The promise of healing is everywhere. Biomedical researchers and charitable foundations race for the cure, self-help books assure their readers that the answer lies within, and a host of alternative therapies channel the energies of the universe to reconcile the traumas of the modern self. The balm of healing is also liberally applied to the wounds of history—be they genocide, apartheid, or racism—when invoked in processes of “truth and reconciliation.” It is, in fact, the ubiquity of healing that makes it carry such heavy burdens—mending the body, psyche, and spirit, fending off ever-changing viral and bacterial threats to life, and restoring justice and right relations. A potent tonic of futility and necessity, the promise of healing—whether of mortal bodies or tragic histories—always seems just out of reach.

Nevertheless, hopeful people of all sorts continue to invoke the possibility (or providence) of healing, whether through medical or metaphorical means. The subjects of this book proclaimed healing as the solution to more than one ill: as doctors and nurses they performed the art and science of mending the sick body; as Christian citizens they supported a therapeutic politics in which biomedical care was a public good open to all; and as believers in the spirit they insisted that the science behind biomedicine was itself a gift of divine wisdom. At the heart of early movements for public health care in North America, liberal Protestants became agents of medicalization. They sought to modernize the call of Jesus to his disciples: “Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse
the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment” (Matthew 10:8, NRSV). To be sure, liberal Protestants shied away from taking all of Jesus’s words literally. They often condemned as quacks those Christians who cast out demons or raised the dead. But along with their more “rational” version of Christian modernity, liberal Protestants nonetheless practiced a version of spiritual healing by imagining a space in the human body and the body politic for the flow of supernatural spirits and energies that came from without.

Consider, for example, Dr. Belle Choné Oliver (1875–1947), a medical missionary working in India on behalf of the United Church of Canada, who began her career as a young woman dedicated to the double tasks of converting Indians to Christianity and treating their ills with modern medicine. Living in the midst of the Indian colonial struggle, and learning a great deal about the diversity of Indian cultures, she ended her career as a champion of medical education for Indian men and women and as a critic of missions focused on conversion. Her “modern” perspective, however, contained within it an abiding interest in the possibility of “spiritual healing” through a growing diversity of channels. Around the globe in a less prominent corner of the British Empire, the northern British Columbia Anglican Diocese of Caledonia, Archbishop Frederick Herbert Du Vernet (1860–1924) practiced his own blend of science and the supernatural in which he argued that radio waves could be harnessed as God’s healing energies. Drawing from the latest in psychic research and living amidst the traveling spirits of Northwest Coast First Nations, Du Vernet pronounced “spiritual radio” or “radio mind” as an effective therapy attested to by experiment and theology combined.

Attempting to cure the sick in a world wracked by wars and the consequences of colonialism, North American liberal Protestants eventually came to see the deep ironies of how their own projects of healing were complicit with the evils they sought to exorcise. While maintaining a commitment to publicly funded biomedical health care, they also began to scrutinize the ways colonial and Christian triumphalism had shaped medical missions, both among First Nations in North America and in the “mission fields” of India, China, and Africa. In the process, they continued the experimental work of Oliver and Du Vernet, opening themselves up to an array of supernatural flows that exceeded dogmatically Christian imaginations.

For liberals, the supernatural was not obliterated by the discoveries of naturalistic science, but nor was it spiritual power that knew no earthly or natural bounds. Instead, as Canadian Anglican theologian Eugene
Fairweather contended in “Christianity and the Supernatural,” a 1956 lecture he delivered at the Episcopalian General Theological Seminary in New York City, the supernatural was the path by which God “elevates human creatures to a true participation in the divine life—an indwelling of God in man and man in God.” Like most liberal Protestants, Fairweather argued for a supernaturalism that could find its way around both atheistic materialism and Pentecostal miracle-workers: “[I]t repudiates the pretensions of secular humanism without doing violence to the structure of nature and reason, and sees the true greatness of man in his natural openness to fulfillment in the ‘new being’ of grace.” Under the rubric of healing, liberal women and men came up with many ways to “open” themselves to divine life while also articulating political goals.

*Spirits of Protestantism,* in short, argues that supernatural liberalism enabled an imaginative shift whereby liberal Protestants went from considering themselves Christians who combined biomedicine and evangelicalism to effect “conversions to modernity” to understanding themselves as complicit in a Christian, scientific, and oftentimes racist imperialism that was (in the end) pathology dressed as progress. What is more, this Protestant supernatural liberalism—and its attendant hopes for psychic and spiritual unity throughout the world—can be traced within the ostensibly secular contours of the anthropology of religion itself.

