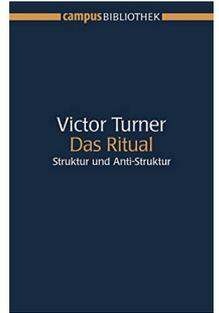


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This version was shortened for the published translated version.

Eugene Halton. 1989. Nachwort. *Das Ritual: Struktur und Antistruktur*. Victor Turner.
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The Ritual Process is a pivotal book in the body of Victor Turner's works. The first three chapters, drawn from Turner's Henry Morgan lectures at the University of Rochester, reveal the richness and subtlety of his analysis of tribal ritual and social life. In the third chapter, he concentrates on the aspects of liminality and *communitas* found in Ndembu ritual and expands these in the remainder of the book to universal categories of human experience. His masterful ethnography opens up to reveal the fundamental reality of the subjunctive mood in human affairs: the ritual process.

In Turner's analyses of the *Isoma* and *Wubwang'a* rituals of the Ndembu of Northwestern Zambia, one sees the fantastic interplay between human affliction and symbolic renewal, between human communities and a natural environment teeming with signification. The Ndembu are revealed to be a people with a deep appreciation of the complexity of existence, and endowed with a sophisticated technics of meaning, a vast architectonic of felt, expressive forms through which to journey to those borderlands beyond human comprehensibility: death, the dead, the call of the mother-line, fecundity, transformation, the interstices of social structure.

Turner reveals himself to be an initiate, not only to the rites revealed to him by the Ndembu, but to the centrality of ritual itself in tribal society and human affairs. Trained in the British structural-functionalist approach to social anthropology, Turner notes how the incessant call of the drums made him feel that he "was always on the outside looking in." Soon, however, Turner and his wife and collaborator Edith discarded their theoretical ear-plugs and answered the invitation of the drums. As observers and co-participants in Ndembu ritual the Turners' began to blaze a trail toward a new anthropology. As Edith Turner

noted in her recent introduction to a collection of Victor's essays:

Fieldwork became our delight. Arriving at a distant village we would be greeted by the whole population, shaking hands and thumbs with us and clapping. I would find the women's kitchens, while Vic sat in the meeting hut with the men. If you listened you could hear the warm deep buzz of voices over the beer calabashes. They liked Vic. The women took me to visit their girl initiate in her seclusion hut, while our own three children played around the cooking fires. On the way home Vic and I discussed the going-into-seclusion ceremony of the previous week. "What's interesting," said Vic, is the name of the spot where she was laid down under the milk tree. 'The Place of Death.' Then she becomes a 'baby,' and is carried backwards into her seclusion hut. She's sacred, and mustn't touch the earth." "The hut's sacred too. Her white beads--her 'children'--are in the roof. She mustn't look up." And so we would go on, testing out ideas and listening for clues to help interpretation" (1985: 4).

Listening for clues to help interpretation: therein lies one of the clues to Victor Turner, the anthropologist of experience. Amidst the mighty theoretical armatures in which the social sciences have been clothing themselves throughout this century, Victor Turner stands out as a man who *listened*, who felt the rhythmic pulse of cultures rather than abstractly dictating their underlying grand scheme. Not that Turner did not develop broad, overarching models--witness his discussions of liminality and *communitas* in this book, which embrace the Franciscans of medieval Europe and the Sahajīyās of fifteenth and sixteenth-century India, Bob Dylan and the Bāul musicians of Bengal, Martin Buber and the Buddha. But systematizers who seek an airtight scheme with absolute closure will not find it in Turner's work. His

theories are open-ended, ever acknowledging the greater richness and potentiality and not-yet-decipherable and perhaps not systematizable richness inherent in experience and culture. He continually directs our gaze instead to those social "openings" through which the ferment of culture erupts. Cultures are not simply inert structures or bloodless "systems," but form a processual dialectic between structure and liminality, and if one can find the clues to help interpretation, they may lead to some heady brew.

