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Ritual, Anti-Structure, and Religion: A Discussion of Victor Turner's Processual Symbolic Analysis*

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This paper offers a systematic outline and discussion of Victor Turner's anthropology of religion and ritual. Along with an examination of Turner's theoretical stance, an account of his personal life history is presented. Attention is paid to Turner's initial functional analysis, the development of his methodological frame and processual mode of analysis, and his conception of anti-structure. This account will serve to elaborate on some important issues in the study of ritual and religion. First, the discussion focuses on the parallels between Turner's life and the innovations in his approach. Second, his notion of religion in the study of ritual is examined. Finally, the distinctiveness, value, and limitations of his work are analyzed with reference to other approaches in symbolic anthropology.

INTRODUCTION

In this paper I wish to explore Victor Turner's contribution to the anthropological study of religion and ritual. The issue will be addressed from two different but related angles. First, the conceptual apparatus and methodology of Turner's work will be discussed from a theoretical point of view. His mode of analysis will be examined with respect to its value as a distinct innovative approach in the anthropology of religion and ritual, with focus mainly on Turner's application of his ideas among the Ndembu of Northern Rhodesia. Second, Turner's work will be characterized as one in which there are crucial intellectual turning-points, often coinciding with important crossroads in his life; parallels can be traced between Turners' anthropological enterprise and his personal life history. Without this, I believe, justice could not be done, either to Turner's work or to his life, "for in him there was, most unusually, no apparent distinction between life and work" (Willis 1984:75).[1]

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1. At various points in this paper I use the biographical notes on Victor Turner by Douglas (1984); Frankenberg (1984); McLaren (1985); Manning (1984); Sullivan (1984); E. Turner (1985); E. Turner and F. Turner (1985); Turner (1982:7-9; 1984; 1987); and Willis (1984).

Victor Witter Turner was born on 28 May 1920 in Glasgow, Scotland, the son of Captain Norman Turner, an electronics engineer, and Violet Witter, founding member and actress of the Scottish National Theater. At the age of 11, Turner left Scotland and went with his divorced mother to live with his maternal grandparents in Bournemouth, England. After attending Bournemouth Grammar School, he studied English language and literature at University College of London (1938-41). During World War II, Turner, a pacifist and objector to military service, became a non-combatant bomb disposal soldier in Britain. In 1943 he married Edith Davis who remained his wife and collaborator throughout his life. After the war the Turners and their two sons lived in a gypsy caravan near Rugby Town, England, a proper home being unobtainable due to German bombing. In the public library there, Turner came across *Coming of Age in Samoa* by Margaret Mead and *The Andaman Islanders* by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown. From these books Turner discovered that tribal life was even more down-to-earth than that of the British soldier which he had experienced during the war. He decided to study anthropology at University College of London, where he attended the seminars of (among others) Daryll Forde, Meyer Fortes, and Edmund Leach, and received his B.A. with honors in 1949. Max Gluckman, the exiled South-African anthropologist and spiritual leader of the Manchester School, then offered Turner a grant from the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute to carry out fieldwork in an African tribe. Turner accepted and was assigned to the Mambwe tribe. However, he never reached the Mambwe homeland; during his stay at the Institute in Lusaka he received a telegram from Gluckman: "Suggest you change to Ndembu tribe Northwestern Province much malaria yellow fever plenty of ritual" (E. Turner 1985:2). In 1950 the Turners moved to the Mukanza village in the Mwinilunga district of Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). Here Victor Turner started his fieldwork among the Ndembu.

THE FUNCTION OF RITUAL

The first report of Turner's research among the Ndembu was his doctoral dissertation (Turner 1954-55), later published as *Schism and Continuity in an African Society: A Study of Ndembu Village Life* (Turner 1957a). This work was first and foremost a study of the mechanisms of resolving social conflicts in Ndembu society. A thorough study of the Ndembu ritual complex was not yet Turner's primary concern. The members of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute paid little attention to the ritual activities of the African tribes they were studying, and at first Turner, who was a research officer at the Institute, was no exception. Still, even at this early stage in his career, he made an innovative contribution to anthropology by introducing the concept of social drama.

Social Drama and Functional Rituals

During his fieldwork among the Ndembu (December 1950 to February 1952, and May 1953 to June 1954), Turner concentrated on investigating the main principles governing Ndembu social structure (Turner 1957a:61-81; 258-287). He discovered two jointly operating principles in Ndembu society: matrilineal descent and virilocality. Matrilineal descent is the dominant organizing principle in Ndembu social structure,

but when combined with virilocality, matrilineal tendencies are counteracted. Matrilineages are scattered over many different villages; given the high rate of divorce, this leads to a high degree of residential mobility, preventing the formation of solid groupings wider than the village. Strong affiliations between the Ndembu villages are unlikely to occur, and in the absence of a strong overall political unity, intervillage disputes frequently take place. Within each village, unstable marriage relationships inhibit the growth of deep lineages and increase the possibility of individual mobility and village fission. As a result, Ndembu society is characterized by many conflicts both within and between the villages. Turner consequently intended his doctoral dissertation primarily to be "a study of social conflict and of the social mechanisms brought into play to reduce, exclude or resolve conflict" (Turner 1957a:89). He introduced the notion of *social drama* as a device to look beneath the surface of social regularities into the hidden contradictions and eruptions of conflict in the Ndembu social structure. The social dramas among the Ndembu exhibit a processual form (Turner [1957a:91] uses the term "processional"), following a pattern of four phases: (1) a breach of regular norm-governed social relationships between persons or groups of a social unit; (2) a crisis or extension of the breach, unless the conflict can be sealed off quickly; (3) adjustive and redressive mechanisms brought into operation by leading members of the social group; and (4) reintegration of the disturbed social group or social recognition of an irreparable breach or schism (91-94).

Where do rituals fit into all this? In *Schism and Continuity* Turner devoted only one of twelve chapters to the study of ritual, and it is indicatively entitled "The Politically Integrative Function of Ritual" (288-317). At this stage of his career, Turner saw rituals (along with political and legal-judicial processes) as mere compensations, or redressive mechanisms for the tensions produced in the secular order (cf. phase 3 of the social drama, above). Turner did not intend to study the Ndembu ritual complex as such, as he stated in a footnote: "I do not intend here to make a cultural analysis of Ndembu ritual but simply to isolate from the ritual complex those sociological features which are relevant in this book" (289n). Rituals, performed by cult-associations cross-cutting the boundaries of lineages and villages, creating wider networks of association, were treated by Turner as merely the "social glue" that holds Ndembu society together. Ritual has a function to fulfill: "The ritual system compensates to some extent for the limited range of effective political control and for the instability of kinship and affinal ties to which political value is attached" (291).

British Structuralism I: The Manchester School

Turner's initial hesitation to investigate the Ndembu ritual complex as a separate domain of study can be explained by his position within the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute of Sociological Research (Kuper 1983:128-129, 150-153; Ortner 1984:128-132; Turner 1969a:4-10; van Donge 1985; Werbner 1984). It was as a research officer of this institute that Turner carried out his fieldwork among the Ndembu. The Institute was founded in 1938 by a group of researchers from Victoria University of Manchester to study the ways in which permanent and satisfactory relationships between natives and non-natives could be established in Southern Africa. Studies of ritual had a very low

priority in the Institute, which focused its concern on political and legal systems, urbanization, labor migration, and social and economic organizations. The Institute produced studies with a high degree of (neo-Marxist) uniformity whereby "deviants and turncoats were treated with great ferocity internally, but no criticism was tolerated from outsiders" (Kuper 1983:129). Not surprisingly, Turner's doctoral dissertation to a large extent bore the mark of Max Gluckman, former director of the Institute and at that time head of the Anthropology Department at Manchester University. It was Gluckman who urged Turner to study the principles of Ndembu social organization: "Until you've mastered that, you're in no position to analyze ritual" (Gluckman as quoted in E. Turner 1985:4).