Many of the claims to healing within “supernatural” liberalism turned on the question of how the natural human body came to be inhabited by forces and spirits both good and ill, or what could be called an anthropology of the spiritual body. Underlying the modern discipline of anthropology as the study of humankind are its early Christian theological roots, in which anthropology was practiced as the study of human nature in its relation to God. This earlier version of anthropology has been largely forgotten by anthropologists of religion—and by anthropologists of Christianity—thus constituting amnesia akin to what, in another context, Matthew Engelke called the “epistemological unconscious” of anthropology. Most importantly for my argument, this amnesia contributes to the misrecognition of the continued legacy of Christian theological categories and modes of argument for anthropological theories of embodiment, ritual, healing, and even medicine.

Anthropologies of the spiritual body underlie the ways people make sense of the mysteries of transmission, equally baffling from the vantage point of biomedicine or religious faith: How does a virus pass into or over one person and not another; how does healing come to this patient and not that one? How can a mother cradle her feverish child all night
and escape the flu or one cancer patient emerge from his agony to remission when another patient succumbs? Healing, like disease, is a question of communicability. Some anthropologies contend that the spirit of God transmits healing power, whereas others understand the medicines, therapies, and persuasive scientific authority of the doctor to bring about healing. Many liberal Protestants, such as Oliver and Du Vernet, combined these two theories of transmission, viewing the tools of medicine and technology as pathways by which the spirit of God was communicated to the vulnerable, imperfect human body.

Firmly committed to the mutuality of biomedicine and Christianity, liberal Protestants thought about “religious healing” in ways that went beyond the miracle, or in other words, the exception to the laws of nature that cannot be explained through rational or technical means. Healing miracles have more often been associated with Roman Catholic or Pentecostal versions of spiritual healing, an association that many twentieth-century Protestants considered to be evidence of the “superstition” of such Christians. But they had their own version of supernaturalism, even if they were convinced that it was not superstition. For liberal Protestants, healing could be communicated quite literally through new technologies that included biomedical techniques of surgery and drugs, but it also included the therapeutic effects of the written word and the spiritual telecommunication of healing radio waves. All of these spiritual technologies were bound together in a supernatural liberalism thought to be made effective by that most mysterious of currents, love, which stretched across the universality of humanity through the difference of cultures, religions, and places.

I have found particularly rich archives for exploring the robust and medicalized supernaturalism of liberal Protestants within the following two groups: the Anglican Church of Canada and the United Church of Canada (the latter church included Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregationalist influences). These groups offer an ideal site for the rethinking of liberal Protestantism as a movement at once medicalized and enchanted, cosmopolitan and local. On the one hand, Canadian Protestants were inhabitants of a settler colony eagerly establishing the political, economic, and educational institutions that would make it a modern nation. On the other, in the realm of healing in particular, they were deeply shaped by their encounter with First Nations’ peoples, as well as by American and British healing movements and a global network of influences stemming from missions to China, India, and to a lesser extent, Africa. These global networks led liberal Protestants across North Amer-
tica and Europe to understand their commitment to human health as beyond nationality precisely because of the psychic and spiritual unity that they considered to bind all human beings together in a holistic and divinely infused cosmos. The coworkers and forebears of such humanitarian medical organizations as the Red Cross and Doctors without Borders, liberal Protestants were just as adept at emergency surgery as at prophylactic prayer. They combined political analysis with religious experimentation to insist that health care was a human right owed by the state to its citizens and sanctioned both by the best models of political economy and the healing works of Jesus.

Accompanied by rhetorics of love and human universality, liberal Protestants moved from medical evangelizers to holistic contemplatives, taking on practices such as yoga and Reiki, a Japanese, energy-based form of healing touch. Their medical missions are no longer rooted in eager evangelism but in a desire for “cross-cultural experience”: the three remaining United Church hospitals in northern British Columbia, supported by both church and public funds, focus on “encouraging community independence” while they provide culturally sensitive medical care to largely First Nations’ clients.4 Their definitions of healing have taken on a much broader compass: in the Anglican Church’s recent plan for new relations among Indigenous and non-Indigenous Anglicans, “holistic healing” has become a primary goal, along with self-determination for Indigenous Anglicans, historical reparation, justice, and what has been called “A New Agape” that would encourage local and national partnerships.5 With traditions of socialist critique, scientific spirit, and a sense of Christian agape, Canadian liberal Protestants came to question how both biomedicine and Christianity were based on claims to exclusive forms of knowledge and particular modes of the modern as they realized that modernity was a project with which they were intimately, if uncomfortably, engaged.