Beer calabashes and beer mugs held theoretical significance for Turner. Edith Turner tells the story of Victor and A.L. Epstein (Bill) spending one evening in Manchester in 1955 at the Victoria Arms, discussing how they might be able to produce living accounts for their dissertations and not mere well-ordered facts and theories: "Vic and Bill drank their beer and from what I can gather cursed away at the impossibility of grafting the quantitative method onto Malinowski's 'living tale' method. Vic did not want to submit tables of regularities illustrated by apt little stories. He saw the Ndembu system for what it was: full of anomalies, the fault lines that bred conflict.... Vic was preoccupied with the character of his old friend, the sorcerer Sandombu, and with the odd personality of Kamahasanyi, both marginal characters made suddenly central as the focus for conflict. Their stories and the rituals involved in them were fascinating to the Ndembu--these events were their great product. A new term was needed. Vic and Bill with their beer mugs before them wrestled with the problem. 'Social drama,' said Vic. 'Of course.' Returning home he wrote out his paper for Max's [Gluckman] seminar the next day, introducing the new concept.

Turner had found the means to bring his dissertation alive and to grasp the inner life of the Ndembu theoretically, just as he and Edith had already done in practice through ritual participation. The concept of "social dramas" enabled him to set the concerns with conflict and process characteristic of the Manchester school within the frame of a fully symbolic and processual analysis, one which could do full justice to the complexity of ritual action. Describing the inadequacy of the structural-functionalist method, Turner observed: "But this method did not enable me to handle the complexity, asymmetry, and antinomy which characterize real social processes, of which ritual performances may be said to constitute phases or stages. I found that ritual action tended thereby to be reduced to a mere species of social action, and the qualitative distinctions between religion and secular custom and behavior came to be obliterated. The ritual symbol, I found, has its own formal principle ... The symbol, particularly the nuclear symbol, and also the plot of a ritual, had somehow to be grasped in their specific essences" (Turner, 1975a [1962]: 186-87).

Turner's turn to the concept of "social dramas," which found its expression in the published version of his dissertation, *Schism and Continuity in African Society* (1957) enabled him to see deep into the inner fissures of Ndembu life brought about by a combination of matrilineage--inheritance passing through the mother's line--and virilocality--the residence of a couple determined by the husband's village. It also provided him with a way to avoid the emptiness of a purely structural or skeletal analysis and to grasp the life of Ndembu ritual and social structure "in their specific essences." One can well see why Turner chose William Blake's words from his poem *Jerusalem* as the epigraph to his preface: "General Forms have their vitality in Particulars, & every Particular is a Man."

Turner viewed social dramas as consisting of phases of 1) breach of regular norm-governed social relations, leading to, 2) mounting crisis, which, in turn, leads to, 3) redressive action, in which the social group can attain to some reflexivity through juridical or ritual acts, such as divination, resulting finally in, 4) re-integration or recognition of irremediable schism. In his use of a dramatistic model of culture as a performative process, Turner independently developed an approach resonant with those being articulated in America by Lewis Mumford, Kenneth Burke, Milton Singer, and Erving Goffman. Burke developed a view of action stressing stage-like dramatic motives, and Goffman stressed the strategic and presentational aspects of interaction. Singer, like Turner, was empirically drawn to a variety of performances in his fieldwork in Madras, India in the 1950s, and thereby led to a theory of culture as performance. Mumford viewed drama itself as an emergent symbol of human culture, as the utilization of dreams in art and the invention of language had earlier been. He restricted his concept of cultural drama to post-tribal society, because he saw in the literal development of drama and the broader metaphor of culture as "enacting the plot of the possible," the means of overcoming the stability of tribal ritual. Similarly Turner was led to distinguish the "liminal" phase of tribal ritual from more modern "liminoid" cultural forms which draw from, mimic, or resemble phases in ritual but without being bound within the ritual frame (1982a [1974b]).