It was the influence of Gluckman and the traditional focus of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute on aspects of political and economic organization which I believe have been responsible for Turner's "prejudice against ritual," as he himself called it (Turner 1969a:7). In the perspective of Gluckman (1954; 1958), ritual studies are of secondary importance; a careful examination of a society's principles of social organization must come first (as it did in Turner's *Schism and Continuity*). In Gluckman's functionalist approach, the role of rituals is to sustain a society's equilibrium and secure solidarity among its members. Rituals are looked upon as mechanisms to ensure societal unity, although according to Gluckman (and in this he diverges from the classical functionalist view), this unity may be achieved in spite of social conflicts and competing social norms and values. What many rituals (of rebellion) often do is precisely to enact social conflicts. Similarly, Turner regarded rituals in his doctoral dissertation only as mechanisms of redress in a conflictual Ndembu society. However, from Gluckman Turner also adopted the insight of stressing the dynamic processes of conflicts in societies. Turner developed the social drama approach to transgress the static framework of classical structuro-functional analyses and to reveal "social structure in action" (Turner 1957a:241, cf. Firth 1973:193-195; Grimes 1985:80-85). Gluckman's dialectical perspective, with its emphasis on process rather than state, was surely co-responsible for Turner's approach to social drama and his view of social life as essentially processual in form, an idea which was to pervade his entire work.

RITUAL AND SYMBOL ANALYSIS

In the same year in which *Schism and Continuity* was published, Turner wrote his first essay on ritual proper (Turner 1957b). With this paper, not published until 1964, Turner (1964b) laid the foundation of his approach to ritual and moved away more and more from the "ritual-hostile" framework of the Manchester School. Strikingly, in 1957 he resigned from the British Communist Party and renounced Marxism, possibly as a result of the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian uprising, and was received into the Roman Catholic Church. During his years as Simon Research Fellow, lecturer, and senior lecturer at Victoria University of Manchester (1957 to 1963), Turner devoted his time largely to writings on Ndembu ritual (Turner 1961; 1962a [both republished in Turner 1975]; 1962b).

Two factors seem to explain why Turner by this time had given up his "prejudice against ritual." First, his interest in the human capacity to engage in creative and ritual

activity must have already manifested itself in the early years of his life. From his mother, Turner inherited a profound interest in the theatrical and creative side of man (which also provided the name for his conceptual tool of social "drama"). Turner's fascination with human creativity is also clear from his lifelong interest not only in ritual, but also in art, literature, and poetry (which he in fact wrote occasionally). Such interests led him even in the midst of his studies at the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute to write essays on Lunda rituals (Turner 1953) and on the revival of the study of African ritual in the 1950s (Turner 1955). Second, equally important as Turner's spontaneous attraction to ritual, was the fact that he was assigned to study the Ndembu. From the many reports of Turner's research among the Ndembu, the picture clearly emerges of a people in whose lives ritual occupies a prominent place. Edith Turner (1985:2-3) reports that the beating of the ritual drums could be heard so often, and the performances of some kind of ritual were so manifold during Turner's fieldwork, that surely ritual had to be more than just "social glue" to sustain the Ndembu social order. As a result, during his second period of fieldwork (1953-54) Turner started to focus on ritual with a vigour which would eventually make him one of the most prominent ritual specialists in anthropology, and which on a personal level must have been an important contributing factor, if not a direct cause, for his conversion to Catholicism.

In the following pages I will outline the main elements of the approach to ritual which Turner applied in his research among the Ndembu, devoting a separate section to his processual view of ritual.

Rituals as Symbolic Action

Turner (1967:19) defined ritual as "prescribed formal behavior for occasions not given over to technological routine, having reference to beliefs in mystical beings and powers." Likewise, a symbol is the smallest unit of ritual which still retains the specific properties of ritual behavior; it is a "storage unit" filled with a vast amount of information (Turner 1968a:1-2). Symbols can be objects, activities, words, relationships, events, gestures, or spatial units (Turner 1967:19). Ritual, religious beliefs, and symbols are in Turner's perspective essentially related. He expressed this well in another definition: Ritual is "a stereotyped sequence of activities involving gestures, words, and objects, performed in a sequestered place, and designed to influence preternatural entities or forces on behalf of the actors' goals and interests" (Turner 1977a:183). Rituals are storehouses of meaningful symbols by which information is revealed and regarded as authoritative, as dealing with the crucial values of the community (Turner 1968a:2). Not only do symbols reveal crucial social and religious values; they are also (precisely because of their reference to the supernatural) transformative for human attitudes and behavior. The handling of symbols in ritual exposes their powers to act upon and change the persons involved in ritual performance. In sum, Turner's definition of ritual refers to ritual *performances* involving manipulation of *symbols* that refer to *religious beliefs*.

Symbols: The Meaningful Vehicles of Ritual

Turner (1967:31-32) drew a distinction between dominant and instrumental symbols.

Dominant symbols appear in many different ritual contexts, but their meaning possesses a high degree of autonomy and consistency throughout the total symbolic system. *Instrumental* symbols are the means of attaining the specific goals of each ritual performance. Instrumental symbols can be investigated only in terms of the total system of symbols which makes up a particular ritual, since their meaning can be revealed only in relation to other symbols.

Turner (1967:28-29; 50-55; 1968a:18-19) identified three major empirical properties of dominant symbols: (1) *condensation, polysemy,* or *multivocality,* when one single dominant symbol represents many different things and actions; (2) *unification of disparate significata,* where the significata (the underlaying meanings of the symbol) are interconnected by virtue of their common analogous qualities, or by association in fact or thought; and (3) *polarization of meaning* or *bipolarity,* in which dominant symbols possess two distinct poles of meaning; at the ideological or normative pole, a cluster of significata refers to components of the moral and social order, to principles of social organization; at the sensory or orectic pole, the significata are natural or physiological phenomena and processes that arouse desires and feelings. One single dominant symbol comprises both a natural necessity and a social need or desire; it "represents both the obligatory and the desirable. Here we have an intimate union of the material and the moral" (Turner 1967:54).

Turner (1967:50-52; 1968a:81-82; 1969b:11-13) inferred the properties of symbols from three levels or fields of meaning: the exegetical, operational, and positional meanings of ritual symbols.

1) *Exegesis:* The exegetical meaning is obtained from questioning indigenous informants about observed ritual behavior, so that a symbol's manifest sense (of which the ritual subjects are fully aware) can be revealed. The informants may be ritual specialists or laymen. Exegesis can also be derived through the analysis of myths, through the fragmentary interpretations of separate rituals or ritual stages, and through written or verbally uttered doctrines and dogmas. In exegesis the meaning of a symbol may rest on three semantic foundations: (a) the nominal basis, or the name of a symbol in ritual and/or non-ritual contexts; (b) the substantial basis, or the culturally selected physical characteristics of symbolic objects; and (c) the artifactual basis, or the symbolic object after it has been molded and fashioned as a product of human activity.

