LIMINAL TO LIMINOID, IN PLAY, FLOW, AND RITUAL: AN ESSAY IN COMPARATIVE SYMBOLOGY

by Victor Turner

First I will describe what I mean by "comparative symbology" and how, in a broad way, it differs from such disciplines as "semiotics" (or "semiology") and "symbolic anthropology," which are also concerned with the study of such terms as symbols, signs, signals, significations, icons, signifiers, signi-fieds, sign-vehicles, and so on. Here, I want to discuss some of the types of sociocultural processes and settings in which new symbols, verbal and non-verbal, tend to be generated. This will lead me into a comparison of "liminal" and "liminoid" phenomena, terms which I will consider shortly.

According to Josiah Webster's lexicographical progeny, the people who produced the second College edition of Webster's New World Dictionary, "symbology" is "the study or interpretation of symbols"; it is also "repre-sentation or expression by means of symbols." The term "comparative" merely means that this branch of study involves comparison as a method, as does, for example, comparative linguistics. Comparative symbology is narrower than "semiotics" or "semiology" (to use Saussure's and Roland Barthes's terms), and wider than "symbolic anthropology" in range and scope of data and problems. "Semiotics" is "a general theory of signs and symbols, especially, the analysis of the nature and relationship of signs in language, usually including three branches, syntactics, semantics, and pragmatics."

1) *Syntactics*: The formal relationships of signs and symbols to one an-other apart from their users or external reference; the organization and relationship of groups, phrases, clauses, sentences, and sentence structure.

2) *Semantics*: The relationship of signs and symbols to the things to which they refer, that is, their referential meaning.

3) *Pragmatics*: The relations of signs and symbols with their users.

In my own analyses of ritual symbols, "syntactics" is roughly similar to what I call "positional meaning"; "semantics" is similar to "exegetical meaning"; and "pragmatics" is similar to "operational meaning." Semiology seems to have rather wider aspirations than semiotics, since it is defined as "the science of signs in general" whereas semiotics restricts itself to signs in language, though Roland Barthes is now taking the position that "lin-

Mr. Turner is Professor of Social Thought and of Anthropology at the University of Chicago.

guistics is not a part of the general science of signs . . . it is semiology which is a part of linguistics" (Barthes 1967:11).

Comparative symbology is not directly concerned with the *technical* aspects of linguistics, and has much to do with many kinds of nonverbal symbols in ritual and art, though admittedly all cultural languages have important linguistic components, relays, or "signifieds." Nevertheless, it *is* involved in the relationships between symbols and the concepts, feelings, values, notions, etc., associated with them by users, interpreters, or exegetes: in short it has *semantic* dimensions, it pertains to meaning in language and context. Its data are mainly drawn from *cultural genres* or *subsystems* of expressive culture. These include both oral and literate genres, and one may reckon among them *activities* combining verbal and nonverbal symbolic actions, such as ritual and drama, as well as *narrative* genres, such as myth, epic, ballad, the novel and ideological systems. They would also include nonverbal forms, such as miming, sculpture, painting, music, ballet, and architecture—and many more.

But comparative symbology does more than merely investigate cultural genres in abstraction from human social activity. It would become semiology if it did, whose corpus of data "must eliminate diachronic elements to the utmost" and coincide with a "state of the system, a cross-section of history" (Barthes, p. 98). When considering ritual data collected during my field-work among the Ndembu people of northwestern Zambia, I wrote that

> I could not analyse [these] ritual symbols without studying them in a time series in relation to other "events" [regarding the symbol, too, as an "event" rather than a "thing"], for symbols are essentially involved in social process [and, I would now add, in psychological processes, too]. I came to see performances of ritual as distinct phases in the social processes whereby groups became adjusted to internal changes [whether brought about by personal or factional dissensions and conflicts of norms or by technical or organizational innova-tions], and adapted to their external environment [social and cultural, as well as physical and biotic]. From this standpoint the ritual symbol becomes a factor in social action, a positive force in an activity field. Symbols, too, are crucially involved in situations of societal change—the symbol becomes associated with human interests, purposes, ends and means, aspirations and ideals, individual and collective, whether these are explicitly formulated or have to be inferred from the observed behavior. For these reasons, the structure and properties of a ritual symbol become those of a dynamic entity, at least within its appropriate context of action. (Turner 1967:20)

We shall take a closer look at some of these "properties" later. But I want to stress here that because *from the very outset* I formulate symbols as social and cultural dynamic systems, shedding and gathering meaning over time and altering in form, I cannot regard them merely as "terms" in atem-poral logical or protological cognitive systems. Undoubtedly, in the specialized genres of complex societies such as philosophical, theological, and formal logical systems, symbols, and the signs derived from their decomposition, do acquire this "algebraic" or logical quality, and can be treated effectively in relations of "binary opposition," as "mediators," and

the rest, denatured by the primacy of specialist cognitive activity. But "les symboles sauvages," as they appear not only in traditional, "tribal" cultures but also in the "cultural refreshment" genres (poetry, drama, and painting) of post-industrial society, have the character of dynamic semantic systems. They gain and lose meanings—and meaning in a social context always has emotional and volitional dimensions—as they "travel through" a *single* rite or work of art, let alone through centuries of performance, and they are aimed at producing effects on the psychological states and behavior of those exposed to them or obliged to use them for their communication with other human beings. I have always tried to link my work in processual analysis (for example, studies of the ongoing process of village politics in *Schism and Continuity*, 1957) with my work in the analysis of ritual performances.

This is perhaps why I have often focused on the study of *individual* symbols, on their semantic fields and processual fate as they move through the scenario of a specific ritual performance and reappear in other kinds of ritual, or even transfer from one genre to another, for example, from ritual to a myth-cycle, to an epic, to a fairy tale, to citation as a maxim in a case at law. Such a focus leaves the semantic future of each symbol, as it were, open-ended. In contrast, formal analysis of a total set of symbols assumed *a priori* to be a system or a *gestalt,* treated as closed, atemporal, and synchronic, a "corpus," or finite collection of materials, tends to emphasize a given symbol's formal properties and relations and to select from its wealth of meaning only that specific designation which makes it an appropriate term in some binary opposition, itself a relational building block of a bounded cognitive system. Binariness and arbitrariness tend to go together, and both are in the atemporal world of "signifiers." Such a treatment, while often seductively elegant, a *frisson* for our cognitive faculties, removes the total set of symbols from the complex, continuously changing social life, murky or glinting with desire and feeling, which is its distinctive milieu and context, and imparts to it a dualistic *rigor mortis.* Symbols, both as sensorily perceptible vehicles (*signifiants*) and as sets of "meanings" (*signifiés*), are essentially involved in multiple variability. Living, conscious, emotional, and volitional creatures employ them not only to give order to the universe they inhabit, but creatively to make use also of disorder, *both* by overcoming or reducing it in particular cases and by its means questioning former axiomatic principles that have become a fetter on the understanding and manipulation of contemporary things. For example, Rabelais's disorderly, scatological heaps of symbolic forms standing for the disorderly deeds and attributes of Gargantua and Pantagruel challenged the neatness of scholastic theological and philosophical systems—the result, paradoxically, was to blast away logically watertight obscurantism. When symbols are rigidified into logical operators and subordinated to implicit syntax-like rules, by some of our modern investigators, those of us who take them too seriously become blind to the creative or innovative potential of symbols as

factors in human action. Symbols may "instigate" such action and in situationally varying combinations channel its direction by saturating goals and means with affect and desire. Comparative symbology does attempt to preserve this ludic capacity, to catch symbols in their movement, so to speak, and to "play" with their possibilities of form and meaning. It does this by contextualizing symbols in the concrete, historical fields of their use by "men alive" as they act, react, transact, and interact socially. Even when the symbolic is the *inverse* of the pragmatic reality, it remains intimately in touch with it, affects and is affected by it, provides the positive figure with its negative ground, thereby delimiting each, and winning for "cosmos" a new territory.

Narrower in scope than semiotics, comparative symbology is wider than symbolic anthropology, for it proposes to take into account not only "ethnographic" materials, but also the symbolic genres of the so-called "advanced" civilizations, the complex, large-scale industrial societies. Undoubtedly, this broader perspective forces it to come to terms with the methods, theories, and findings of specialists and experts in many disciplines which most anthropologists know all too little about, such as history, literature, musicology, art history, theology, the history of religions, philosophy, and so on. Nevertheless, in making these attempts to study symbolic action in complex cultures, anthropologists, who now study symbols mainly in "tribal" or simple agrarian myth, ritual, and art, would be doing no more than returning to an honorable tradition of their predecessors. Durkheim and the *Année Sociologique* school, Kroeber, Redfield, and their successors, and Professor Singer, have examined cultural sub-systems in *"oikoumenes"* (literally "inhabited worlds," used by Kroeber to indicate civilizational complexes, such as Christendom, Islam, Indic and Chinese civilization, and the like) and Great Traditions.