Given Turner's social drama model, one can easily see why he found folklorist Arnold van Gennep's discussion of Les rites de passage (1909) as consisting of 1) separation, 2) margin or limen, and 3) reaggregation so compelling. It helped to open Turner's processual conflict model further to those fantastic sources of

meaning-generation arising out of non- or anti-structural sources.

Victor Turner was an original. He was born in Glasgow, Scotland on May 28, 1920 to an actress mother, a founding member of the Scottish National Theatre, and to an electrical engineer father, and he remained to the end of his life a child of and participant in "the two cultures" of art and science. When Turner died on December 18, 1983 from a heart attack, he was preparing a lecture on "Blake, Luria, and Neuroscience," and who better than Victor Turner could find and create the semiotic synapses linking the English visionary poet and painter William Blake with the Russian neurophysiologist A.R. Luria?

From the time Turner was an infant, when his mother would rehearse her lines in front of his high chair, he was filled with lines and verses of poetry and theatre, with Shakespeare, Aeschylus, Shaw, Ibsen. As Turner himself put it in his autobiographical introduction to his book *From Ritual to Theatre* (1982a), he, "slithered between arts and sciences, sports and classics. I won a prize for a poem on "Salamis" at age twelve, which excited the derision of my schoolmates for many years and forced me to win attention as a soccer player and cricketer of some violence--I shamefully acquired the proud title of 'Tank'--to erase the stigma of sensibility."

"No wonder, then, that I became an anthropologist, a member of a discipline poised uneasily between those who promote the "science of culture," on the model of the nineteenth century natural sciences, and those who show how "we" (Westerners) may share in the humanity of others (non-Westerners). The former speak in terms of monointentional materialism, the latter of mutual communication."

Turner went on to a scholarship at University College, London, where he studied English literature between 1938 and 1941. Though "Tank" had acquired an early reputation as a somewhat pugnacious sportsman "of some violence," he was a conscientious objector in World War 2 and spent the war years (1941-1946) as a non-combatant in the Bomb Disposal Squad. Undoubtedly the tense "laboring of the minute particulars" involved in picking through ruins and meticulously defusing and removing live bombs impressed the "betwixt and between" first hand experience of liminality on Turner long before he ever encountered the Ndembu or Arnold van Gennep. It was also during this time that Turner met and married

Edith, who was to remain his closest collaborator throughout their lives together. There was no separation of family life from professional life as the Turners and three of their children lived in grass huts for almost three years with the Ndembu, gathering village histories and participating in rituals, and continuing their collaboration until Victor's death. Edith shared Victor's love of poetry and theater, and is a poet in her own right. In 1978 the Turners co-authored *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, a book which explores pilgrimage as a liminoid phenomenon.

Turner's embrace of the concept of liminality came at a "liminal" phase in his own life. In 1963, as he was in transition from Manchester to a professorship at Cornell University in the United States, Turner and his family were living in Hastings while waiting for visa problems to be resolved, uncertain whether they would be returning to England or staying in America, shocked by the news of the assassination of John F. Kennedy, feeling neither here nor there, and reading van Gennep's

Les rites de passage. It was there, in the public library, that Turner wrote his well-known essay, "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage" (1967: 93-111). He attempted to grasp that virtually ungraspable mercurial element in human affairs in which normal social structure and mores of conduct are temporarily eclipsed. Liminality was that which dis-membered structure in order to transform, renew, and re-member it. Turner went on to show, in this essay and in other works, how liminality provides a time of visceral or meditative (or both together) reflection, reflective speculation: "Liminality here breaks, as it were, the cake of custom and enfranchises speculation...Liminality is the realm of primitive hypothesis, where there is a certain freedom to juggle with the factors of existence. As in the works of Rabelais, there is a promiscuous intermingling and juxtaposing of the categories of event, experience, and knowledge, with a pedagogic intention" (1967: 106). Turner notes, however, that the liberty of liminality is ritually limited in tribal societies, and must give way to traditional custom and law.