2) *Operational meaning:* A symbol's operational meaning, revealing its latent sense (of which the subjects are only marginally aware), is derived from observing not only what is said about a ritual, but also what is done with it and how it is used. This includes observation of the people who handle the symbol in ritual activity, as well as inquiries about why certain people are absent on particular ritual occasions.

3) *Positional meaning:* The positional meaning of a symbol refers to its relationship with other symbols in the total ritual complex and reveals the symbol's hidden (for the ritual subjects' unconscious) senses. In a given ritual only one or a few of the meanings of the polysemous symbol may be stressed or become paramount at different stages of a ritual, so that a symbol becomes fully meaningful only in relation to other symbols of different ritual performances.

So far we have outlined that part of Turner's mode of ritual analysis which he developed during his fieldwork among the Ndembu in the 1950s (although most of these

ideas were not published until the 1960s). We see that Turner had already constructed several important elements in his approach to ritual. First, ritual is part of an ongoing process of social drama; it has a major function in contributing to a society's conflictual equilibrium. Second, ritual involves the handling of symbols that constitute the smallest units of ritual activity; symbols in themselves are carriers of meaning. Third, the meanings of symbols are multiple, giving unity to the morality of the social order and the emotional needs of the individual. Finally, on a methodological level, Turner inferred the properties of symbols from various types of data obtained through observation and questioning. Another crucial innovation in Turner's analysis, which took place right before he left for America in 1963, was the development of his processual view on ritual.

THE PROCESS OF RITUAL

In 1963 Turner was offered a professorship of anthropology at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. He had previously been appointed a fellow at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences at Palo Alto, California (1961-62), and he accepted also this new offer to go to America. However, he was held up with visa problems, and he and his family had to spend some time in Hastings, England. In the public library of Hastings, Turner read *The Rites of Passage* by French folklorist Arnold Van Gennep ([1909] 1960). Van Gennep had first published his classic work in French in 1909, but it was not translated into English until 1960. Via Henri Junod ([1913] 1962) Turner had taken note of Van Gennep's ideas, which would influence his writings profoundly in the years to come.[2] In the library at Hastings, Turner wrote "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage,*" his first essay discussing the processual form of ritual (Turner 1964a). Now he was ready to leave for America and to develop further his processual view on ritual.

Rituals as Processes

In 1955 Turner (1955:54) had already suggested that the temporal structure of rituals of rebellion, as described by Gluckman (1954), might shed light on the capacity of rituals to transfer a rebellious affect to the official social order. In *Schism and Continuity* Turner (1957a:298) also noted that many Ndembu rituals "involve the performance of two successive rituals, separated by a period during which the patient undergoes partial seclusion from secular life." From Van Gennep's *Rites of Passage* Turner found the basis for the further development of his ritual analysis: Not only is ritual situated within a process of social drama; ritual itself is processual in form.

Van Gennep defined *rites de passage* as "rites which accompany every change of place, state, social position and age" (Van Gennep [1909] 1960 in Turner 1967:94). Van Gennep indicated that all such rites are marked by a threefold progression of successive ritual stages: (1) *separation* or the pre-liminal (after *limen,* Latin for threshold),

2. Max Gluckman (1962) read and commented upon Van Gennep's *Rites of Passage* before Turner did. Surprisingly, however, Turner makes no reference to Gluckman's essay.

when a person or group becomes detached from an earlier fixed point in the social structure or from an earlier set of social conditions; (2) *margin* or the liminal, when the state of the ritual subject is ambiguous; he is no longer in the old state and has not yet reached the new one; and (3) *aggregation* or the post-liminal, when the ritual subject enters a new stable state with its own rights and obligations (Turner 1967:94; 1968b:576-577).

Life-Crisis Rituals and Rituals of Affliction

In his discussions of the ritual complex among the Ndembu, Turner presented the processual view of ritual with a distinction between life-crisis rituals and rituals of affliction. He had already drawn this distinction in *Schism and Continuity* (Turner 1957a:292), but it was not until the introduction to *The Forest of Symbols* that he elaborated the model (Turner 1967:7-15).

Life-crisis rituals refer to that class of rituals which mark the transition of one phase in the development of a person to another phase. Such phases are important points in the physical or social development of the ritual subject, such as birth, puberty, or death. Life crisis-rituals among the Ndembu include initiation ceremonies for boys and girls, and funeral rites. *Rituals of affliction,* on the other hand, are performed for individuals who are said to have been "caught" by the spirits of deceased relatives whom they have forgotten or neglected. Those spirits (Turner [1967] uses the term "shades") may afflict the Ndembu in one of three ways: (1) the shade of a hunter may cause his kinsmen to miss their aim, fail to find animals to shoot, or drive animals out of range; (2) the shade of a woman may cause her kinswomen to have reproductive troubles; or (3) shades of both sexes may cause their living kin to become ill in various ways. The corresponding Ndembu rituals are hunters' cults, women's fertility cults, and curative cults. Ndembu rituals of affliction are performed by cult-associations on behalf of persons believed to be afflicted by a shade (Turner 1968a:15-16). The members of the cult-associations are recruited from all over the Ndembu territory, regardless of their particular village or lineage membership. In this way, the system of cults helps to hold together the loosely organized Ndembu society.

All the Ndembu rituals are characterized by the three-phased processual form of rites of passage (Turner 1967:13-14): (1) separation (*Ilembi or Kulemba*), the treatment and dance to make the subjects sacred; (2) margin, a period of seclusion involving partial or complete separation of the subjects from everyday existence; and (3) re-aggregation (*Ku-tumbuka*), a further treatment and dance celebrating the end of the seclusion period.

The Notion of Field

With the distinction between life-crisis rituals and rituals of affliction identified, Turner's notion of field can now be clarified. Following the field-theory of Kurt Lewin (1949), Turner (1967:262-268) distinguished the social from the cultural field in which rituals take place; such an examination helps to understand fully the meaning of each ritual performance.

The *social* field (or action-field) refers to the groups, relationships, and social-structural organizational principles of the society in which the rituals are performed. In the case of the Ndembu, this refers to the ritual's function as a redressive mechanism in a social drama, and to such numerical characteristics as the number of villages represented during the ritual, the pattern of intervillage relationships, and the goals and aims of the people attending the rituals. In Ndembu society, the social field is dominated by the contradiction between matrilineal descent and virilocality. The rituals of affliction here serve as redressive mechanisms whenever a crisis occurs. The social field bears no relevance to life-crisis rituals, because the latter "take no account of the actual balance between persons and groups but dogmatically stress the key values and concepts of Ndembu society, in virtual independence of the concrete historical situation" (Turner 1968a:87-88).

In the *cultural* field, ritual symbols are regarded as clusters of abstract meanings. The dominant symbols are studied in each ritual performance and in each of its phases. The cultural field encompasses the ritual within the totality of Ndembu rituals and within the cultural realm of Ndembu religious beliefs. Turner (1968a:14-15) distinguished four components in Ndembu religion (1) a belief in the existence of a high god (*Nzambi*) who has created the world but does not interfere with worldly human activities (this god is largely absent from Ndembu ritual and prayer); (2) a belief in the existence of ancestor spirits or "shades" who may afflict the Ndembu (their importance is manifested by the numerous performances of rituals of affliction among the Ndembu); (3) a belief in the intrinsic efficacy of certain animal and vegetable substances; and (4) a belief in the destructive power of female witches and male sorcerers.

