

Communicating Through Symbolisms in Anthropological Medicine with Reference to Traditional Performances of Wayang Kulit, Main Puteri and Kuda Kepang

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Abstract : In anthropological medicine (traditional therapeutic healing) symbolic interface are used to connect with the cognitive and metacognitive mechanisms to activate conscious and unconscious response of patients or other recipients. At the same time they are used to communicate with the inhabitants of the nether world to whom are ascribed almost all cases of psychosomatic illness. The symbols, which are cultural specific, are divided into verbal and non-verbal forms of communication. The verbal forms are chanting of mantra and doa and the invocation to invoke the spirits while the non-verbal ones are the physical materials such as the offerings, props and decorative elements, music, movements, olfactory sensation and the performance space. The process of communication through these symbols is affected by the Shaman who is a link or intermediary between the healer (Shaman) and the patients and between the healer and the spirits of the nether world. The paper also examines the scientific perspective of the traditional healing through the use of these symbols. The response to these symbols as external stimuli is embedded in the genes that are linked to the hereditary factor in the person's DNA. When the patients are tuned in to external stimuli such as music, chanting and singing (sonic orders), it can triggers a response from the brain, which may activate its inner pharmacy by releasing drugs such as dopamine and/or opiodsto ameliorate pain and counter depression, anxiety and create a feel good feeling. These symbols act like placebo, evoking the power of the mind over the body and triggering the innate self-healing energy. At the same time they could also be used as nocebo, for example black magic, which has the opposite effect of placebo. In whatever capacity they operate these symbols, which are either visual or auditory, is an integral part of anthropological medicine. For they communicate and conjure emotional responses that are conducive to healing by activating the internal brain pharmacy.

Keywords : communication, healing, placebo, nacebo, symbol

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