Structure and liminality are engaged in a ceaseless dialectic, as can also be seen in the discussions of Saint Francis and Caitanya of Bengal. And society itself is a symbolic process, a dialectic between structure and *communitas*. By "communitas" Turner means a state of immediate, total, and egalitarian "confrontation of human identities," which is dialectically opposed to the normal interactions of people through the roles, statuses, and hierarchies of social structure. As Turner demonstrates so clearly, liminality tends to produce a powerful sense of communion among ritual participants, who are stripped naked of the normal accretions of status, prestige, and caste. Yet the de-habituated state of liminality and communion can only exist for so long before it too begins to take the shape of habituation: the problem is not so much what to do during the revolution, but what to do the day after the revolution.

Turner was not interested in systematically connecting his ideas to the mainstream of social theory, and so left it to the reader to decide how liminality and *communitas* might relate to Max Weber's idea of charisma and its routinization, or to Durkheim's concept of "collective effervescence," or to Simmel's discussions of the stranger (*der Fremde*), or conflict (*der Streit*), or to the dialectic of form and life. He was influenced early on by Marx and his stress on dialectic, and many of Turner's concepts, such as liminality versus structure, are expressed in dialectical form. Turner's fierce support for the fantastic as a reality of human practice sets him apart from Marx's notions of labor and practice, and his view of *communitas* as liminal phase rather than end state (or end of the state!) also contrasts with Marx.

In developing liminality as a general theoretical concept in *The Ritual Process*, a concept which attempts to incorporate the "interstructural" centers of meaning so frequently ignored in social theory, Turner can also be seen as giving voice to the liminal spirit of the 1960s: that time out-of-time when cultural revolutions were flaring up around the world from widely different causes (or were they?), when red guards in China were spiritually united with the avant-garde in the West in ruthlessly attempting to eradicate the past, when an almost century old intellectual, Bertrand Russell, was spiritually united with the greatest boxer of the century, Muhammed Ali, in opposition to the ruthless American war in Vietnam.

The Ritual Process partakes of the liminality it describes. It is a book of exploration and suggestion, bodying forth a fecundity of ideas and research possibilities. It ignited a generation of students and scholars, and laid a groundwork for Turner's own development of what he termed "comparative symbology."

As Turner himself notes in the preface, the comparative studies in the second half of the book grew out of a cross-disciplinary seminar at Cornell University which dealt with liminal phenomena across a broad spectrum of topics. One personally practical consequence of these studies was an invitation to join the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago in 1968, which Turner accepted, along with an appointment as Professor in the anthropology department. Turner's "comparative and humanist bent" found encouragement in the Committee on Social Thought, which included such colleagues as Saul Bellow, Mircea Eliade, art critic Harold Rosenberg, and sociologist Edward Shils. And it was there, "in his home on South Harper that he taught his famous Comparative Symbology seminars on 'Symbol, Myth, and Ritual,' and it was then that he began editing a series of books under that title for Cornell University Press" (Babcock and MacAloon 1987: 13).

Turner's Comparative Symbology seminar, which I participated in as a graduate student in the early 1970s, was a rite-de-passage in my own intellectual development. One never knew who or what you might find at the Turners' seminar: a kinship taxonomy of a Lesbian commune in Oregon, a Catholic nun describing rights of investiture, the altered states of consciousness achieved by rock climbers, or, in the case of one of my presentations to the seminar, an analysis of the meanings of household possessions for the "natives" of contemporary Chicago. The Comparative Symbology Seminar continued a tradition begun by British anthropologist Max Gluckman, but incorporated the rites-de-passage model elaborated in this book: Turner would usually present his ongoing researches at the first few sessions, followed for the remainder of the semester by student or guest presentations.