Ndembu Color Classification

Of the highly complicated ritual complex among the Ndembu, which is so detailed and vividly described throughout Turner's work, I wish here to discuss Turner's comments on the use of red, white, and black symbolic objects in the Ndembu life-crisis rituals.[3] This account (based on Turner 1966 [reprinted in Turner 1967:59-92]; 1977a:187-189) will prove useful for a comparison of Turner's approach with French structuralist anthropology.

Turner discovered that in many Ndembu rituals the colors red, white, and black are represented in symbolic objects (red or white clay, black charcoal). From informants' reports, Turner learned that the relationship between the three colors refers to the mystery of the three rivers (the rivers of whiteness, redness, and blackness). These rivers represent a power flowing from a common source in the high god *Nzambi.* Exegetical, operational, and positional meanings of the red and white symbols in Ndembu rituals also indicated that white symbols are associated with goodness, health, power, visibility, and life; ritual whiteness refers to harmony, continuity, purity, the manifest, and the legitimate. Red symbols are associated with different kinds of blood; redness acts both

3. Since space is limited, I cannot present here a complete review of the Ndembu rituals discussed in Turner's work. Turner's most comprehensive ethnographic accounts of the Ndembu ritual complex can be found in Turner (1967; 1968a; 1975 [including reprints of Turner 1961; 1962a]). For a classified inventory of all Ndembu rituals described by Turner, see Deflem (1988:34-37).

for good and ill, for good blood (animal blood shed by the hunters) and bad blood (blood of menstruation and murder). Black symbols are associated with evil, disease, and witchcraft; black is often ritually neglected because it does not make things visible and is associated with death and impurity. Red and white are associated with life: White stands for the preservation of life, while red refers to the taking of life, or bloodshed for the communal good. This binary structure between red and white is captured within a wider tripartite mode of classification of which black, referring to death, is the third element. The supreme antithetical pair of the triad is the white/black (life/death) contrast.

French Structuralism

Turner's interpretation of the Ndembu color classification offers a useful point of reference for a comparison of his processual symbolic analysis with French structuralist anthropology. Within the framework of French structuralism, notably in the writings of Claude Lévi-Strauss (1958; 1962; 1981) and Luc De Heusch (1975; 1982), an altogether different approach to ritual has been employed. De Heusch (1975:167-177), for instance, in discussing Turner's analysis of the Ndembu color classification, has argued that Turner neglected the fact that, according to the Ndembu informants, red is an independent symbolic category. Ritual redness, symbolized by good and bad blood, exposes an ambivalence which does not allow the color triad to be reduced to a binary structure between black and white. According to De Heusch, this piece of exegesis should be considered an integral part of the classificatory mode of thought established in mythology. Exegesis is an expression of mythology, and in the last resort "ritual activity is firmly based on a mythological system" (De Heusch 1975:368).

Comparing this perspective with Turner's,[4] we see that within French structuralist anthropology (of which Lévi-Strauss was the founder and De Heusch offers a variant) ritual symbols are studied through the analysis of ritual speech and mythology, which is thought to be at the roots of ritual. For Lévi-Strauss (1981), a ritual, defined as "words uttered, gestures performed and objects manipulated; . . . [of which] gestures and objects are *in loco verbi;* they are a substitute for words" (671), "is not a reaction to life; it is a reaction to what thought has made of life" (681). Therefore, from this perspective the abstract universal principles underlying ritual (and in fact all human behavior) are analyzed. A "thought-structuralist" study of rituals implies a study of the cognitive-classificatory aspects of ritual symbols through an analysis of myths. The unconscious categories or mental circuits (especially the much-favored binary oppositions of structuralistic anthropology) are unravelled as they are reflected in multiple symbols. In his discussion of the Ndembu color classification, for example, De Heusch (1975; 1982) argues that the qualities of red, white, and black, and their symbolic representations in various forms, can be understood only when put (as they are in the structure of human thought) in relation to one another. A symbolic object, gesture, or word as such carries no meaning; symbols become meaningful only in opposition to each other. The relationship between

4. This account is based on Collins (1976:339-341); Douglas (1970:305-308); Kuper (1983:183-184); Turner (1969a:41-43); and Wieting (1972). For a different perspective, see Schwimmer (1985).

different ritual symbols corresponds with the relationship between different categories of human thought; the symbolic objects, gestures and words are "good to think."

For Turner, on the other hand, studying symbols meant primarily "studying symbols in social action, in practice" (Turner 1985b:216). Ritual in Turner's approach is above all ritual *performed,* ritual in action. Turner was interested in discovering how ritual works, what ritual does, and how people handle symbols during ritual performances. Moreover, Turner studied all kinds of symbols in a ritual performance, but he discovered the properties of multivocality, unification, and bipolarity in a *single* dominant symbol, not in its relationship with other symbols. If we consider again the color symbolism in Ndembu ritual, we see that for Turner the bipolarity of, for instance, red symbols is comprised within any one single red symbolic object. In the Ndembu ritual *Nkula,* in which, as a ritual of affliction, a female patient's reproductive or menstrual troubles are dealt with, portions of the *mukula* tree are used (Turner 1968a:52-88). This tree exudes a red gum, referred to by the Ndembu as the "blood of *mukula.*" This "blood" as used ritually refers at the same time to the orectic pole of childbirth, as well as to the normative pole of matriliny and all female things. The bipolar quality of the symbol is captured within the symbol itself. Turner also argued that using symbols in ritual means attempting to manipulate, to "anticipate, even generate, change" (Turner 1980:163). For Turner, symbols had the quality of *efficacy.* The red gum of the *mukula* tree, for instance, is known for its quality of quick coagulation, which in the *Nkula* ritual, it is hoped, will ensure quick healing of the patient. Symbols are "good to manipulate" and the handling of symbols "works," because they are not just reflections of cognitive classifications, but also "a set of evocative devices for rousing, channeling, and domesticating powerful emotions" (Turner 1969a:42-43). Turner's view is here directly opposed to the structuralist approach because the latter would fail to draw attention to the whole person involved in ritual (cf. the bipolarity of symbols).

To this discussion should be added that Turner in his ritual analysis depended upon exegetical information and the semantic foundations of symbols, and that he was also aware that at least part of ritual involves verbally uttered cognitive statements. However, this does not imply that Turner's mode of analysis comes closer to the structuralist approach; quite the contrary. As Lévi-Strauss (1981:668-671) himself explained, for Turner exegesis and ritual speech constituted elements of ritual activity, and as such belong to ritual, not to mythology. For Lévi-Strauss, on the other hand, mythology can exist in two different modalities: either as explicit myths, or implicitly as fragmentary sketches of a text (e.g., interpretations by ritual specialists) which should be removed from ritual. Here lies the methodological core of Turner's divergence from the structuralist perspective: Exegesis for Turner is part of ritual, while commentaries associated with ritual are in structuralism treated as implicit mythology.

In sum, although French structuralist anthropology and Turner's processual symbolic analysis are not mutually exclusive approaches but represent different angles from which to study the same ritual symbols, their analyses diverge in the emphasis on ritual performance versus mythical thought, single dominant symbols versus the opposition between several symbols, and the efficacy of symbols in action versus the correspondence of the relationship between symbols to the structure of human thought.