In my own case, I was pressed towards the study of symbolic genres in *large*-scale societies by some implications of the work of Arnold van Gennep (which drew principally on the data of small-scale societies) in his *Rites de Passage,* first published in French in 1909. Although van Gennep himself seems to have intended that his term "rite of passage" should be used both for rituals accompanying the change in social status of an individual or a cohort of individuals, and for those associated with seasonal changes for an entire society, his book concentrates on the former type; and the term has come to be used almost exclusively in connection with these "life-crisis" rituals. I have tried to revert to van Gennep's earlier usage in regarding almost *all* types of rites as having the processual form of *"passage."* What does this term mean?

Van Gennep distinguishes three phases in a rite of passage: *separation, transition,* and *incorporation.* The first phase is *separation,* the phase which clearly demarcates sacred space and time from profane or secular space and

time (it is more than just a matter of entering a temple—there must be in addition a rite which changes the quality of *time* also, or constructs a cultural realm which is defined as "out of time," that is, beyond or outside the time which measures secular processes and routines). It includes symbolic behavior—especially symbols of reversal or inversion of secular things, relationships, and processes—which represents the detachment of the ritual subjects (novices, candidates, neophytes, or "initiands") from their previous social statuses. In the case of members of a society, it involves collectively moving from all that is socially and culturally involved in an agricultural season, or from a period of peace as against one of war, from plague to community health, from a previous sociocultural state or condition, to a new state or condition, a new turn of the seasonal wheel. During the intervening phase of *transition*, called by van Gennep "margin" or "limen" (meaning "threshold" in Latin), the ritual subjects pass through a period and area of ambiguity, a sort of social limbo which has few (though sometimes these are most crucial) of the attributes of either the preceding or subsequent profane social statuses or cultural states. We will look at this liminal phase much more closely later. The third phase, called by van Gennep "re-aggregation" or "incorporation," includes symbolic phenomena and actions which represent the return of the subjects to their new, relatively stable, well-defined position in the total society. For those undergoing life-cycle ritual this usually represents an enhanced status, a stage further along life's culturally prefabricated road. For those taking part in a calendrical or seasonal ritual, no change in status may be involved, but they have been ritually prepared for a whole series of changes in the nature of the cultural and ecological activities to be undertaken and of the relationships they will then have with others—all these holding good for a specific quadrant of the annual productive cycle. Many passage rites are irreversible (for the individual subjects) one-shot-only affairs, while calendrical rites are repeated every year by everyone; though, of course, one may attend the passage rites of one's kin or friends innumerable times, until one knows their form better than the initiands themselves—like the old ladies who "never miss a wedding" as compared with the nervous couple at their first marriage. I have argued that initiatory passage rites tend to "put people down" while some seasonal rites tend to "set people up"; that is, initiations humble people before permanently elevating them, while some seasonal rites (whose residues are carnivals and festivals) elevate those of low status transiently before returning them to their permanent humbleness. Van Gennep argued that the three phases of his schema varied in length and degree of elaboration in different kinds of passage: for example, "rites of separation are prominent in funeral ceremonies, rites of incorporation at marriages. *Transition* rites may play an important part, for instance, in pregnancy, betrothal, and initiation." The situation is further complicated by regional and ethnic differences which cut across typological ones.

Nevertheless, it is rare to find no trace of the three-part schema in "tribal" rituals.

The passage from one social status to another is often accompanied by a parallel passage in space, a geographical movement from one place to another. This may take the form of a mere opening of doors or the literal crossing of a threshold which separates two distinct areas, one associated with the subject's pre-ritual or preliminal status, and the other with his post-ritual or postliminal status. (The draft inductee's "two steps forward" may serve as a modern instance of a ritualized move into liminality.) On the other hand, the spatial passage may involve a long, exacting pilgrimage and the crossing of many national frontiers before the subject reaches his goal, the sacred shrine, where paraliturgical action may replicate in microcosm the three-part schema at the shrine itself. Sometimes this spatial symbolism may be the precursor of a real and permanent change of residence or geographical sphere of action. For example, a Nyakusa or Ndembu girl, after her puberty rites, leaves her natal village to dwell in her husband's; in certain hunting societies young boys live with their mothers until the time of their initiation rites into adulthood, after which they begin to live with the other hunters of the tribe. Perhaps something of this thinking persists in our own society, when, in large bureaucratic organizations on the national scale, such as the federal government, a major industrial corporation, or the university system, etc., promotion in status and salary usually involves movement in space from one city to another. This process is described by William Watson in *Closed Systems and Open Minds* as "spiralism." The "liminoid" phase between leaving one post and taking up another would repay study in terms of comparative symbology, both in regard to the subject (his dreams, fantasies, favorite reading and entertainment) and to those whom he is leaving and joining (their myths about him, treatment of him, and so on). But there will be more of this and of the distinction between "liminal" and "liminoid" later.

According to van Gennep, an extended liminal phase in the initiation rites of tribal societies is frequently marked by the physical separation of the ritual subjects from the rest of society. Thus in certain Australian, Melanesian, and African tribes, a boy undergoing initiation must spend a long period of time living in the bush, cut off from the normal social interactions within the village and household. Ritual symbols of this phase, though some represent inversion of normal reality, characteristically fall into two types: those of effacement and those of ambiguity or paradox. Hence, in many societies the liminal initiands are often considered to be dark, invisible, like a planet in eclipse or the moon between phases; they are stripped of names and clothing, smeared with the common earth, rendered indistinguishable from animals. They are also associated with life and death, male and female, food and excrement, simultaneously, since they are at once dying from or dead to their former status and life, and being born and

growing into new ones. Sharp symbolic inversion of social attributes may characterize separation; blurring and merging of distinctions may characterize liminality.

Thus, the ritual subjects in these rites undergo a "leveling" process, in which signs of their preliminal status are destroyed and signs of their liminal non-status are applied. I have mentioned certain indicators of their liminality (absence of clothing and names): other signs include not eating or not eating specified foods, disregard of personal appearance, the wearing of uniform clothing, sometimes irrespective of sex. In mid-transition the initiands are pushed as far toward uniformity, structural invisibility, and anonymity as possible.

By way of compensation, the initiands acquire a special kind of freedom, a "sacred power" of the meek, weak, and humble. As van Gennep elaborates:

> During the entire novitiate, the usual economic and legal ties are modified, sometimes broken altogether. The novices are outside society, and society has no power over them, especially since they are actually [in terms of indigenous beliefs] sacred and holy, and therefore untouchable and dangerous, just as gods would be. Thus, although taboos, as negative rites, erect a barrier between the novices and society, the society is helpless against the novices' undertakings. That is the explanation—the simplest in the world—for a fact that has been noted among a great many peoples and that has remained incomprehensible to observers. During the novitiate, the young people can steal and pillage at will or feed and adorn themselves at the expense of the community. (1960:114)

If only students in our culture were granted similar immunities concordant with their intellectually liminal situation!

The novices are, in fact, temporarily undefined, beyond the normative social structure. This weakens them, since they have no rights over others. But it also liberates them from structural obligations. It places them too in a close connection with asocial powers of life and death. Hence the frequent comparison of novices on the one hand with ghosts, gods, or ancestors, and on the other with animals or birds. They are dead to the social world, but alive to the asocial world. Many societies make a dichotomy, explicit or implicit, between sacred and profane, cosmos and chaos, order and disorder. In liminality, profane social relations may be discontinued, former rights and obligations are suspended, the social order may seem to have been turned upside down. By way of compensation, cosmological systems (as objects of serious study) may become of central importance for the novices. They are confronted by the elders, in rite, myth, song, instruction in a secret language, and various non-verbal symbolic genres (such as dancing, painting, clay-molding, wood-carving, masking, and the like), with symbolic patterns and structures which amount to teachings about the structure of the cosmos and their culture as a part and product of it, insofar as these are defined and comprehended, whether implicitly or explicitly. Liminality is a complex series of episodes in sacred space-time, and may also include subversive and ludic events. The factors of culture are

isolated, insofar as it is possible to do this with multivocal symbols (that is, with the aid of symbol-vehicles—sensorily perceptible forms) that are each susceptible not of a single but of many meanings. Then they may be re-combined in numerous, often grotesque ways, grotesque because they are arrayed in terms of possible rather than experienced combinations—thus a monster disguise may combine human, animal, and vegetable features in an "unnatural" way, while the same features may be differently, but equally "unnaturally" combined in a painting or described in a tale. In other words, in liminality people "play" with the elements of the familiar and defamiliarize them. Novelty emerges from unprecedented combinations of familiar ele-ments. In the 1972 American Anthropological Association Meetings in Toronto, Brian Sutton-Smith borrowed a term which I have applied to liminality (and other social phenomena and events), "anti-structure" (mean-ing dissolution of normative social structure, with its role-sets, statuses, jural rights and duties, and so on). He related it to a series of experimental studies he has been making of children's (and some adult) games both in tribal and industrial societies. Much of what he says, *mutatis mutandis,* can be transferred to the study of liminality in tribal ritual. He writes:

> The normative structure represents the working equilibrium, the anti-structure represents the latent system of potential alternatives from which novelty will arise when contingencies in the normative system require it. We might more correctly call this second system the *proto-structural* system [he says] because it is the precursor of innovative normative forms. It is the source of new culture. (Sutton-Smith 1972:18-19)

Sutton-Smith, who recently has been examining the continuum *order-disorder* in games (such as the children's ring-a-ring-a-roses), goes on to say that

> we may be disorderly in games [and, I would add, in the liminality of rituals, as well as in such "liminoid" phenomena as charivaris, fiestas, Halloween masking and mumming, etc.] either because we have an overdose of order, and want to let off steam [the "conservative" view of ritual disorder, such as ritual reversals, Saturnalia, and the like], or because we have something to *learn* through being disorderly. (1972:17)

What interests me most about Sutton-Smith's formulations is that he sees liminal and liminoid situations as the settings in which new symbols, models, and paradigms arise—as the seedbeds of cultural creativity in fact. These new symbols and constructions then feed back into the "central" economic and politico-legal domains and arenas, supplying them with goals, aspira-tions, incentives, structural models, and *raisons d'être.*

Some have argued that liminality, more specifically "liminal" phenomena such as myth and ritual in tribal society, is best characterized by the estab-lishment of "implicit syntax-like rules" or by "internal structures of logical relations of opposition and mediation between the discrete symbolic ele-ments" of the myth or ritual. Claude Lévi-Strauss would perhaps take this view. But to my mind it is the analysis of culture into factors and their free

or "ludic" recombination in any and every possible pattern, however weird, that is of the essence of liminality, liminality *par excellence*. This may be seen if one studies liminal phases of major rituals cross-culturally and cross-temporally. When implicit rules begin to appear which limit the possible combination of factors to certain conventional patterns, designs, or figurations, then, I think, we are seeing the intrusion of normative social structure into what is potentially and in principle a free and experimental region of culture, a region where not only new elements but also new combinatory rules may be introduced—far more readily than in the case of language. This capacity for variation and experiment becomes more clearly dominant in societies in which *leisure* is sharply demarcated from *work,* and especially in all societies which have been shaped by the Industrial Revolution. Various Lévi-Straussian models, such as the one dealing with metaphorical and oppositional logical relations and the transformation to humanity, from nature to culture, and the geometric model which utilizes two sets of oppositions in the construction of a "culinary triangle," raw/cooked:raw/rotten, seem to me to be applicable mainly to tribal or early agrarian societies where work and life tend to be governed by seasonal and ecological rhythms. The models apply in situations where the rules underlying the generation of cultural patterns tend to seek out the binary "Yin-Yang," forms suggested by simple "natural" oppositions, such as hot/cold, wet/dry, cultivated/wild, male/female, summer/winter, plenty/scarcity, and the like. The main social and cultural structures tend to become modeled on these cosmological principles, which determine even the layout of cities and villages, the design of houses, and the shape and spatial placement of different types of cultivated land. It is not surprising that liminality itself cannot escape the grip of these strong structuring principles. Only certain types of *children's* games and play are allowed some degree of freedom because these are defined as structurally "irrelevant," not "mattering." When children are initiated into the early grades of adulthood, however, variabilities and labilities of social behavior are drastically curtailed and controlled. Law, morality, ritual, even much of economic life, fall under the structuring influence of cosmological principles. The cosmos becomes a complex weave of "correspondences" based on analogy, metaphor, and metonymy. For example, the Dogon of West Africa, according to Marcel Griaule, Genevieve Calame-Griaule, and Germaine Dieterlen, establish a correspondence between the different categories of minerals and the organs of the body. The various soils are conceived of as the organs of "the interior of the stomach," rocks are regarded as the "bones" of the skeleton, and various hues of red clay are likened to "the blood" (see my discussion of Dogon cosmology, 1974:156-165). Similarly, in medieval China, different ways of painting trees and clouds are related to different cosmological principles.

Thus the symbols found in *rites de passage* in these societies, though subject to permutations and transformations of their relationships, are only

involved in these *within* relatively stable, cyclical, and repetitive systems. It is to these kinds of systems that the term "liminality" properly belongs. When used of processes, phenomena, and persons in large-scale complex societies, its use must in the main be metaphorical. That is, the word "liminality," used *primarily* of a phase in the processual structure of a *rite de passage,* is applied to other aspects of culture—here in societies of far greater scale and complexity. This brings me to a watershed division in comparative symbology. Failure to distinguish between symbolic systems and genres belonging to cultures which have developed before and after the Industrial Revolution can lead to much confusion both in theoretical treatment and in operational methodology.

Let me try to spell this out. Despite immense diversities within each camp, there still remains a fundamental distinction at the level of expressive culture between all societies before and all societies subsequent to the Industrial Revolution, including the industrializing Third World societies, which, though dominantly agrarian, nevertheless represent the granaries or playgrounds of metropolitan industrial societies.

Key concepts here are *work, play*, and *leisure*. Placing a different explanatory stress on each or any combination of these can influence how we think about symbolic manipulation sets, symbolic genres, in the types of societies we will consider. Each of these concepts is multivocal or multivalent, each has many designations. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, "work" means:

> (1) expenditure of energy, striving, application of effort to some purpose [this fits fairly well with Webster's primary sense: "physical or mental effort exerted to do or to make something; purposeful activity; labor; toil"]; (2) task to be undertaken, materials to be used in task; (3) thing done, achievement, thing made, book or piece of literary or musical composition [note this application of "work" to the genres of the leisure domain], *meritorious act* as opposed to faith or grace; (4) doings or experiences of *specified* kind, e.g., sharp, bloody, thirsty, wild, dry, etc., *work* [work often has this focused, singular capacity]; (5) *employment,* especially the opportunity of earning money by labour, laborious occupation; (6) ordinary, practical (as in *workaday*), etc. [where it has resonances with secular, profane, pragmatic, and so on].

Now in "tribal," "preliterate," "simpler," "small-scale" societies, the types studied by anthropologists, ritual, and to some extent, myth, are regarded as "work" precisely in this sense, what the Tikopia call "the *work* of the Gods." Ancient Hindu society also posits a "divine work." In the third chapter of the *Bhagavadgita* (v.14-15) we find a connection made between sacrifice and work: "From food do all contingent beings derive, and food derives from rain; rain derives from sacrifice and sacrifice from *work.* From Brahman work arises." Nikhilananda (1952:110) comments that "work" (action) here refers to the sacrifice prescribed in the Vedas, which prescribes for "householders" sacrifice or work. The Ndembu call that which a ritual specialist does *kuzata,* "work," and the same general term is applied to what a hunter, a cultivator, a headman, and, today, a manual laborer,

do. Even in fairly complex agrarian societies associated with "city-state" or "feudal" polities, well within the scope of historical documentation, we find terms like *liturgy* which in pre-Christian Greece early became established as "public service to the gods." *Liturgy* is derived from the Greek *leos* or *laos*, "the people," and *ergon*, "work" (cognate with Old English *weorc*, German *werk*, from the Indo-European base, *werĝ-*, "to do, act." The Greek *organon*, "tool, instrument" derives from the same base—orginally *worganon*). The work of men is thus the work of the Gods, a conclusion which would have delighted Durkheim, though it could be construed as implying a fundamental distinction between gods and men, since men co-operated in ritual the better to enter into reciprocal, exchange relations with the gods or with God—it was not simply that "the voice of the congregation was the voice of God." A difference was construed between creator and created. Whatever may have been the empirical case, what we are seeing here is a universe of work, an *ergon-* or *organic* universe, in which the main distinction is between sacred and profane *work*, not between work and leisure. For example, Samuel Beal comments in his *Travels of Fah-Hian and Sung-Yun, Buddhist Pilgrims from China to India (400 A.D. and 518 A.D.)* (1964:5) on Chi Fah-Hian's use of the term *Shaman,* as follows: "The Chinese word Shaman represents phonetically the Sanscrit 'Sramana,' or the Pali 'Samana.' The Chinese word is defined to mean 'diligent and laborious' . . . . The Sanscrit root is 'sram,' to be fatigued." (He was referring to the people of Shen-Shen, in the desert of Makhai, part of the Gobi desert region.) It is, furthermore, a universe of work in which whole communities participate, as of obligation, not optation. The *whole* community goes through the *entire* ritual round, whether in terms of total or representative participation. Thus, some rites, such as those of sowing, first fruits, or harvest, may involve everyone, man, woman, and child, others may be focused on specific groups, categories, associations, etc., such as men *or* women, old *or* young, one clan *or* another, one association or secret society or another. Yet the whole ritual round adds up to the total participation of the whole community. Sooner or later, no one is exempt from ritual duty, just as no one is exempt from economic, legal, or political duty. Communal participation, obligation, the passage of the whole society through crises, collective and individual, directly or by proxy, are the hallmarks of "the work of the gods" and sacred human work. Without it profane human work would be, for the community, impossible to conceive, though, no doubt, as history has cruelly demonstrated to those conquered by industrial societies, possible to live, or, at least, exist through.