The seminar was held in the Turners' living room on Thursday evenings (and would spill over to the rest of the house), and after the initial forty-five minute presentation there would ensue a "liminal" phase of beer drinking, conversation,

and *communitas* (hierarchical distinctions between faculty and students and random visitors temporarily erased), followed by a "reaggregation" of revived discussion. It was there that Turner presented his essay "From Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow, and Ritual: An Essay in Comparative Symbology" (1974b). Turner's theory of liminality had caught on so well and was being used for such a variety of topics, that he felt compelled to distinguish between liminality in traditional ritual and the liminal-like quality in post-tribal societies which finds its expression in a variety of artistic, political, religious, and leisure forms. The Turners also presented their work on pilgrimage, which was to appear as the book on *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (1978). When the Turners left the University of Chicago in 1977 to go to the University of Virginia, they brought the Comparative Symbology Seminar with them, which Edith continued after Victor's death.

In Turner one continually confronts the drama and mystery of life itself in its humanly perceivable forms. The live human creature, not the dead abstract system, is the source of his processual anthropology. Throughout *The Ritual Process*, he engages Claude Levi-Strauss in a dialectical contrast, posing his processual anthropology against Levi-Strauss's structuralism, while yet drawing from Levi-Strauss's analyses that which he finds useful. In Turner one sees that meaning is much more than a "logical structure," because it involves powerful emotions not reducible to logic, a purposiveness not reducible to binary oppositions, "a material integument shaped by...life experience." In short, a processual approach views structure as a slow process, sometimes very slow indeed. Or as Turner puts it, "Structure is always ancillary to, dependent on, secreted from process" (1985: 190).

Turner is very much concerned with "systemic" or "structural" questions, as is clear particularly in the later chapters of this book, but he continually reminds us of the human face behind the social roles, status hierarchies, and social structures. That human face may be painted with the red and white clays of *Wubwang'u*, or it may be adorned with the phantasms of carnival, or it may be soberly dressed in ritual poverty, but Turner's theories, and the body of his work itself, never let us forget those deep human needs for fantastic symboling to express the fullness of being.

Central to Turner's processual anthropology and comparative symbology is the ritual symbol, which he considered the "core" unit of analysis. The symbol is the "blaze"--the mark or path--which directs us from the unknown to the known, both in the Ndembu sense of *ku-jikijila* (to blaze a trail by cutting marks or breaking or bending branches on trees) and in C.G. Jung's sense. Key to the indigenous hermeneutic of the Ndembu is the term *ku-solola*--"to make visible," or "to reveal"--which is the chief aim of Ndembu ritual, just as its equivalent concept of *alētheia* is for Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutic. These Ndembu terms derive from the vocabulary of hunting cults and reveal its high ritual value. The connection to a blaze or path through the forest also draws attention to the significance of trees for the Ndembu, not only as providing the texture of the physical environment, but as sources of spiritual power. The associations of substances derived from trees with properties of blood and milk, or of toughness with health, fruitfulness with fertility, which Turner discusses in his description of the *Isoma* ritual, also reveal why Turner chose to title his previous book *The Forest of Symbols*. The first stanza of Baudelaire's poem *Correspondances*,

which Turner printed in entirety as the epigraph to his book, could have been written by an Ndembu sorcerer:

*La Nature est un temple ou de vivants piliers
Laisent parfois sortir de confuses paroles;
L'homme y passe à travers des forêts de symboles
Qui l'observent avec des regards familiers.*

Turner introduced a number of distinctions into his analyses of ritual symbols which it may be helpful to mention here. He regarded *multivocality* as characteristic of ritual symbols, the ability to have multiple meanings simultaneously signified or available to interpretation, and which he contrasted with *univocal* signs. Turner's penchant for dialectical opposition can also be seen in his view of the symbol as comprised of an *ideological* or *normative* pole, around which "cluster a set of referents to moral norms and principles governing the social structure," and a sensory or *orectic* pole, around which "cluster a set of referents of a grossly physiological character, relating to general human experience of an emotional kind" (1967: 54). With his concept of an "orectic" pole, Turner sought to include the communicative life of emotions so frequently excluded from conceptualistic semiotics. Hence, in discussing the *mudyi* or white sap tree as incorporating both poles, he says, "we find that the milk tree stands at one and the same time for the physiological aspect of breast feeding with its associated affectual patterns, and for the normative order governed by the matriliney. In brief, a single symbol represents both the obligatory and the desirable. Here we have an intimate union of the moral and the material. An exchange of qualities may take place in the psyches of the participants under the stimulating circumstances of the ritual performance,