The Relationship between Religion and Ritual

Turner's definition of ritual, as we have seen, included the manipulation of efficacious symbols in ritual performances and the reference that is made in ritual to a belief in supernatural beings or powers. For Turner there is in ritual an essential element of religious belief. This is demonstrated by the attention he gave to the cultural field in which rituals take place. As mentioned before, examination of the Ndembu cultural field involves an analysis of the four components of Ndembu religious belief. Thus, religion in Turner's work refers to both belief (religion as thought) and practice (religion as ritual action). The component of practice or action is clearly demonstrated by Turner's focus on detailed analyses of ritual performances. The component of religious belief and its significance in ritual, however, are less well developed in Turner's writings. In his study of the Ndembu ritual complex, Turner discussed the ideas of Ndembu religious belief only briefly (Turner 1968a:14-15, *see above*). Again we see, as in the discussion with Lévi-Strauss, that religion for Turner was primarily "religion in action"; religion is what religion does, how generative it is for human action and manipulation. In this sense, religion is in Turner's perspective ritualistic, since it is studied primarily through the analysis of ritual action, while an elaborate systematic treatment of Ndembu religious thought is lacking.

Nevertheless, the religious component in ritual was essential for Turner. In his work on the *Chihamba* ritual, for instance, Turner (1962a, reprinted in Turner 1975:37-203) refused to "explain away" the religious aspect in ritual: "One has to consider religious phenomena in terms of religious ideas and doctrines" (Turner 1975:195). We see that for Turner ritual is religious, and religion involves both social experiences in ritualistic activity and a systematic corpus of beliefs "which have for their object invisible and intangible beings or powers which a human group recognizes as superior, on which it depends" (V. Turner and E. Turner 1982:201). Turner (1975:31-32) went even further in asserting not only that ritual is religious, but also that religion has ontological value: "After many years as an agnostic and monistic materialist I learned from the Ndembu that ritual and its symbolism are not merely epiphenomena or disguises of deeper social and psychological processes, but have ontological value." In Turner's approach, religious belief seems to correspond with the nature of reality itself. It may cause some surprise, then, to note that Turner, who in his doctoral dissertation still regarded rituals as mere functional devices for the maintenance of the social system, now gave supreme status to the religious component in ritual. Soon after the publication of his work on the *Chihamba* ritual Turner was criticized for overestimating the role of religion in his study of ritual. Horton (1964), for instance, argued that "ritual man" is but part of "theory-building man"; both religion and other (secular) systems of thought have as basic aims to explain and predict the events of things in the world. Religion in Horton's view cannot be given superior status over other forms of knowledge.

In conclusion, I would argue that whenever ritual is inspired by a religious belief in supernatural beings or powers, its status is different from other, inner-worldly forms of knowledge. I concur with Turner that, for the people involved in many ritual activities, religious beliefs have some kind of "surplus value" over and above other, secular forms of thought. It is only in the different forms of religion that references are made to the

supernatural (be it a personalized god, invisible energies, or divine powers attributed to natural phenomena) and to the way things are meant to be in concordance with a reality which is, according to Clifford Geertz (1973:112), "really real," and which is independent from worldly contingencies and man-made arrangements based on secular knowledge. In this way, it can be said (against Horton) that religion is not just like any other system of ideas and does have supreme ontological value, but (adapting Turner's claim) only for the subjects involved in religious rituals. Religion, referring to the supernatural, is more than "theory," but only in the eye of the believer. This does not necessarily imply that all ritual activity is *per se* religious. So far, we have discussed only Turner's analysis of ritual among the Ndembu, i.e., ritual in a primitive, tribal society. In his later works, as we will see, Turner also applied his mode of analysis to the study of ritual in modern industrial society. The question then arises whether religion enters into ritual in the same way for modern as for tribal societies. Before I address this issue, I will explore the final steps in Turner's ritual analysis: the concepts of liminality and communitas.

ANTI-STRUCTURE: LIMINALITY AND COMMUNITAS

Having adopted the processual view on ritual from Van Gennep, Turner throughout his work repeatedly discussed the importance of the liminal, intermediate phase in ritual. In 1967, when Turner left Cornell University to become a professor of social thought and anthropology at the University of Chicago, he had already published *The Forest of Symbols* (Turner 1967) in which his republished essay on Van Gennep occupied a central place. Then came the publication of *The Drums of Affliction* (Turner 1968a), a work which reveals no theoretical innovations but offers detailed accounts of the Ndembu ritual complex, followed by *The Ritual Process* (Turner 1969a). These three consecutively published books are very much the central core of Turner's approach to ritual. Among these *The Ritual Process,* the publication of Turner's Henry Morgan Lectures which he delivered at the University of Rochester in April 1966, is most crucial, for it is the work in which Turner discussed the concepts of liminality and communitas at some length, and at the same time, it is the work in which he was led away from an exclusive study of Ndembu ritual and started to focus on phenomena in complex societies.

The Liminal Phase in the Ritual Process

Following Van Gennep's passage model, Turner identified a three-phased process of ritual: A ritual exemplifies the transition of an individual from one state to another. Turner (1967:93-103; 1969a:94-96, 102-106) noted that between the states the ritual subjects are often secluded from everyday life and have to spend some time in an interstructural, liminal situation. During this phase, the ritual subjects are given new names to denote their "no longer/not yet" status. The symbols exhibited express that the "liminal personae" are neither living nor dead, and both living and dead; they express the ambiguity of the interstructural period. This ambiguity is also demonstrated by the fact that the ritual subjects are during the seclusion period disguised or hidden; they are considered neither male nor female, deprived of rank, status and property. They

are all treated equally and are subjected to the rest of the community. In sum, the liminal subjects are "neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial" (Turner 1969a:95).

Turner distinguished analytically three (in actual ritual performances, often interwoven) components of liminality (Turner 1967:99-108; 1985a:291-301; V. Turner and E. Turner 1982:203-206): (1) communication of sacra, where secret symbols are communicated to the ritual subjects in the form of exhibitions of sacred articles (relics, masks, instruments, "what is shown,"), actions (dancing, "what is done") and instructions (mythical history, "what is said"); the symbols represent the unity and continuity of the community; they are simple in form, but, because of their multivocality, they are often given complex cultural interpretations; (2) ludic deconstruction and recombination of familiar cultural configurations, which refers to the exaggeration or distortion of the characteristics of familiar articles in the sacra; familiar objects are often presented in distorted, deviant or grotesque forms (in smaller or larger shape, in other colors); these representations force the ritual adepts to think about their society; they provoke the ritual subjects to reflect on the basic values of their social and cosmological order; and (3) simplification of the relations of the social structure, in which the only remaining structural characteristic in liminality is the authority of the ritual instructors over the completely submissive and obedient adepts; between the ritual subjects the sociostructural distinctions disappear in favor of an absolute equality. It is this third component of liminality, the "sameness" of the liminal personae, which led Turner to develop his notion of communitas.

Communitas: General Characteristics and Types

In his first essay on the processual form of ritual, Turner (1964a, reprinted in Turner 1967:93-111) noted that the ritual subjects during the liminal phase in a ritual performance are all treated equally, deprived of all distinguishing characteristics of social structure, constituting "a community or comity of comrades and not a structure of hierarchically arrayed positions" (Turner 1967:100). In *The Ritual Process* Turner introduced the concept of communitas to denote this feeling of comradeship among the liminal personae. According to Turner (1975:21), the first empirical base for this concept was his experience of friendship while he was a non-combatant soldier during World War II, but it was not until his analysis of the Ndembu ritual complex that he became fully aware of its theoretical relevance.