Yet it can be argued that this "work" is not work, as we in industrial societies know it, but has in both its dimensions, sacred and profane, an element of "play." Insofar as the community and its individual members regard themselves as the masters or "owners" of ritual and liturgy, or as representatives of the ancestors and gods who ultimately "own" them, they

have authority to introduce, under certain culturally determined conditions, elements of novelty from time to time into the socially inherited deposit of ritual customs. Liminality, the seclusion period, is a phase peculiarly conducive to such "ludic" invention. Perhaps it would be better to regard the distinction between "work" and "play," or better between "work" and "leisure" (which includes but exceeds play *sui generis*), as itself an artifact of the Industrial Revolution, and to see such symbolic-expressive genres as ritual and myth as being at once "work" and "play" or at least as cultural activities in which work and play are intricately intercalated. Yet it often happens that the historically *later* can throw light on the *earlier*, especially when there is a demonstrable sociogenetic connection between them. For there are undoubtedly "ludic" aspects in "tribal," etc., culture, especially in the liminal periods of protracted initiation or calendrically based rituals. Such would include joking relationships, sacred games, such as the ball games of the ancient Maya and modern Cherokee, riddles, mock-ordeals, holy fooling and clowning, Trickster tales told in liminal times and places (in or out of ritual contexts), and a host of other types.

The point is, though, that these "play" or "ludic" aspects of tribal and agrarian ritual and myth are, as Durkheim says, "de la vie sérieuse," that is, they are intrinsically connected with the "work" of the collectivity in performing symbolic actions and manipulating symbolic objects so as to promote and increase fertility of men, crops, and animals, domestic and wild, to cure illness, to avert plague, to obtain success in raiding, to turn boys into men and girls into women, to make chiefs out of commoners, to transform ordinary people into shamans and shamanins, to "cool" those "hot" from the warpath, to ensure the proper succession of seasons and the hunting and agricultural responses of human beings to them, and so forth. Thus the play is in earnest, and has to be within bounds. For example, in the Ndembu Twin Ritual, *Wubwang'u*, described in *The Ritual Process*, in one episode women and men abuse one another verbally in a highly sexual and jocose way. Much personal inventiveness goes into the invective, though much is also stylized. Nevertheless, this ludic behavior is pressed into the service of the ultimate aim of the ritual—to produce healthy offspring, but not *too many* healthy offspring at once. Abundance is good, but reckless abundance is a foolish joke. "Enough's enough, but this is ridiculous!" Hence cross-sexual joking both maintains reasonable fertility and restrains unreasonable fecundity. Joking is fun, but it is also a social sanction. Even joking must observe the "golden mean," which is an ethical feature of "cyclical, repetitive societies," not as yet unbalanced by innovative ideas and technical changes.

Technical innovations are the products of ideas, the products of what I will call the "liminoid" (the "-oid" here, as in aster*oid*, star*like*, ov*oid*, egg-*shaped*, etc., derives from Greek *-eidos*, a form, shape, and means "like, resembling"; "liminoid" *resembles* without being identical with "liminal")

and what Marx assigned to a domain he called "the *super*structural"—I would prefer to talk about the "anti-," "meta-," or "*proto*structural." "Superstructural," for Marx, has the connotation of a distorted mirroring of the "structural," which is, in his terms, the constellation of productive relations, both in cohesion and conflict. On the contrary, I would see the "liminoid" as an independent and critical source—like Marx's own liminoid "works." Here we will observe how "liminoid" actions of industrial leisure genres can repossess the character of "work" though originating in a "free-time" arbitrarily separated by managerial fiat from the time of "labor"—and how the liminoid can be an independent domain of creative activity, not simply a distorted mirror-image, mask, or cloak for structural activity in the "centers" or "mainstreams" of "productive social labor." This is to identify liminoid productions with apologia for the political status quo. "Anti-structure," in fact, can generate and store a plurality of alternative models for living, from utopias to programs, which are capable of influencing the behavior of those in mainstream social and political roles (whether authoritative or dependent, in control or rebelling against it) in the direction of radical change. As scientists we are interested in demarcating a domain, not in taking sides with one or other of the groups or categories which operate within it. Experimental and theoretical science itself is "liminoid" —it takes place in "neutral spaces" or privileged areas (laboratories and studies) set aside from the mainstream of productive events. Universities, institutes, colleges, etc., are "liminoid" settings for all kinds of freewheeling, experimental cognitive behavior as well as forms of symbolic action, resembling some found in tribal society ("rushing" and "pledging" ceremonies, for example!).

But let us look more closely at this notion of the "liminoid," and try to distinguish it from the "liminal." To do this properly, we have to examine the notion of "play." Etymology does not tell us too much about its meaning. We learn that the word "play" is derived from OE *plegan*, "to exercise oneself, move briskly," and that the Middle Dutch *pleyen,* "to dance," is a cognate term. Walter Skeat, in his *Concise Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* (p. 355) suggests that the Anglo-Saxon *plega,* "a game, sport," is also (commonly) "a fight, a battle." He considers, too, that the Anglo-Saxon terms are borrowed from the Latin *plaga,* "a stroke." Even if the idea of a "danced-out or ritualized fight" gets into subsequent denotations of "play," this multi-vocal concept has its own historical destiny.

For *Webster's Dictionary, play* is:

(1) action, motion, or activity, esp. when free, rapid, or light (e.g., the *play* of muscles) [here, as so often, "play" is conceived of as "light" as against the "heaviness" of "work," "free" as against work's "necessary" or "obligatory" character, "rapid" as against the careful, reflected-upon style of work routines]; (2) freedom or scope for motion or action; (3) activity engaged in for amusement or recreation [here, again, we are verging on the notion of activities disengaged from necessity or obligation]; (4) fun, joking (to do a thing in *play*) [emphasizing the *non*-serious character of certain types of modern play]; (5) (a)

the playing of a game, (b) the way or technique of playing a game [here reintroducing the notion that play might be work, might be serious within its non-serious dimension, and raising the problem of what are the conditions under which "fun" becomes "technique" and rule-governed]; (6) (a) a maneuver, move, or act in a game (e.g., the "wishbone" or "T" offensive formation in American football or a specific brilliant move by a team or individual), (b) a turn at playing (e.g., "there's one play left in the game"); (7) the act of gambling [and here we may think of the "gambling" character of divination in tribal and even in feudal society, and, of course, the very word "gamble" is derived from OE *gamenian*, "to play" akin to the German dialect term *gammeln*, "to sport, make merry"]; (8) a dramatic composition or performance; drama, "the play's the thing" [clearly this term preserves something of the earlier sense of "fight, battle" as well as those of "recreation," "technique," and "turns (i.e., acts, scenes, etc.) at playing"]; (9) sexual activity, dalliance.

Here again we can see a shift from the meaning of sex as procreative "work," (a persistent meaning in tribal and feudal societies) to the division of sexual activity into "play" or "foreplay," and the "serious" business or "work" of begetting progeny. Post-industrial birth control techniques make this division practically realizable, and themselves exemplify the division between work and play brought about by modern systems of production and thought, both "objectively," in the domain of culture, and "subjectively" in the individual conscience and consciousness. The distinction between "subjective" and "objective" is itself an artifact of the sundering of work and play. For "work" is held to be the realm of the rational adaptation of means to ends, of "objectivity," while "play" is thought of as divorced from this essentially "objective" realm, and, insofar as it is its inverse, being "subjective," free from external constraints, where any and every combination of variables can be "played" with. Indeed, Jean Piaget, who has done most to study the developmental psychology of play, regards it as "a kind of free assimilation, without accommodation to spatial conditions or to the significance of the objects" (1962:86).