between orectic and normative poles; the former, through its association with the latter, becomes purged of its infantile and regressive character, while the normative pole becomes charged with the pleasurable affect associated with the breast-feeding situation. In one aspect, the tie of milk, under matriliney, develops into the primary structural tie, but in another aspect, and here the polar model is apposite, the former stands opposed to and resists the formation of the latter" (1967: 54-55). One sees in Turner's polar conception of the symbol, perhaps, his own synthesis of Durkheim and Freud. His recognition of the collective and classificatory nature of symbolism and social structure shows the influence of the Durkheimian tradition, while Turner's acknowledgement of unconscious, underlying motives, "orectic" or affective meanings, condensation of meanings and multivocality, and especially the place of the body in symbolic processes, reveals why he believed, "Freud's intellectual cutting tools were better honed to slice up the beast I was intent on carving, ritual seen as a sequence and field of symbol-vehicles and their significations, than those bequeathed to me by the social anthropologists"(cited in Babcock and MacAloon 1987: 5). In Turner's ground-breaking discussions of color symbolism in Ndembu ritual, for example, he shows how the social system of classification comes into play, but roots the social meanings of red, white, and black color symbols to the experiential level of bodily fluids and substances of blood, milk and sperm, and feces.

Turner distinguished three levels of analysis for the understanding of ritual symbols, which illustrate why he believed a researcher's methods must also be "multivocal." The first dimension is the *exegetical*, or the level of

indigenous interpretation by specialists and laymen. The second dimension is the *operational*, in which the focus is on the use of symbols, behaviorally observed. The observer needs to be concerned with how a group performs or acts in relation to a particular symbol, what the affective qualities of these acts are, who is present or perhaps purposively absent, and so forth. The third dimension is the *positional*, in which the meaning of the symbol derives from its "relationship to other symbols in a totality, a *Gestalt*, whose elements acquire their significance from the system as a whole" (1967: 51). Here the significant contexts are worked out by the anthropologist. Unlike approaches which stress a particular dimension, such as the total reliance on the exegetical level in ethnomethodology or the reliance on the positional level in structuralism, Turner sought to develop a grounded methodology which could be fully "three-dimensional."

Edith Turner notes that, "Political anthropology and process can be seen working continually in Vic's thought. He would return constantly to the grassroots, that is, to the use of detailed field material to give strength to his progress. He was fond of a maxim of Karl Marx's about the giant Anteus who could never be beaten if he kept his feet on the earth. The earth was the people and actual events" (1985: 9). This seems to me a most apt description of Turner's work. In *The Ritual Process* Turner's feet are on the earth all over the earth, formulating new concepts through comparative ethnography. In some of his more purely theoretical essays on semiotics elsewhere, however, it is my opinion that Turner strays too far from his own footing, conceding too much to Levi-Strauss and Charles Morris, thereby not utilizing the fullest possibilities of his processual approach (I suppose my criticism is that he becomes "semi-Turnerian"). On Turner's behalf it should be noted, however, that he was always open to influence: he listened to

opposing points of view, and, where possible, sought to unify disparate sources. He avoided the abstractionist vacuum cleaner into which many other symbolic anthropologists and semioticians were sucked. As Babcock and MacAloon point out, "The inseparability of symbolic anthropology and political anthropology was a fundamental ethos informing all of his work. The analysis of symbolic forms must always begin, he would insist, with a close understanding of the network of power relations in the social field, and it must end with as much an account as possible--as he liked to put it in his crusty and multivocal private speech--of 'who is screwing whom'" (Babcock and MacAloon 1987: 11).