Keeping their self-awareness in mind, I use “modernity” in a double sense. First, I employ it in the sense that liberal Protestants have used it, to define a particular era in which they lived, one that was characterized by anxiety, violence, the growth of capitalism and liberal democratic welfare states, the rise of science and of anticolonialism, and always, for them, the hopeful possibility of positive change. Second, I adopt critical approaches to modernity as an inescapable, yet plural concept that is at once an historical periodization and a political project.6 In the end the liberal Protestant and the critical sense of modernity have a good deal of overlap, and paying attention to this overlap is of crucial importance. As Dipesh Chakrabarty puts it, even the most diligent of self-reflexive scholars
cannot fully extricate herself from the rhetoric of a “progressive” modernity judged by the standards of democracy and development: “We must, therefore, engage and reengage our ideas of modernity in a spirit of constant vigilance.” 7 The pathologies of modernity, then, are not fixed but fluid—what was one generation’s healing Christianity looked to a later generation like an imperialist virus, unfaithful to the teachings of Jesus and inadequate to the challenge of transforming toxic structures of power. 8

My own analysis of shifting Protestant diagnoses of modernity has been shaped by the writings of several twentieth-century philosophers and cultural critics who have made strong arguments that modern structures of living have themselves caused illness and inequity. 9 The skepticism of these works is often directed not at religious modes of healing but at what are considered the sickening effects of biomedicine, or Western-based scientific medicine, operating in conjunction with state or imperial power. Among the most influential of these critiques of biomedicine is Michel Foucault’s concept of the disciplinary apparatus of biopower in which he demonstrated the ways that biomedicine is therapy born not only from scientific interventions into the body, but also from political, religious, and economic disciplines of the embodied self that help to define what is considered pathological. 10

An important influence on Foucault’s later work on medicalization was Medical Nemesis, the popular critique of biomedicine written by Ivan Illich, an activist, former Catholic priest, and public intellectual. Illich argued that modern medicine had grown so all-powerful as a way of knowing the human body that its modes of diagnosis and technologies of care were literally making people and societies sick. Describing what he called the “religious tenets” of biomedicine, Illich contended that if laypeople did not start to question these tenets, the iatrogenic effects of medicine would take away not only their health, but also their ability to face mortality with dignity. 11 Taking iatrogenesis in another direction, several scholars have pointed to the ways that colonial regimes, including Canada, have used medicine as a tool of conquest, regulating and disciplining the very bodies that were made sick by the diseases brought with and imagined by colonial encounters. 12 The skeptical view of how modern therapies have ended up as pathologies has also taken the form of a critique of “therapeutic culture,” for which liberal Protestantism has been offered as a prime example.

Twentieth-century Protestantism, especially in its liberal forms, has long been characterized as having succumbed to therapeutic culture—of having a “theology [that] finally became therapy” in which “self-
realization” was more of a goal than overcoming sin. Scholars have argued that a consumerist, therapeutic culture, heavily influenced by the popularization of psychological theories arguing that human beings could transform themselves from within, allowed liberal Protestants to detach themselves from divine authority or absolutes. As the story goes, liberal Protestants replaced sin with subconscious drives, and dispensed with personal responsibility in favor of the guiltless pathologies of psychology. According to sociologist Philip Rieff the “therapeutic ethos” was born when “psychological man” rose from the ashes of Western Christian civilization. For Rieff the perils of therapeutic culture were its rejection of religious institutions that had shaped people as members of a moral community and its fostering of pleasure-seeking individuals: “Religious man was born to be saved; psychological man is born to be pleased. The difference was established long ago, when ‘I believe,’ the cry of the ascetic, lost precedence to ‘one feels,’ the caveat of the therapeutic. And if the therapeutic is to win out, then surely the psychotherapist will be his secular spiritual guide.” Rieff depicted liberal religious clergy—Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish—as at once submitting to this individualistic therapeutic culture while simultaneously engaging in a hopeless attempt to survive the crises of postwar modernity through political and cultural critique. By becoming anti-institutional “spiritualizers,” Rieff argued, liberal clergy fooled themselves into thinking they could break the “outward forms so as to liberate allegedly, the inner meaning of the good, the beautiful, and the true.”