In the liminal phases and states of tribal and agrarian cultures—in ritual, myth, and legal processes—work and play are hardly distinguishable in many cases. Thus, in Vedic India, according to Alain Danielou (1964:144), the "gods [*sura* and *deva*, who are objects of serious sacrificial ritual] play. The rise, duration and destruction of the world is their game." Ritual is both earnest and playful. As Milton Singer has pointed out (1972:160), the "Krishna dance" in an urban *bhajana* program (group hymn singing) is called *lila*, "sports," in which the participants "play" at being the "Gopis" or milkmaids who "sport" in a variety of ways with Krishna, Vishnu incarnate, reliving the myth. But the *Gopi*'s erotic love-play with Krishna has mystical implications, like the *Song of Solomon*—it is at once serious and playful, God's "sport" with the human soul.

Now let us consider the clear division between *work* and *leisure* which modern industry has produced, and how this has affected all symbolic genres, from ritual to games and literature. Joffre Dumazedier, of the Centre d'Etudes Sociologiques (Paris), is not the only authority who holds

that leisure "has certain traits that are characteristic only of the civilization born from the industrial revolution" (1968; see also 1962). But he puts the case very pithily and I am beholden to his argument. Dumazedier dismisses the view that leisure has existed in all societies at all times. In archaic and tribal societies, he maintains, "work and play alike formed part of the ritual by which men sought communion with the ancestral spirits. Religious festivals embodied both work and play" (1968:248). Yet religious specialists such as shamans and medicine-men did not constitute a "leisure-class" in Veblen's sense, since they performed religious or magical functions for the whole community (and, as we have seen, shamanism is a "diligent and laborious" profession). Similarly, in the agricultural societies of recorded history,

> the working year followed a timetable written in the very passage of the days and sea-sons: in good weather work was hard, in bad weather it slackened off. Work of this kind had a natural rhythm to it, punctuated by rests, songs, games, and ceremonies; it was synonymous with the daily round, and in some regions began at sunrise, to finish only at sunset . . . the cycle of the year was also marked by a whole series of sabbaths and feast days. The sabbath belonged to religion; feast days, however, were often occasions for a great investment of energy (not to mention food) and constituted the obverse or opposite of everyday life [often characterized by symbolic inversion and status reversal]. But the ceremonial [or ritual] aspect of these celebrations could not be disregarded; they stemmed from religion [defined as sacred *work*], not leisure [as we think of it today]. . . . They were imposed by religious requirements . . . [and] the major European civilizations knew more than 150 workless days a year. (1968:249)

Sebastian de Grazia has recently argued (1962) that the origins of leisure can be traced to the way of life enjoyed by certain aristocratic classes in the course of Western civilization. Dumazedier disagrees, pointing out that the idle state of Greek philosophers and sixteenth century gentry cannot be defined *in relation to* work, but rather *replaces work altogether*. Work is done by slaves, peasants, or servants. True leisure exists only when it complements or rewards work. This is not to say that many of the refine-ments of human culture did not come from this aristocratic idleness. Dumazedier thinks that it is significant that the Greek word for having nothing to do (*schole*) also meant "school." "The courtiers of Europe, after the end of the Middle Ages, both invented and extolled the ideal of the humanist and the gentleman" (1968:249).

"Leisure," then, presupposes "work": it is a non-work, even an anti-work phase in the life of a person who also works. If we were to indulge in termi-nological neophily, we might call it *anergic* as against *ergic*! Leisure arises, says Dumazedier, under two conditions. First, society ceases to govern its activities by means of common ritual obligations: some activities, including work and leisure, become, at least in theory, *subject to individual choice*. Secondly, the work by which a person earns his or her living is "set apart from his other activities: its limits are no longer *natural* [my italics] but

arbitrary—indeed, it is organized in so definite a fashion that it can easily be separated, both in theory and in practice, from his free time" (1968:249). It is only in the social life of industrial and postindustrial civilizations that we find these necessary conditions. Other social theorists, both radical and conservative, have pointed out that leisure is the product of industrialized, rationalized, bureaucratized, large-scale socioeconomic systems with arbitrary rather than natural delimitation of "work" from "free time" or "time out." Work is now organized by industry so as to be separated from "free time," which includes, in addition to leisure, attendance to such personal needs as eating, sleeping, and caring for one's health and appearance, as well as familial, social, civic, political, and religious obligations (which would have fallen within the domain of the work-play continuum in tribal society). Leisure is predominantly an urban phenomenon, so that when the concept of leisure begins to penetrate rural societies, it is because agricultural labor is tending towards an industrial, "rationalized" mode of organization, and because rural life is becoming permeated by the urban values of industrialization. This holds good for the "Third World" today as well as for the rural hinterlands of long-established industrial societies.

Leisure-time is associated with two types of freedom, "freedom-from" and "freedom-to," to advert to Isiah Berlin's famous distinction. 1) It represents *freedom from* a whole heap of institutional obligations prescribed by the basic forms of social, particularly technological and bureaucratic, organization. 2) For each individual, it means *freedom from* the forced, chronologically regulated rhythms of factory and office and a chance to recuperate and enjoy natural, biological rhythms again.

Leisure is also 1) *freedom to* enter, even to generate new symbolic worlds of entertainment, sports, games, diversions of all kinds. It is, furthermore, 2) *freedom to* transcend social structural limitations, freedom to *play*—with ideas, with fantasies, with words (from Rabelais to Joyce and Samuel Beckett), with paint (from the Impressionists to Action Painting and Art Nouveau), and with social relationships—in friendship, sensitivity training, psychodramas, and in other ways. Here far more than in tribal or agrarian rites and ceremonies, the ludic and the experimental are stressed. In complex, organic-solidary societies, there are obviously many more options; games of skill, strength, and chance can serve as models for future behavior or models of past work experience—now viewed as release from work's necessities and as something one chooses to do. Sports such as football, games such as chess, recreations such as mountaineering can be hard and exacting and governed by rules and routines even more stringent than those of the work situation, but, since they are optional, they are part of an individual's freedom, of his growing self-mastery, even self-transcendence. Hence they are imbued more thoroughly with pleasure than those many types of industrial work in which men are alienated from the fruits and results of their labor. Leisure is potentially capable of releasing creative

powers, individual or communal, either to criticize or buttress the dominant social structural values.

It is certain that no one is committed to a true leisure activity by material need or by moral or legal obligations, as is the case with the activities of getting an education, earning a living, or participating in civic or religious ceremonies. Even when there is effort, as in competitive sport, that effort— and the discipline of training—is chosen voluntarily, in the expectation of an enjoyment that is disinterested, is unmotivated by gain, and has no utilitarian or ideological purpose.

But if this is ideally the spirit of leisure, the cultural reality of leisure is obviously influenced by the domain of work from which it has been split by the wedge of industrial organization. Work and leisure interact, each individual participates in both realms, and the modes of work organization affect the styles of leisure pursuits. Let us consider the case of those mainly Northern European and North American societies whose preliminary industrialization was accompanied and infused with the spirit of what Max Weber has called "the Protestant Ethic." This ethical milieu, or set of values and beliefs, which Weber thought was an auspicious condition for the growth of modern, rational capitalism, in my view produced effects in the *leisure* domain quite as far-reaching as in that of work. As everyone now knows, Weber argued that John Calvin and other Protestant reformers taught that salvation is a pure gift from God and cannot be earned or merited by a being so thoroughly depraved in his nature since the Fall of Adam as man. In its extreme form, Predestination, this meant that no one could be certain of being saved, or indeed of being damned. This threatened seriously to undermine individual morale, and a get-out clause evolved at the level of popular culture, though it could not be made theologically watertight. This was that he who is in God's grace and (invisibly) among the elect by God's foreordaining does actually manifest in his behavior systematic self-control and obedience to the will of God. By these outward signs it may be known to others and he can reassure himself that he is among the elect, and will not suffer eternal damnation with the reprobate. But the Calvinist is never finally certain that he will be saved and thus dedicates himself to an incessant examination of the conditions of his inward soul and outward life for evident indications of the work of salvific grace. In a sense, what was in cultural history previously the social "work of the Gods," the calendrical, liturgical round, or, rather, its penances and ordeals, not its festive rewards, became "internalized" as the systematic, non-ludic "work" of the individual's conscience.