Communitas can generally be defined in opposition to structure: Communitas appears where structure does not (Turner 1969a:94-97, 125-130). Social structure refers to an arrangement of positions or statuses. As Turner discovered from his analysis of passage rites among the Ndembu, the characteristics of the social structure are no longer and not yet applicable during the intermediate period of liminality in ritual. What is brought about in liminality is what Turner called communitas, a term he adopted with a different meaning from that of Paul Goodman (Goodman and Goodman 1947).

In Turner's work, communitas in rituals refers to liminality, marginality, inferiority, and equality (Turner 1969a:94-97, 125-130; 1974a:45-55). The ritual subjects are during the seclusion period "neither here nor there"; they are subjected to the rest of the com-

munity and treated as equals to one another, creating a generic bond and a sentiment of "humankindness" between them. As such, communitas refers to one of the three components of the liminal phase in rituals. Yet there is more. In *The Ritual Process,* Turner (1969a:96-97) argued that communitas and structure also refer to two modalities of society. Turner conceived society as involving a dialectic process between communitas, the undifferentiated community of equal individuals, and structure, the differentiated and often hierarchical system of social positions. This dialectic process appears in the course of history in a cyclical way: "Maximization of communitas provokes maximization of structure, which in turn produces revolutionary strivings for renewed communitas" (129). Turner (1969a:131-140) distinguished three types of communitas in society: (1) *existential* or *spontaneous* communitas, which is free from all structural demands and is fully spontaneous and immediate; (2) *normative* communitas, or existential communitas, which is organized into a social system; and (3) *ideological* communitas, which refers to utopian models of societies based on existential communitas and is also situated within the structural realm. The types of communitas are phases, not permanent conditions. If we take for example the "hippie" movement in the late 60s (Turner 1969a:112-113, 138-139), following the communitas scheme, its development can be outlined as having started with the spontaneous communitas which occurs in "happenings" (rock concerts, experiments with drug-use). Around these happenings a union of followers was normatively organized, with their own places and times where communitas could be experienced on the margins of the society at large. Eventually complete ideologies were developed to promote, ideally for all members of the society, the type of communitas the hippies experienced. In the end, however (as was the case with the hippie movement), the fate of any type of communitas is inevitably a "decline and fall into structure and law" (Turner 1969a:132), after which a new form of communitas may rise again (Turner 1974a:282).

From Ndembu Rituals to the Human Brain

With *The Ritual Process* Turner reached a crucial point in the development of his approach. This work not only rounded off his mode of ritual analysis, but at the same time it led him to apply the notions of liminality and communitas to phenomena in complex societies, such as the Franciscan order, the hippie movement of the 60s, and the Sahajïyä movement of Bengal (Turner 1969a:112-113, 154-165). In the years to come Turner devoted his attention to such wide-ranging phenomena as communitas in the history of religions (Turner 1972), pilgrimages in Christian culture (Turner 1974c; V. Turner and E. Turner 1978), Western literature (Turner 1976b), and rites and ceremonies in the Catholic Church (Turner 1976a). In this way, Turner's work, which he characterized as "comparative symbology" (Turner 1974b; 1976b; 1978), exhibited a shift from tribal studies to analyses of complex industrial societies. Realizing that communitas and liminality in the modern world are different from the liminal phase in Ndembu ritual, Turner introduced the term "liminoid," denoting the quasi-liminal character of cultural performances (e.g., theatre plays, music concerts, art exhibitions) and leisure activities in complex society (Turner 1974b; 1977b; 1982; cf. Hecht 1985).

The liminoid diverges from the liminal in several ways (Turner 1974b:84-86). *Liminal*

phenomena are predominantly restricted to "primitive" tribal societies; they are experienced collectively as the result of a crisis in the social process (rituals of affliction), or synchronous with a biological or calendrical pattern (life-crisis rituals). Liminal phenomena are also fully integrated into the totality of the social world, and they re-enact, often by inversion, the main principles of the social order. *Liminoid* phenomena, on the other hand, take place in the complex industrial world; they are the products of individual or particular group efforts and are generated continuously. The liminoid originates outside the boundaries of the economic, political, and structural process, and its manifestations often challenge the wider social structure by offering social critique on, or even suggestions for, a revolutionary re-ordering of the official social order.

After Turner left the University of Chicago in 1977 to become the William R. Kenan Professor of Anthropology and Religion at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, he continued his interest in the study of liminoid phenomena in complex societies. During the final years of his life, he studied the relation between the findings of his ritual studies and discoveries in neurobiology (Turner 1983; 1985a:249-301; cf. Hefner 1986; Schechner 1985; E. Turner 1986a; 1986b). Turner believed that the models of society which he had identified, structure and communitas, correspond with the neurobiological thesis on the workings of the left and right sides of the brain: The left hemisphere of the brain is concerned with structure and logic, while the right hemisphere gives a sense of the whole, of communitas (in Turner's term). The human brain itself would thus encompass both free will and the genetically fixed. This led Turner to believe that his notions of communitas and structure, conceived as phases in the ritual process and as recurring models of society, have a neurophysiological basis.

Religion and Ritual in Tribal and Modern Societies

Having discussed Turner's notion of anti-structure, we see that Turner applied the passage model of Van Gennep to all kinds of rituals, in both tribal and modern societies. In his discussions on ritual in modern societies (Turner 1974b; 1976a; 1977b; 1982), he employed the same definition of ritual as in his work on the Ndembu: For Turner, all rituals involved symbolic manipulation and a reference to religion. In the case of rituals among the Ndembu this may be clear. From Turner's analyses, we indeed learn that in Ndembu rituals of affliction, for instance, reference is made to a religious belief in the powers of the supernatural "shades" of the ancestors. However, Turner (1976a:504-505) also argued that rituals in modern industrial society are "about matters of ultimate concern and about those entities believed to have emunicated, clarified and mediated a culture's bonding axioms to its present members." Even rituals in modern society, which may be situated outside the boundaries of the institutionalized religions of churches, sects, and other religious groups, and which take place in the domain of, for instance, recreational activity (in what Turner [1974b] calls "play"), have some religious component. In theatre plays, for instance, Turner (1982:12) argued that there is "something of the investigative, judgmental, and even punitive character of law-in-action, and something of the sacred, mythic, numinous, even 'supernatural' character of religious action." All rituals, it seems, are in Turner's perspective religious; they all "celebrate or commemorate transcendent powers" (V. Turner and E. Turner 1982:201).

Still, Turner did view rituals in modern industrial society as having some characteristics different from the tribal rituals he studied in Ndembu society. In tribal societies "all life is pervaded by invisible influences" (Turner 1976a:507). In this way, tribal societies are wholly religious, and ritual actions surrounding their religions are "nationwide"; they are oriented towards "all members of the widest effective community" (Turner 1977b:45). In modern societies, on the other hand, religion is "regarded as something apart from our economic, political, domestic and recreational life. Religion is part of the division of social labor" (Turner 1976a:507; cf. Turner 1968c:441-443). Modern religion, since the industrial revolution and because of the processes of institutionalization and secularization, has split from the rest of culture. The rituals of modern, industrial religion were denoted by Turner as liminal (as are tribal rituals where religion and other cultural sectors are interwoven). As we have seen, however, he referred to ritual outside the religious domain as liminoid, having as its most distinct characteristic that ritual activity is no longer nationwide but individualized to certain specific groups.