In Turner's late work we see his concern with living meaning--and the task of the anthropologist being to give a living account of social processes--brought to a new phase. Turner sought a transformation for the social sciences "withering on the structuralist vine" (or, we might add, withering on the poststructuralist vine). He was frustrated with the fragmenting tendencies and arrogant theoretical provincialism endemic to contemporary anthropology and intellectual life. He seriously questioned his own presuppositions from top to bottom in an attempt to find his way to a broadened mode of thought. Turner believed that nothing less than an intellectual *communitas* was needed, a deeply felt humility in the face of the overwhelming complexity and mystery which social life reveals to the sensitive observer coupled with a willingness to join together, or at least *listen to*, diverse and possibly opposed perspectives.

Babcock and MacAloon note that in Turner's six years at the University of Virginia, from 1977 until his death in 1983, his vast energies were deployed in at least seven directions: "(1) toward Japan and its literary and performative genres; (2) toward Brazil and its *Carnaval*; (3) toward the theater, particularly

New York's experimental post-modern, Off-Off Broadway workshops; (4) as a contributor and editor of the new *International Encyclopedia of Religion*; (5) as a member of the Smithsonian Council and guest curator for *Celebration: A World of Art and Ritual*, a major exhibit that gathered from nine of the Smithsonian museums objects that depict or play a role in human celebrations; (6) toward a renewed interest in Dilthey and Dewey and what he termed 'the anthropology of experience;' and (7) to the structure and functioning of the 'liminal dynamo' itself, the human brain" (1987: 16). Turner was apparently frustrated that he did not have the time to master Japanese or Portuguese in order to undertake more extended ethnographies in Japan or Brazil, yet his restless energies and great feel for dramatic form caused him to produce fascinating accounts of Japanese literature and drama and the Afro-Brazilian *Umbanda* religion in Rio de Janeiro. Turner's native interests in drama also found lively resonance in experimental theater in New York, where, with theater director Richard Schechner, he created enactments of his ethnographies in drama workshops, which, in turn, produced further material for reflection on ethnography, social dramas, and liminality. In pursuing these diverse directions simultaneously, one sees that Victor Turner was himself a multicultural ritual symbol in contemporary intellectual life, "unifying disparate referents."

At the time of his death Turner was fully engaged in the struggle to achieve a new synthesis--a theoretical rite of passage to a broadened vision of anthropology and social theory. A number of social theorists have been claiming to be transforming social theory--I am thinking here of Jürgen Habermas, Niklas Luhmann, Anthony Giddens, and others--but for the

most part they have been replaying tired variations on old themes without ever questioning the premisses of modern social theory. But in Turner's synthesis of social dramas, liminality, *communitas*, Deweyan and Diltheyan understandings of "experience," and neurobiological semiotics, perhaps we see the unexpected outline of a new understanding of the human creature: one which reconnects life and meaning, which embraces the "subjunctive" as no less fundamental a reality of human existence than the "indicative," which views the realm of the fantastic as a precious resource for continued human development rather than a vestige of an archaic and obsolete past.

It might seem unlikely that Turner was so drawn to Dilthey while simultaneously investigating neurobiological brain processes as a means to understanding ritual processes. It was Dilthey, after all, who wanted to keep the *Geisteswissenschaften* distinct from the *Naturwissenschaften*, and who developed a non-naturalistic *Lebensphilosophie*. It was Dilthey's concept of "structures of experience" which attracted Turner: "Long before I had read a word of Wilhelm Dilthey's I had shared his notion that "structures of experience" are fundamental units in the study of human action. Such structures are irrefrangibly threefold, being at once cognitive, conative, and affective. Each of these terms is itself, of course, a shorthand for a range of processes and capacities...persons will desire and feel as well as think, and their desires and feelings impregnate their thoughts and influence their intentions....It became clear to me that an "anthropology of experience" would have to take into account the psychological properties of individuals as well as the culture which, as Sapir insists, is

'*never given*' to each individual, but, rather, 'gropingly discovered,' and, I would add, some parts of it quite late in life. We never cease to learn our own culture, let alone other cultures, and our own culture is always changing" (1982: 63-64). Turner admired Dilthey's attempt to root meaning within human experience rather than in a conceptual apparatus superior to the human activities which form its object. For the same reasons he was attracted to Dewey's experientially-rooted pragmatism. Although he acknowledged that Dewey's "process of experiencing cleaved closer to the biological" (1985b: 39), he did not, to my knowledge, explicitly take up the problem of Dilthey's anti-naturalism, or, put inversely, of his own pro-naturalism in contrast to Dilthey.