Calvinist emphasis was also on the notion of one's calling in life, one's vocation. As against the Catholic notion of "vocation" as the call to a religious life, by vows of chastity, obedience, and poverty, the Calvinist held that it was precisely a person's worldly occupation that must be regarded as the sphere in which he was to serve God through his dedication to his

work. Work and leisure were made separate spheres, and "work" became sacred *de facto*, as the arena in which one's salvation might be objectively demonstrated. Thus, the man of property was to act as a steward of worldly goods, like Joseph in Egypt. He was to use them not for sinful luxury, but to better the moral condition of himself, his family, and his employees. "Betterment" implied self-discipline, self-examination, hard work, dedication to one's duty and calling, and an insistence that those under one's authority should do the same. Wherever the Calvinist aspiration to theocracy became influential, as in Geneva or in the transient dominance of English Puritanism, legislation was introduced to force men to better their spiritual state through thrift and hard work. For example, English Puritanism affected not only religious worship by its attack on "ritualism," but also reduced "ceremonial" ("secular" ritual) to a minimum in many other fields of activity, including drama, which it stigmatized as "mummery." The Act making stage performances illegal cut twenty-odd years from the performance of Jonson's plays. Among the targets of such legislation were, significantly, genres of leisure entertainment which had developed in aristocratic or mercantilist circles in the proto-industrializing period, such as theatrical productions, masques, pageants, musical performances, and, of course, the popular genres of carnivals, festivals, charivaris, ballad singing, and miracle plays. These represented the "ludic" face of the work-play continuum that had formerly caught up the whole of society into a single process moving through sacred and profane, solemn and festive, phases in the seasonal round. The Calvinists wanted "no more cakes and ale"—or other festival foods that belonged to the work and play of the gods. They wanted ascetic dedication to the mainline economic enterprise, the sanctification of what was formerly mostly profane, or, at least, *subordinated to* and ancillary to the sacred cosmological paradigms. Weber argues that when the religious motivations of Calvinism were lost after a few generations of worldly success, the focus on self-examination, self-discipline, and hard work in one's calling even when secularized continued to promote the ascetic dedication to systematic profits, reinvestment of earnings, and thrift, which were the hallmarks of nascent capitalism.

Something of this systematic, vocational character of the Protestant ethic came to tinge even the entertainment genres of industrial leisure. To coin a term, even leisure became "ergic," "of the nature of work," rather than "ludic," "of the nature of play." Thus we have a *serious* division of *labor* in the *entertainment* business: acting, dancing, singing, art, writing, composing, and so on, become professionalized "vocations." Educational institutions prepare actors, dancers, singers, painters, and authors for their "careers." At a higher level, there grew up in the late eighteenth and especially in the nineteenth centuries the notion of "art" itself, in its various modalities, as a quasi-religious vocation, with its own asceticism and total dedication, from William Blake, through Kierkegaard, Baudelaire, Ler-

montov, and Rimbaud, to Cézanne, Proust, Rilke, and Joyce, not to mention Beethoven, Mahler, Sibelius, and so forth.

Another aspect of this influence of the Protestant ethic on leisure is in the realm of play itself. As Edward Norbeck has recently said:

> America's forefathers believed strongly in the set of values known as the Protestant ethic. Devotion to work was a Christian virtue; and play, the enemy of work, was reluctantly and charily permitted only to children. Even now, these values are far from extinct in our nation, and the old admonition that play is the devil's handiwork continues to live in secular thought. Although play has now become almost respectable, it is still something in which we "indulge" (as in sexual acts), a form of moral laxness. (1971)

Organized sport ("pedagogic" play) better fits the Puritan tradition than unorganized children's play ("pediarchic" play) or mere dalliance, which is time wasted.

Nevertheless, modern industrial or post-industrial societies have shed many of these anti-leisure attitudes. Technological development, political and industrial organization by workers, action by liberal employers, revolutions in many parts of the world, have had the cumulative effect of bringing more leisure into the "free-time" of industrial cultures. In this leisure symbolic genres, both of the entertainment and instructive sorts, have proliferated. In my book *The Ritual Process,* I have spoken of some of these as "liminal" phenomena. In view of what I have just said, is liminality an adequate label for this set of symbolic activities and forms? Clearly, there are some respects in which these "anergic" genres share characteristics with the "ludergic" rituals and myths (if we contrast the Hindu and Judaic ritual style) of archaic, tribal, and early agrarian cultures. Leisure can be conceived of as a betwixt-and-between, a neither-this-nor-that domain between two spells of work or between occupational and familial and civic activity. Leisure is etymologically derived from Old French *leisir,* which itself derives from Latin *licere,* "to be permitted." Interestingly enough, it ultimately comes from the Indo-European base **leik-,* "to offer for sale, bargain," referring to the "liminal" sphere of the market, with its implications of choice, variation, contract—a sphere that has connections, in archaic and tribal religions, with Trickster deities such as Elegba, Eshu, and Hermes. Exchange is more "liminal" than production. Just as when tribesmen make masks, disguise themselves as monsters, heap up disparate ritual symbols, invert or parody profane reality in myths and folk-tales, so do the genres of industrial leisure, the theater, poetry, novel, ballet, film, sport, rock music, classical music, art, pop art, and so on, *play* with the factors of culture, sometimes assembling them in random, grotesque, improbable, surprising, shocking, usually experimental combinations. But they do this in a much more complicated way than in the liminality of tribal initiations. They multiply specialized genres of artistic and popular entertainments, mass culture, pop culture, folk culture, high culture, counterculture, underground culture, etc., as against the relatively limited symbolic genres of "tribal" society, and within each they allow lavish scope to

authors, poets, dramatists, painters, sculptors, composers, musicians, actors, comedians, folksingers, rock musicians, "makers" generally, to generate not only weird forms, but also, and not infrequently, models, direct and parabolic or aesopian, that are highly critical of the status quo as a whole or in part. Of course, given *diversity* as a *principle,* many artists, in many genres, also buttress, reinforce, and justify the prevailing social and cultural mores and political orders. Those that do so, do so in ways that tend more closely than the *critical* productions to parallel tribal myths and rituals— they are "liminal" or "pseudo-" or "post-" "liminal," rather than "liminoid." Satire is a conservative genre because it is *pseudo-liminal.* Satire exposes, attacks, or derides what it considers to be vices, follies, stupidities, or abuses, but its criteria of judgment are usually the normative structural frame of values. Hence satirical works, like those of Swift, Castlereagh, or Evelyn Waugh, often have a "ritual of reversal" form, indicating that disorder is no permanent substitution for order. A mirror inverts but also reflects an object. It does not break it down into constituents in order to remold it, far less does it annihilate and replace that object. But art and literature often do. The *liminal* phases of tribal society invert but do not usually subvert the status quo, the structural form, of society; reversal underlines that chaos is the alternative to cosmos, so they had better stick to cosmos, that is, the traditional order of culture—though they can for a brief while have a heck of a good time being chaotic, in some saturnalian or lupercalian revelry, some charivari, or institutionalized orgy. But supposedly "entertainment" genres of industrial society are often *subversive,* lampooning, burlesquing, or subtly putting down the central values of the basic, work-sphere society, or at least of selected sectors of that society. Some of these genres, such as the "legitimate" or "classical" theater, are historically continuous with ritual, and possess something of the sacred seriousness, even the *"rites de passage"* structure of their antecedents. Nevertheless, crucial differences separate the structure, function, style, scope, and symbology of the liminal in "tribal and agrarian ritual and myth" from what we may perhaps call the "liminoid," or leisure genres, of symbolic forms and action in complex, industrial societies.

The term *limen* itself, the Latin for "threshold," selected by van Gennep to apply to "transition between," appears to be negative in connotation, since it is no longer the positive past condition nor yet the positive articulated future condition. It seems, too, to be passive since it is dependent on the articulated, positive conditions it mediates. Yet on probing, one finds in liminality both positive and active qualities, especially where that "threshold" is protracted and becomes a "tunnel," when the "liminal" becomes the "cunicular"; this is particularly the case in initiation rituals, with their long periods of seclusion and training of novices rich in the deployment of symbolic forms and esoteric teachings. "Meaning" in culture tends to be *generated* at the interfaces between established cultural sub-systems, though

meanings are then institutionalized and consolidated at the centers of such systems. Liminality is a temporal interface whose properties partially invert those of the already consolidated order which constitutes any specific cultural "cosmos." It may be useful heuristically to consider in relation to liminality in ritual/myth Durkheim's overall characterization of "mechanical solidarity," which he regarded as that type of cohesion plus cooperative, collective action directed towards the achievement of group goals which best applies to small, nonliterate societies with a simple division of labor and very little tolerance of individuality. He based this type of solidarity on a *homogeneity* of values and behavior, strong social constraint, and loyalty to tradition and kinship. The rules for togetherness are known and shared. Now what frequently typifies the liminality of initiation ritual in societies with mechanical solidarity is precisely the opposite of this: ordeals, myths, maskings, mumming, the presentation of sacred icons to novices, secret languages, food and behavioral taboos, create a weird domain in the seclusion camp in which ordinary regularities of kinship, the residential setting, tribal law and custom are set aside. The bizarre becomes the normal, and through the loosening of connections between elements customarily bound together in certain combinations, their scrambling and recombining in monstrous, fantastic, and unnatural shapes, the novices are induced to think (and think hard) about cultural experiences they had hitherto taken for granted. The novices are taught that they did not know what they thought they knew. Beneath the surface structure of custom was a deep structure, whose rules they had to learn, through paradox and shock. In some ways social constraints become stronger, even unnaturally and irrationally stronger, as when the novices are compelled by their elders to undertake what in their minds are unnecessary tasks by arbitrary fiat, and are punished severely if they fail to obey promptly—and, what is worse, even if they succeed. But in other ways, as in the case cited earlier from van Gennep's *Rites de Passage*, the novices also are conceded unprecedented freedoms: they make raids and swoops on villages and gardens, seize women, vituperate older people. Innumerable are the forms of topsy-turvydom, parody, abrogation of the normative system, exaggeration of rule into caricature or satirizing of rule. The novices are at once put outside and inside the circle of the previously known. But one thing must be kept in mind: *all* these acts and symbols are of *obligation*. Even the *breaking* of rules *has* to be done during initiation. This is one of the distinctive ways in which the liminal is marked off from the liminoid. In the 1972 American Anthropological Association Meetings in Toronto, several examples were cited— among them, carnival in St. Vincent in the West Indies, and the La Have Islands, Nova Scotia (Abrahams and Bauman, 1972)—from modern societies on the fringe of industrial civilizations which bore some resemblance to liminal inversions in tribal societies. But what was striking to me was how even in these "outback" regions *optionality* dominated the whole