Rieff’s account of therapeutic culture has been particularly influential in the study of Christianity, psychology, and medicine. Several scholars poised on a fine, if not finessed, line between the writing of history and theology have turned to Rieff in order to depict liberal Protestantism, in particular, as ripe for the incursion of a Jamesian “psychological religion.” In Keith Meador’s view the seeds of the secular therapeutic—inwardness, latitudinarian spiritualizing, shuffling off doctrinal repression—were already latent in Protestant notions of selfhood, even before psychology set the disease to flourishing. This therapeutic critique joins a persistent refrain in the study of liberal Protestants that paints them as pawns to overweening forces of secularization, in which ideologies of medicine, psychology, and existential philosophy, along with the forces of consumer culture, replaced traditional Christian disciplines of the self with materialistic, liberal individualism.

Although there is some truth to these depictions, the wholesale critique of therapeutic culture is problematic for at least three reasons.
One, the secularization by therapy argument is itself often grounded—if tacitly—in a commitment to a particular vision of what counts as “authentic” Christianity or tradition, by which liberal Protestants fall short. Second, the argument does not engage with the scholarship that has demonstrated how secularity and Christianity are mutually constitutive.18 Third, the critiques of liberal Protestant secularization are often based on scornful stereotypes of the “belief-based” Protestant, and thus miss the opportunity to consider the energetic and complicated ways that liberal Protestants practiced their own modern supernaturalism in the midst of their love of science.

My interest in liberal Protestants partly comes from what I see to be a lack of imagination when it comes to the analysis of the “liberal subject,” especially in its Protestant versions. Anthropologists, political theorists, and other scholars have often worked with a definition of the liberal human subject as an individual invested with autonomy, choice, and freedom of conscience, who is simultaneously willing to grant (or impose) these same freedoms to other individuals under the rubric of tolerance. In some accounts, to be liberal also implies an affinity for Protestantism; liberalism is viewed as a Western political ideology that is “thick with bourgeois Protestant norms.”19 These theoretical accounts of liberalism may work fairly well as a description of the ideal of the liberal subject and rightfully point to the mutual imbrications of Protestantism and power in the empires of North America. They do not, however, account for the messiness of how those who have claimed to be liberal have actually practiced their ideals. Nor do they attend to the diversity of normative claims about self and society at issue within North American Protestantism. As Jeffrey Stout has shown, the sharp critiques of liberalism from theorists and theologians such as Alastair MacIntyre and Stanley Hauerwas have caricatured liberalism as an anti-traditional, rootless cosmopolitanism, requiring little of those who would live under its name. Stout suggests forgoing the term liberalism altogether—without giving up liberal democracy as a tradition—but since “liberalism” is still a live term as a derogatory epithet, a self-description, and a scholarly category, I argue for its continued, if cautious use, realizing that its meaning is not one thing across time or peoples.20 Considering liberal Protestantism not as a trope but a practice reveals a challenging array of convictions and inconsistencies, solidarities and exclusions that have characterized the lives and communities of men and women who have taken both the advancement and the taming of modernity as their task.
Liberalism, tied as it is to a narrative of secularity as a normative project by which religion is supposedly cleaved apart from political life, makes for an even more complicated subject when combined with religious commitments. Assailed from multiple quarters—including from within—the overly roomy notion of liberalism in its political and religious forms has greatly transformed over the past century moving from a democratic tradition concerned with engaging with a diverse world to a vision derided by conservatives for its unprincipled pliability and critiqued by postcolonial scholars for its unacknowledged Western and Christian assumptions about economy, self, and society. Liberal Protestants, more specifically, have been accused both of heresy and of hegemony; they have been chastised for their lack of true Christian conviction by conservative Protestants, criticized for getting “caught up in the fashionable currents of inclusiveness and ecumenicity” by scholars of American religion, and critiqued by postcolonial scholars for disguising yet more western domination in the language of tolerance and interreligious dialogue.21 The line between liberalism and liberal Protestantism is fuzzy, but as Michael Warner argues, much of the criticism of both liberalism as a political identity and liberal Protestantism as a religious identity operates with scornfully gendered tropes in place of careful analysis.22

