The emphasis that Pacific peoples place on specific engagements to bring about transformation, and to provide relations with the desired shape, gave us the lead.

A great number of people responded to the 2015 ESfO call and gave interesting papers at a lively extended panel. However, we had to limit the number of papers for this special issue and selected papers that most precisely addressed the request for a detailed engagement with the material and processual aspects of transformation.¹ We also decided not to include our own papers, but to write a collective introduction outlining succinctly the ‘state-of-the-art’, including a discussion of our own analyses.

That was the original idea. Because, among the three of us, Pascale was the one who organised the first workshop, and since it was mainly her hypotheses that had been proposed for discussion in both the 2014 and the 2015 calls for papers, we decided that the presentation of the issue should be written by her alone.

References

- Bonnemère, P., 2008. Du corps au lien: l’implication des mères dans les initiations masculines des Ankave-Anga. In I. Théry & P. Bonnemère, eds. *Ce que le genre fait aux personnes*. Enquête. Paris: Editions de l’EHESS, pp. 75–90.
- Bonnemère, P. 2014b. A Relational Approach to a Papua New Guinea Male Ritual Cycle. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 20(4): 728–45.
- Revolon, S. 2007. The dead are looking at us. Place and role of the *apira ni farunga* (‘ceremonial bowls’) in end-of-mourning ceremonies in Aorigi (Eastern Solomon Islands). *Journal de la Société des Océanistes* 124: 59–66.

¹We would like to warmly thank Sophie Chave-Dartoen, Ludovic Coupaye, Sébastien Galliot, Pierre Lemonnier, Denis Monnerie, Mark Mosko and Anthony Pickles for having contributed papers to the panel and for their contributions in the discussions. The stimulating role of the audience should also be acknowledged.