process. For example, when the masked mummers of La Have, usually older boys and young married men, known as "belsnicklers," emerge on Christmas Eve to entertain, tease, and fool adults, and to frighten children, they knock at house doors and windows, asking to be "allowed" entrance. Some householders actually refuse to let them in. Now I cannot imagine a situation in which Ndembu, Luvale, Chokwe, or Luchazi masked dancers (peoples I have known and observed), who emerge after the performance of a certain ritual, marking the end of one half of the seclusion period and the beginning of another, to dance in villages and threaten women and children, would be refused entry. Nor do they ask permission to enter; they storm in! Belsnicklers have to "ask for" treats from householders. *Makishi* (maskers) among Ndembu, Chokwe, etc., demand food and gifts as of right. Optation pervades the liminoid phenomenon, obligation the liminal. One is all play and choice, an entertainment, the other is a matter of deep seriousness, even dread, it is demanding, compulsory (though, indeed, fear provokes nervous laughter from the women, who, if they are touched by the *makishi,* are believed to contract leprosy, become sterile, or go mad!). Again, in St. Vincent, only *certain types* of personalities are attracted to the Carnival as performers, those whom Roger Abrahams describes as "the rude and sporty segment of the community," who are "rude and sporty" *whenever* they have an opportunity to be so, all the year round—hence they can most aptly personify "disorder" versus "order" at the Carnival. Here, again, optation is evidently dominant—for people do not *have to* act invertedly, as in tribal rituals; some people, but not *all* people, *choose* to act invertedly at Carnival. And Carnival is unlike a tribal ritual in that it can be attended *or* avoided, performed or merely watched, at *will.* It is a genre of leisure enjoyment, not an obligatory ritual, it is play-separated-from-work not play-and-work ludergy as a binary system of man's "serious" communal endeavor. Abrahams, in his joint paper with Bauman, makes a further valid point which firmly places Vincentian carnivals in the modern-leisure-genre category. He stresses that it is overwhelmingly the "bad, unruly (*macho*-type) men" who choose to perform carnival inversions indicative of disorder in the universe and society, people who are disorderly by temperament and choice in many extra-carnival situations. To the contrary, in tribal ritual, even the normally orderly, meek, and "law-abiding" people would be *obliged* to be disorderly in key rituals, regardless of their temperament and character. The sphere of the optional is in such societies much reduced. Even in liminality, where the bizarre behavior so often remarked upon by anthropologists occurs, the *sacra,* masks, etc., emerge to view under the guise at least of "collective representations." If there ever were individual creators and artists, they have been subdued by the general "liminal" emphasis on anonymity and normative *communitas,* just as the novices and their novice-masters have been. But in the liminoid genres of industrial art, literature, and even science (more truly homologous with tribal liminal thinking than modern art is), great public stress is laid on

the individual innovator, the unique person who dares and opts to create. In this lack of stress on individuality, tribal liminality may be seen not as the inverse of tribal normativeness, but as its projection into ritual situations. However, this has to be modified when one looks at actual initiation rituals "on the ground." I found that, among the Ndembu, despite the novices' being stripped of names, profane rank, and clothes, each emerged as a distinct individual; and there was an element of competitive personal distinctiveness in the fact that the best four novices in the terms of performance during seclusion (in hunting, endurance of ordeal, smartness in answering riddles, cooperativeness, etc.) were given titles in the rites marking their re-aggregation to profane society. For me, this indicated that in liminality is secreted the seed of the liminoid, waiting only for major changes in the sociocultural context to set it agrowing into the branched "candelabra" of manifold liminoid cultural genres. If one *has to*, like Jack Horner, pull out a dialectical plum from each and every type of social formation, I would counsel that those who propose to study one of the world's fast disappearing "tribal" societies should look at the liminal phases of their rituals in order most precisely to locate the incipient contradiction between communal-anonymous and private-distinctive modes of conceiving principles of sociocultural growth.

I have used the term "anti-structure," mainly with reference to tribal and agrarian societies, to describe both liminality and what I have called "communitas." I meant by it not a structural reversal, a mirror-imaging of "profane" workaday socioeconomic structure, or a fantasy-rejection of structural "necessities," but the liberation of human capacities of cognition, affect, volition, creativity, etc., from the normative constraints incumbent upon occupying a sequence of social statuses, enacting a multiplicity of social roles, and being acutely conscious of membership in some corporate group such as a family, lineage, clan, tribe, or nation, or of affiliation with some pervasive social category such as a class, caste, sex- or age-division. Sociocultural systems drive so steadily towards consistency that human individuals only get off these normative hooks in rare situations in small-scale societies, and not very frequently in large-scale ones. Nevertheless, the exigencies of structuration itself, the process of containing new growth in orderly patterns or schemata, has an Achilles heel. This is the fact that when persons, groups, sets of ideas, etc., move from one level or style of organization or regulation of the interdependence of their parts or elements to another level, there has to be an interfacial region or, to change the metaphor, an interval, however brief, of "*margin*" or "*limen*," when the past is momentarily negated, suspended, or abrogated, and the future has not yet begun. There is an instant of pure potentiality when everything trembles in the balance, like the moment when the trembling quarterback with all the "options" sees the very solid future moving menacingly towards him! In tribal societies, due to the general overriding homogeneity of

values, behavior, and social structural rules, this instant can be fairly easily contained or dominated by social structure, held in check from innovative excess, "hedged about," as anthropologists delight to say, by "taboos," "checks and balances," and so on. Thus, the tribal liminal, however exotic in appearance, can never be much more than a subversive flicker. It is put into the service of normativeness almost as soon as it appears. Yet I see it as a kind of institutional capsule or pocket which contains the germ of future social developments, of societal change, in a way that the central tendencies of a social system can never quite succeed in being, the spheres where law and custom, and the modes of social control ancillary to these, prevail. Innovation can take place in such spheres, but most frequently it occurs in interfaces and limina, then becomes *legitimated* in central sectors. For me, such relatively "late" social processes, historically speaking, as "revolution," "insurrection," and even "romanticism" in art, characterized by freedom in form and spirit, by emphasis on feeling and originality, represent an inversion of the relation between the normative and the liminal in "tribal" and other essentially conservative societies. For in these modern processes movements, the seeds of cultural transformation, discontent with the way things culturally are, and social criticism (always implicit in the preindustrially liminal), have become situationally central, no longer a matter of the interface between "fixed structures" but a matter of the holistically developmental. Thus revolutions, whether successful or not, become the *limina*, with all their initiatory overtones, between major distinctive structural forms or orderings of society. It may be that this is to use "liminal" in a metaphorical sense, not in the "primary" or "literal" sense advocated by van Gennep, but this usage may help us to think about global human society, to which all specific historical social formations may well be converging. Revolutions, whether violent or non-violent, may be the totalizing liminal phases for which the limina of tribal *rites de passage* were merely foreshadowings or premonitions.