We see then in Turner's writings a certain ambiguity: On the one hand, he considered all rituals to have religious connotations. On the other hand, he typified both tribal rituals and religious rituals in industrial societies (which are confined to the realm of institutionalized religion) as liminal, while rituals in the recreational domain of modern society were termed liminoid. In this matter Turner seems to have underestimated his distinction between the liminal and the liminoid, as well as the differences between tribal and modern societies. I believe the ambiguity could have been resolved in one of two ways. First, the term "ritual" could have been restricted to religion (and only religion) in action, while a new term could have been introduced for routinized, ritual-like behavior in which no reference to the supernatural is made. Gluckman, for instance, has distinguished between ritual and ceremony: Only in rituals, not in the ceremonies of industrial societies, are references made to mystical powers (Gluckman and Gluckman 1977).[5] Second, and this is fully acceptable within Turner's perspective, a distinction could be made between religious and non-religious or secular ritual by taking fully into account Turner's view of the distinction between tribal and modern societies (cf. also Moore and Myerhoff 1977). In tribal societies, as Turner argued, religion, economy, law, politics, and other cultural domains are essentially interwoven. Tribal rituals, therefore, must have some religious component, since tribal religion in both mythology and ritual practices has not (yet) split off from other sectors of tribal culture. In industrial societies, on the other hand, the several institutions have become independent of each other, each of them dealing with certain needs and questions which these societies face (law, politics, economy, religion, etc.). Rituals may take place in either one of these institutional domains, but not always with religious connotations, since they may happen outside the realm of institutionalized religion in domains where matters of the "supernatural" are not dealt with. Contrary to this view, it has been argued, for instance by Mary Douglas

5. In a similar perspective, Pickering (1974) has suggested the terms "ritual" and "ceremonial" to account for the persistent need of people in contemporary society to engage in passage rites (baptism, marriage, burial) without consciously believing in the religious elements of these rites. Ritual is defined as "formalized action related to a deity or super-human being, while ceremonial could be viewed as an elaborate or stylized form of social behavior not related to such a being" (75). Thus, the persisting rites of passage in modern society are ceremonials, not rituals.

(1978:36-39), that there are also secular, this-worldly rituals in tribal societies (although not as many as in the industrial world), and that therefore ritual should be studied in terms of the socio-structural environment regardless of references to the supernatural. However, such an approach would contravene Turner's refusal to explain away the religious element in ritual in terms of the social structure, and it would disregard the differences between tribal and complex societies with respect to the particular extent and nature of their secularization. Turner's distinction between tribal and complex societies may best be preserved at the least as an idealtypical construct, whereby due attention would be given to the ways in which these societal types may have come closer together or remained further apart. Ndembu society at the time of Turner's research, for instance, was still largely isolated and relatively spared from modernization trends; therefore the references in Ndembu ritual to Ndembu religious belief were still manifest. Taking into account the trends of convergence and divergence between societies, scholars could address the changing character of ritual activity in relation to patterns of change in and between societies, as a result of both internal developments and external (e.g., colonial) influences. Thus, the problem in contemporary ritual studies is not whether tribal societies are all-religious or also include secular, non-religious ritual, but whether or to what extent tribal societies still exist.

A Humanistic Stance in a Scientific World?

It can be argued that Turner's later writings on the liminoid, communitas, and the importance of religion in society seem to have had less solid ethnographic foundation than did his analyses of the Ndembu rituals.[6] Turner has often been praised for the careful detail in his accounts of ritual among the Ndembu. Even Adam Kuper (1983:153), critical observer of British social anthropology, wrote of Turner's early work *Schism and Continuity* that "the quality of the case material and the care with which it was presented and analyzed put the monograph in a class of its own." Moreover, Turner has been widely acclaimed for his views on the processual nature of ritual, and his identification of the liminal phase in ritual was an important innovation in the anthropological study of religion and ritual. However, when Turner started discussing the liminoid, ritual and religion in industrial society, and the overall importance of communitas in the course of world history, his own personal convictions (he remained a devoted Catholic after his conversion) appear to have entered into his anthropological analysis. In the different manifestations of communitas, Turner came to see the operation of a meaningful and powerful human energy by which the tight nets of the social structure could be circumvented. In this way, Turner's work may be read as a plea for people to engage in communitas-inspired action and constantly to defy the social order by inverting, or even perverting, its structural demands. For so humane an endeavor, Turner, one of the leading authorities in a scientific enterprise, has been criticized for overestimating the powers of liminal and liminoid phenomena to challenge the social structure while paying insufficient attention to the ways in which the social structure may respond to and even neutralize these powers. For instance, Max Gluckman, one of Turner's former

6. See also the discussions on this issue by Obeyesekere (1986), Porter (1975), Ray (1977), and Schechner (1985).

teachers, has argued that Turner's distinction between structure and anti-structure is too rigid, and that communitas is significant only "within an established structure which is asserted again afterwards, and which indeed is asserted during the liminal period itself, by inversion" (Gluckman and Gluckman 1977:242). It can also be argued, following Erving Goffman (1961), that at least some marginal phenomena of the liminal and liminoid (like "total institutions") are not at all challenging to the wider social structure and involve no feeling of humankindness or communitas, but on the contrary offer an outlet for the social order and involve mechanisms of depersonalization ("mortification") by which the whole personality of the marginal individual is stripped off. Moreover, as Morris (1987:122) has argued, Turner may have failed to see the informal, egalitarian aspects in structured relationships and may have ignored the symbolic dimensions, informalities, and the humanly meaningful within the realm of structured relationships.

It seems that for Turner, as a pious Catholic, communitas in his later works became more a matter of faith than fact, and that he wanted to see communitas and religion everywhere leading to the day when, as Turner's former collaborator Richard Schechner (1985:198) explained, "each individual will love his/her neighbor as him/herself, and when abused, will be able to turn the other cheek." Turner's own religious experiences even led him to search for a physiological basis of communitas and religion in the structure of the human brain. Thus, there was a shift in Turner's work from anthropological analysis *sensu stricto* to philosophical belief, to an attempt to look for a new synthesis "not mainly between two scientific viewpoints [anthropology and physiology], but between science and faith" (Schechner 1985:203).

British Structuralism II: Structuralism and Beyond

In the previous sections, I have tried to demonstrate how there was considerable growth and development in Turner's anthropological approach to religion and ritual. Soon after Turner published his doctoral dissertation, he moved away from the narrow structuralist perspective of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute. This is exemplified first by his focus on ritual proper, which he undertook during his second period of fieldwork, and second by his emphasis on the processual nature of ritual, an innovation in his work introduced just before his departure to the United States. Turner's main theoretical advance was to show how rituals are more than just social glue for the maintenance of the social order, and how rituals are processes, not states, in the social world, which itself is "a world in becoming, not a world in being" (Turner 1974a:24).