Liberal Protestantism is a highly influential form of Christianity rarely attended to by anthropologists, who have little recognized liberal Protestants as anthropological subjects.23 Theologians in the lineage of Schleiermacher, Rauschenbusch, or Tillich have dominated historical characterizations of Protestant liberalism—critics and defenders alike have considered liberalism an idealistic academic or clergy-led enterprise with a narrow audience. Attention to healing, however, reveals that liberal Protestantism can be found to have many different practitioners when one starts looking: medical missionaries, parish nurses, Christian yoga advocates. A category not especially shaped by official creeds or orthodoxies, liberal Protestantism commenced with a nineteenth- and early twentieth-century openness to scientific modes of critical inquiry, including medical research, adopting, by the end of the century, a growing receptivity to diverse religious traditions, informed, in part, by postcolonial movements of liberation theology in the Americas, Asia, and Africa.

By considering liberal Protestants as “practicing Protestants” with as much ambivalence and complication as other Christians, I open up new avenues for theorizing liberal subjects and liberal modernities.24 My
appeal pushes further Joel Robbins’s call for anthropologists to recognize how “the deep structure of anthropological thinking” has made it hard for them to see “convert cultures” as Christian. For my part, I ask anthropologists to see the ways that anthropological thinking is shaped by some of the same cultural and historical forces that have constituted liberal Protestantism’s traditions of social critique.25 The challenge of recognizing liberal Protestants as anthropological subjects, I suggest, is partly the result of the overlapping spatial, intellectual, and political locations and commitments of liberal Protestants and English-speaking academia, including anthropology.

For example the anthropologist Edward Sapir, who for fifteen years worked in Canada among West Coast First Nations at the same time as Du Vernet, argued that the transformations of modernity were particularly tied to “a progressive increase in the radius of communication.” Without going all the way to radio mind, Sapir, who came from an Orthodox Jewish family, defined religion by way of reference to Protestant revivalism, Plains Indians’ “supernatural medicine,” and Nootka notions of the “Supreme Being,” coming up with a definition that Du Vernet would likely have endorsed: “Religion is man’s never-ceasing attempt to discover a road to spiritual serenity across the perplexities and dangers of daily life.”26 Although not forgoing the Bible, many liberal Protestants had reading lists akin to those of intellectuals like Sapir, including Kant, Marx, Bergson, Freud, and the new literature in “comparative religion.” In turn, pioneering anthropologists, such as Franz Boas and Margaret Mead, sometimes came to their conclusions about human nature in direct conversation with practicing Protestants, including Boas’s Tsimshian collaborator Odille Morison, an Anglican from Du Vernet’s part of British Columbia, and liberal Protestant intellectuals such as Paul Tillich. Protestant supernatural liberalism, like anthropology itself, contributed to a new, modern discourse of “religion” that took shape in the midst of colonial state projects and popularizations of academic prose.27

The overlapping critical cultures of anthropology and North American liberal (and liberationist) Christianity have also shaped the work of prominent medical anthropologists. As Mark Lewis Taylor has shown in his analysis of the writings of Paul Farmer and Nancy Scheper Hughes, medical anthropologists who consider their work to require “moral advocacy” turn to “religious-like” language when pushed to the limits of what they can bear as they face the urgency and violence of global cultures of illness, inequity, and suffering. Adopting a liberatory discourse much indebted to the largely Roman Catholic liberation theology found
in their fieldwork settings, they blur the line between activist and prophetic ethnography.”

Joel Robbins has addressed this blurry line most directly, in his argument that anthropologists have lost their earlier willingness to write about cultural difference in a prescriptive fashion that aims to “get their readers to put difference to use in their own lives.”

Robbins argues that Christian theology, by contrast, has greater “critical force” precisely because it argues for different ways of living that are meant to directly effect transformations in the lives of its readers.

Robbins makes his argument about anthropology’s enfeebled vision by contrast to the bold project of theologian John Milbank—a powerful thinker who has positioned his own critique of the intersection of religion and social theory within the rubric of radical orthodoxy, a group of Christian scholars highly critical of liberal Protestantism.