Turner addressed the issue instead by plunging into neurobiological brain research, which can be seen as a radical continuation of his earlier attempts to root color symbolism in body processes. He asked whether we can escape "from something like animal ritualization without escaping from our own bodies and psyches, the rhythms and structures of which arise on their own" (1985a: 252). From the perspective of cultural anthropology and contemporary intellectual life, Turner became a heretic in admitting to the possibility of biology as having a formative influence on human action, and some of his closest colleagues seemed to be embarrassed by this aspect of his work, as though he were forsaking the challenge of the ritual process and its interpretation, as though he were becoming a reductionist. That the rigid division of a falsely mechanical nature from a de-natured culture might itself be the product of a reductionist ethos did not occur to these critics. Locked in by outdated dichotomies of nature and culture, the etherial rational intellect of today seems unwilling or unable to confront its own material embodiment. At the beginning of his career Turner had to jettison

the baggage of structural-functionalism because it proved inadequate to his needs. And at the end of his career he found that he had to discard his acquired prejudice against the biosemiotic sources of meaning. He saw the need for a "deep ecology" of human experience, perhaps to complement those "structures of experience" he found in Dilthey and Dewey: "if one considers the geology, so to speak, of the human brain and nervous system, we see represented in its strata--each layer still vitally alive--not dead like stone, the numerous pasts and presents of our planet. Like Walt Whitman, we 'embrace multitudes.' And even our reptilian and paleomammalian brains are human, linked in infinitely complex ways to the conditionable upper brain and kindling it with their powers. Each of us is a microcosm, related in the deepest ways to the whole life-history of that lovely deep blue globe swirled over with the white whorls first photographed by Edwin Aldrin and Neil Armstrong from their primitive space chariot, the work nevertheless of many collaborating human brains. The meaning of that living macrocosm may not only be found deep within us but also played from one mind to another as history goes on--with ever finer tuning--by the most sensitive and eloquent instrument of Gaea the Earth-spirit--the cerebral organ" (1985a: 273).

Turner is regarded as an "anthropologist" in the Anglo-American sense, but his late work reveals him to be a "philosophical anthropologist" in the German sense as well. He is no throwback to biological reductionism, and I believe that his late work shows the ways toward undoing the etherializing "shade" which haunts the contemporary study of meaning and culture as well as its mechanico-materialist opposite which haunts human ethology and sociobiology. At the heart of Turner's work is ever the incandescent human form.

Victor and Edith Turner, and Edith's sister, Mrs. Helen Barnard, had dinner at my home in 1983 on the evening Victor was to present one of the inaugural lectures for the new department of anthropology at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana. My wife and I had placed a long wooden scroll, a gift from friends which was originally made to be nailed to the transom of a boat, in our dining room window. It was an inscription from Chaucer--actually Chaucer's translation into English of the old Latin proverb "*Ars longa, vita brevis*"--and it made an impression on Turner. "The lyf so short, the craft so long to lerne." He repeated it a number of times during the course of dinner, each time in a thicker Scottish accent. In reviewing Turner's restless search to understand the varieties and underpinnings of human existence, to mark new blazes for research, one can see why he took delight in the Chaucer quotation. Two months later he was dead from a heart attack, buried with Ndembu and Catholic funeral rites. "The lyf so short, the craft so long to lerne."

Turner's death has left a hole in contemporary anthropology and social thought. His life has left a legacy of masterful ethnographies and analyses of ritual processes, of the feeling, suffering, celebrating, and experiencing creature at the heart of any science which claims to be human, and of pathways into forests of symbols yet to be traversed.

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