Turner also went beyond classical British social anthropology by describing rituals as detailed case studies of ritual performances involving active symbolic manipulation. In this way, Turner wanted to bring in the "human coefficient," as he called it (Turner 1974a:33), and show how the social is not something over and above the individual, but how principles of social organization both affect and are manipulated by concrete individuals, i.e., how society and the individual come together. This is especially apparent in Turner's identification of the bipolarity of symbols. In identifying the sensory and the ideological poles of symbols, Turner contributed to reconciling sociological and psychological interpretations of ritual symbols. Here he was clearly influenced by the work of Sigmund Freud. According to Turner (1978; cf. Scharf 1979), during his second

period of fieldwork among the Ndembu he was directed towards the work of Freud because he was unable to link all ritual symbols or all different meanings of one single symbol to principles and conflicts of the social order. Through Freud, Turner discovered that symbols may refer not only to the social order, but also to physiological phenomena (bipolarity). Yet it should *not* be concluded that Turner was a Freudian, since this would deny the whole sociological side of Turner's approach (especially Turner's notion of field) and the distinctiveness of Freudian analysis with its emphasis on the individual, subconscious drive in ritual. Turner merely used Freud's concepts metaphorically and applied them analogously to ritual symbols directed toward a collectivity (and not to dream symbols at the level of the individual psyche, as did Freud). It was Freud's style of thinking, not his concepts and hypotheses, as Turner (1978:582) has acknowledged, that influenced Turner's work.

Finally, Turner went beyond British structuralism in stressing the inter-structural phase of liminality in ritual and the related notion of communitas. This meant a shift in his work away from the social-structural analyses characteristic of British social anthropology. Within the latter perspective, the Durkheimian argument largely prevails that ritual is a mere reflection and perpetuation of the principles of the social order (cf. Turner *in press*). Resonance of such an approach may be found in the work of Max Gluckman (1954; 1958) and in the writings of Mary Douglas (1966; 1975; 1978). Gluckman considered ritual performances as functional only for the maintenance of the political and social order: Rituals are integrative; they ensure the bonding of man to society. Mary Douglas, although sympathetic to Turner's work (cf. Douglas 1968; 1970), in a similar Durkheimian fashion, has referred to rituals as expressions "of society's awareness of its own configurations and necessities" (1975:54), and it is the main purpose of her symbolic studies to analyze the social-structural contexts in which ritual and other cultural performances take place, notably through an analysis of the dimensions "grid" and "group" (1978:77-92).

Turner, however, who was at first heavily influenced by British structuralism, in his later studies emphasized the culturally purposeful elements in rituals both among the Ndembu and in modern Western society. In this way, Turner's work comes closer, for instance, to that of Clifford Geertz. Although Geertz (1980) has criticized Turner for applying his mode of analysis too generally to rituals of all kinds, times, and places (thereby paying insufficient attention to the specifics of the locally meaningful context in which ritual forms of action take place), both scholars share a common interest in the humanly meaningful elements of ritual (away from society's functional requisites). Geertz (1973) has argued, in a manner similar to Turner's, and against functionalism, that culture (including symbolic ritual) is not just a derivative of the social structure, but refers to meaningful structures embodied in symbols, to "webs of significance" (Geertz 1973:5) that should be studied interpretatively. In Turner's ritual studies, we find more resemblance to such an interpretative approach, which is more characteristic of American cultural anthropology, than to British structuralism. Thus, Turner's change of perspective coincided perhaps not accidentally with his move to the United States, where he developed fully his approach on liminality in ritual and the liminoid of cultural performances in complex societies.

CONCLUSION

In this paper I have presented an outline and discussion of Victor Turner's approach to religion and ritual, pointing out the growth and evolution that his work underwent through the years. When Victor Turner died on 18 December 1983 in Charlottesville, he had developed a unique ritual approach stressing the processual nature of ritual among the Ndembu and of ritual activity in complex societies. During and after his life, Turner's work has found widespread admiration. Indicative of this are the many introductory reviews and general discussions of his work (Bouissac 1985; Collins 1976; Edwards 1972; Grimes 1976; Porter 1975; Seneviratne 1983) and the numerous instances in which his mode of analysis has been applied and discussed in such diverse fields as the anthropological study of pilgrimage (Da Matta 1979; Messerschmidt and Sharma 1981; Pace 1989; Sax 1990, the history of religion (Shorter 1972), medical anthropology (Devisch 1985), studies on popular culture (Lyons and Lyons 1985; Manning 1985; 1988; Salamone 1988; Trosset 1988), and, with increasing interest, theological studies (Arbuckle 1986; Gilhus 1984; Holmes 1973; 1977; McKenna 1976; Moore 1984; Nichols 1985; Perdue 1981; Senn 1982; Smits 1976; Worgul 1979). However, theoretically provocative discussions on Turner (which, for instance, the symbol analysis of Lévi-Strauss has come to enjoy) are rare. I believe this is partly due to the nature of Turner's writings. First, considerable shifts in his viewpoint may have prevented a thorough debate, and second, Turner's theoretical ideas, although presented with great accuracy, were scattered over a large number of essays. Turner has been praised for the ethnographic richness of his ritual analyses and for his theoretical innovations, but he cannot be applauded as a great systematizer. Turner's failure to treat his ideas systematically is evident from the multitude of labels with which his work has been characterized: It has been called "situational analysis" (Collins 1976), "symbolic action theory" (Holmes 1977), "the semantics of symbolism" (Gilsenan 1967), "comparative symbology" (Grimes 1976; Turner 1974b), "anti-structural social anthropology" (Blasi 1985), and "processual symbolic analysis" (Arbuckle 1986; Keyes 1976; Moore 1984; Saler 1979). In this paper, I have preferred to use the term "processual symbolic analysis," which Turner adopted from Keyes (1976), since it indicates the main advance of Turner's approach, namely his stress on the processes of both life and ritual.

Notwithstanding some of the criticisms mentioned earlier, Turner's most valuable contributions remain his conceptual apparatus, his distinct analytical mode of ritual analysis, and his application thereof in his Ndembu research. This last accomplishment is a major strength of his work. Turner's ethnographic descriptions of the Ndembu ritual complex are so rich in detail, his accounts so brilliantly written, that his monographs have continued to draw the attention of many readers through the years.

Turner also offered a fruitful set of tools to discover the meanings of ritual performances, and he suggested a useful complement to French structuralism in which ritual analyses are dominated by myth, speech, and thought analysis. Turner's approach takes into account not only what is said about ritual, but also the relationships among ritual performances, myth and religious belief; the manner in which ritual symbols are manipulated and handled by the ritual subjects; the meaning and efficacy of single ritual symbols as well as their relation to other symbols at all ritual stages; and the field-

contexts, both social and cultural, in which the symbols appear.

Finally, Turner's processual symbolic analysis was an important advance in anthropological research on ritual since, by its focus on ritual proper, it transgressed the traditional framework of British structuralist anthropology of the Manchester School (of which Turner himself was once an adept). We saw how this important innovation in Turner's work coincided with his rejection of Marxism and his conversion to Catholicism. It was Turner's notion of social drama (still very much a functionalist device) in combination with Van Gennep's influential work on rites of passage which, I believe, led Turner to analyze ritual not simply as a mechanism of redress, but as humanly meaningful cultural performances of an essentially processual nature. Ritual not only takes place within a social process but is itself processual. In his studies of the liminal phase in ritual, Turner showed that ritual is not just a response to society's needs but involves humanly meaningful action. In this way, Turner's mode of analysis has been an important alternative for often all too static social-structural analyses, and it may continue to stimulate research on ritual to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of ritual's role both in human thought and in action.

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