Compared to radical orthodoxy, liberal Protestants and anthropologists share an affinity largely derived from an historical transformation not discussed by Robbins: whereas there were always anthropologists and missionaries who confronted aspects of colonialism, post-1960s anthropologists and liberal Protestants were both struck in new ways with the awareness that their encounters with difference—in the registers of culture or religion—were profoundly shaped by their own complicity with colonial power. Compared to liberal Protestants, and not to Milbank, anthropologists can be seen to have shared a postcolonial trajectory whereby critiques of their authority and power, both from within and without, challenged their willingness or ability to think universally and prescriptively. Their optimistic cosmopolitanism chastened, both anthropologists and liberal Protestants have been living with a crisis of faith and a crisis of narrative.

*Spirits of Protestantism* attends to these overlapping cultures of crisis and critique by examining how liberal Protestants moved from missionary hubris to self-criticism as they sought to alleviate what they considered to be pathologies of modernity via particular techniques and technologies of healing. After an introduction that addresses what I mean by “healing”, and situates the groups and methodology at the center of this study, the five chapters of the book take a more or less chronological order. The first chapter, “Strange Places of the Spirit: Anthropologies of the Spiritual Body” has two tasks. First, I argue that constituting liberal Protestantism as the object of anthropological analysis requires showing how liberal Protestants have contributed to setting the terms of the anthropology of religion itself. Reflecting on the awkward kinship between academic anthropology and theological anthropology, I use both meanings of the term
to frame liberal Protestants as “anthropological” subjects. In the process I show how liberal Protestants developed a particular perspective on what it meant to be a “spiritual” body, by drawing on psychological notions of the self and cultivating “spiritual equilibrium,” and to a lesser extent, spiritual intervention.

The second chapter, “The Gospel of Health and the Scientific Spirit,” details the early twentieth-century liberal Protestant embrace of medical science as a partner to Christian missions and considers the important, and largely neglected, role that liberal Protestants played in the process of medicalization in the first quarter of the century. I argue that this imperialistic alliance was undergirded by an overlapping text-based cosmology in which liberal Protestants understood texts both as talismanic tools of healing and as documents for scientific proof. The third chapter, “Protestant Experimentalists and the Energy of Love,” contends with other kinds of mediated supernaturalism, especially the new technology of radio, as liberal Protestants from the 1920s to the 1940s sought tools of healing in forms of energy such as electricity and psychic channels at a time when psychology and psychoanalysis were claiming their share of the human spirit. This experimentalism flourished in such places as Canada, England, the United States, and India at same time that liberal Protestants were beginning to question the ways Christian mission both fostered and was supported by colonialism. Chapter four, “Evil Spirits and Queer Psyches in an Age of Anxiety,” follows liberal supernaturalism in North America from the 1950s – 1970s, showing how liberal Protestants tacked between psychological and charismatic understandings of the self to renew their theologies and pastoral practices. Turning to a ubiquitous and vague anthropology of “body, mind, and spirit,” liberal Protestants contended with the simultaneous rise of faith healing, charismatic renewal, and psychology as diagnosticians of the moral—or immoral—self. At the same time, they were in the vanguard of a sexual revolution in which the literal “pathologizing” of homosexuality was transformed into a political and religious movement for the celebration of sexual difference.

Finally, the fifth chapter, “Ritual Proximity and the Healing of History” analyzes how contemporary Protestants, in their embrace of yoga, Reiki, and other non-Christian techniques, have rethought and re-embodied questions of what counts as spirit and religious difference in the midst of charges of both appropriation and heresy. In the wake of their acknowledgment that their own historical projects of Christian modernity carried within them pathologies of colonial domination, some liberal Protes-
tants turned to ritual to cultivate a new religious universalism. *Spirits of Protestantism* contributes a new transnational perspective to the growing body of work that has excavated forgotten (maybe even repressed?) traditions of religious liberalism in North America. By reconsidering what counts as the heretical and the hegemonic within the techniques,ologies, and controversies that shaped liberal Protestant discourses of healing over the twentieth century, I provide another genealogy for the work of those political theorists, such as Courtney Jung, who advance a “critical liberalism” grounded in specific political and historical contexts.31 Tracing anthropologies of the spiritual body inside and outside of medical realms reveals a tradition of supernatural liberalism that has animated both biomedical and spiritual healing practices, and has shaped diverse sensibilities of critique.32