This may possibly be the point where we should feed in the other major variable of the "anti-structural," *communitas*. (I will discuss the merits and demerits of talking about "anti-structure," "metastructure," and "pro-tostructure" later.) There is in tribal societies probably a closer relationship between communitas and liminality than between communitas and normative structure, though the modality of human interrelatedness which is communitas can "play" across structural systems in a way too difficult for us at present to predict its motions. This is the experiential basis, I believe, of the Christian notion of "actual grace." Thus, in the workshop, village, office, lecture-room, theater, almost anywhere, people can be subverted from their duties and rights into an atmosphere of *communitas*. What then *is* communitas? Has it any reality base, or is it a persistent fantasy of mankind, a sort of collective return to the womb? I have described (Turner 1969) this way by which persons see, understand, and act towards one

another as essentially "an unmediated relationship between historical, idiosyncratic, concrete individuals." This is *not* the same as Georges Gurvitch's notion of "communion" which he describes as "when minds open out as widely as possible and the least accessible depths of the 'I' are integrated in this fusion (which presupposes states of collective ecstasy)" (Gurvitch 1941). For me communitas preserves individual distinctiveness —it is neither regression to infancy, nor is it emotional, nor is it "merging" in fantasy. In people's social structural relationships they are by various abstract processes generalized and segmentalized into roles, statuses, classes, cultural sexes, conventional age-divisions, ethnic affiliations, and so on. In different types of social situations they have been conditioned to play specific social roles. It does not matter how well or badly, as long as they "make like" they are obedient to the norm-sets that control different compartments of the complex model known as the "social structure." So far this has been almost the entire subject matter of the social sciences: people playing roles and maintaining or achieving status. Admittedly this does cover a very great deal of what human beings are up to and what quantitatively takes up a great deal of their available time, both in work and leisure. And, to some extent, the authentic human essence gets involved here, for every role-definition takes into account some basic human attribute or capacity, and willy-nilly, human beings *play* their roles in human ways. But *full* human capacity is locked out of these somewhat narrow, stuffy rooms. Even though when we say a person plays his role well, we often mean that he plays it with flexibility and imagination, Martin Buber's notions of *I-and-Thou* relationship and the *Essential We* formed by people moving towards a freely chosen common goal are intuitive perceptions of a non-transactional order or quality of human relationship, in the sense that people do not necessarily initiate action towards one another in the expectation of a reaction that satisfies their interests. Anthropologists, inadvertently, have escaped many of these "hang-ups," for they deal with "man alive," in his altruistic as well as egoistic strivings, in the microprocesses of social life. Some sociologists, on the other hand, find security in ethnocentric questionnaires, which, by the nature of the case, distance observer from informant, and render inauthentic their subsequently guarded interaction. In tribal societies and other pre-industrial social formations, liminality provides a propitious setting for the development of these direct, immediate, and total confrontations of human identities. In industrial societies, it is within leisure, sometimes aided by the projections of art, that this way of experiencing one's fellows can be portrayed, grasped, and sometimes realized. Liminality is, of course, an ambiguous state, for social structure, while it inhibits full social satisfaction, gives a measure of finiteness and security; liminality may be for many the acme of insecurity, the breakthrough of chaos into cosmos, of disorder into order, rather than the milieu of creative interhuman or transhuman satisfactions and achievements.

Liminality may be the scene of disease, despair, death, suicide, the breakdown without compensatory replacement of normative, well defined social ties and bonds. It may be *anomie,* alienation, *angst,* the three fatal "alpha" sisters of many modern myths. In tribal and similar societies it may be the interstitial domain of domestic witchcraft, the hostile dead, and the vengeful spirits of strangers; in the leisure genres of complex societies, it may be represented by the "extreme situations" beloved of existentialist writers: torture, murder, war, the verge of suicide, hospital tragedies, the point of execution, etc. Liminality is both more creative and more destructive than the structural norm. In either case it raises basic problems for social structural man, invites him to speculation and criticism. But where it is socially positive it presents, directly or by implication, a model of human society as a homogeneous, unstructured communitas, whose boundaries are ideally coterminous with those of the human species. When even two people believe that they experience unity, all people are felt to be one by those two, even if only for a flash. Feeling generalizes more readily than thought, it would seem! The great difficulty is to keep this intuition alive—regular drugging will not do it, repeated sexual union will not do it, constant immersion in great literature will not do it: initiation seclusion must sooner or later come to an end. We thus encounter the paradox that the *experience* of communitas becomes the *memory* of communitas, with the result that communitas itself in striving to replicate itself historically develops a social structure, in which initially free and innovative relationships between individuals are converted into norm-governed relationships between social *personae.* I am aware that I am stating another paradox: that the more spontaneously "equal" people become, the more distinctively "themselves" they become; the more the *same* they become socially, the less they find themselves to be individually. Yet when this *communitas* or *comitas* is institutionalized, the newfound idiosyncratic is legislated into yet another set of universalistic roles and statuses, whose incumbents must subordinate individuality to a rule.

I argued in *The Ritual Process* that the spontaneity and immediacy of communitas—as opposed to the jural-political character of (social) structure—can seldom be sustained for long. Communitas itself soon develops a (protective social) structure, in which free relationships between individuals become converted into norm-governed relationships between social personae. The so-called "normal" may be more of a game, played in masks (personae), with a script, than certain ways of behaving "without a mask," that are culturally defined as "abnormal," "aberrant," "eccentric," or "way-out." Yet *communitas* does not represent the erasure of structural norms from the consciousness of those participating in it; rather its own style, in a given community, might be said to depend upon the way in which it symbolizes the abrogation, negation, or inversion of the normative structure in which its participants are quotidianly involved. Indeed, its own readiness to convert into normative structure indicates its vulnerability to the structural environment.

Looking at the historical fate of *communitas*, I identified three distinct and not necessarily sequential forms of it, which I called *spontaneous, ideological,* and *normative.* Each has certain relationships with liminal and liminoid phenomena.

1) *Spontaneous* communitas is "a direct, immediate and total confrontation of human identities," a deep rather than intense style of personal interaction. "It has something 'magical' about it. Subjectively there is in it a feeling of endless power." Is there any of us who has not known this moment when compatible people—friends, congeners—obtain a flash of lucid mutual understanding on the existential level, when they feel that all problems (not just their problems), whether emotional or cognitive, could be resolved, if only the group which is felt (in the first person) as "essentially us" could sustain its inter-subjective illumination. This illumination may succumb to the dry light of next day's disjunction, the application of singular and personal reason to the "glory" of communal understanding. But when the mood, style, or "fit" of spontaneous communitas is upon us, we place a high value on personal honesty, openness, and lack of pretensions or pretentiousness. We feel that it is important to relate directly to another person as he presents himself in the here-and-now, to understand him in a sympathetic (not an empathetic—which implies some withholding, some non-giving of the self) way, free from the culturally defined encumbrances of his role, status, reputation, class, caste, sex, or other structural niche. Individuals who interact with one another in the mode of spontaneous communitas become totally absorbed into a single, synchronized, fluid event. Their "gut-" understanding of synchronicity in these situations opens them to the understanding of such cultural forms—derived typically today from the literate transmission of world culture, directly or in translation— as eucharistic union and the I-Ching. The latter stresses the mutual mystical participation (to cite Lévy-Bruhl) of all contemporary events, if one only had a mechanism to lay hold of the "meaning" underlying their "coincidence."

2) What I have called "*ideological communitas*" is a set of theoretical concepts which attempt to describe the interactions of spontaneous communitas. Here the retrospective look, "memory," has already distanced the individual subject from the communal or dyadic experience. Here the experiencer has already come to look to language and culture to mediate the former immediacies, an instance of what Mihali Csikszentmihalyi has recently called a "flow-break," that is, an interruption of that experience of merging action and awareness (and centering of attention) which characterizes the supreme "pay-off" in ritual, art, sport, games, and even gambling. "Flow" may induce communitas, and communitas "flow," but some "flows" are solitary and some modes of communitas separate awareness from action—especially in religious communitas. Here it is not teamwork in flow that is quintessential, but "*being*" together, with being the operative

word, not doing. Csikszentmihalyi has already begun to ransack the inherited cultural past for models or for cultural elements drawn from the debris of past models from which he can construct a new model which will, however falteringly, replicate in words his concrete experience of spontaneous communitas. Some of these sets of theoretical concepts can be expanded and concretized into a "utopian" model of society, in which all human activities would be carried out on the level of spontaneous communitas. I hasten to add that not all or even the majority of "utopian" models are those of "ideological communitas." Utopia means "no place" in Greek: the manufacture of utopias is an untrammelled "ludic" activity of the leisure of the modern world, and such manufacture, like industrial manufacture, tends to posit ideal politico-administrative *structures* as prime desiderata—including highly hierarchical ones—rather than what the world or a land or island would look like if everyone sought to live in communitas with his and her neighbor. There are many hierarchical utopias, conservative utopias, fascistic utopias. Nevertheless, the communitas "utopia" is found in variant forms as a central ingredient, connected with the notion of "salvation," in many of the world's literate, "historical" religions. "Thy Kingdom" (which being *caritas, agape,* "love," is an anti-kingdom, a communitas) "come."

3) *Normative communitas,* finally, is, once more, a "perduring social system," a subculture or group which attempts to foster and maintain relationships of spontaneous communitas on a more or less permanent basis. To do this it has to denature itself, for spontaneous communitas is more a matter of "grace" than "law," to use theological language. Its spirit "bloweth where it listeth"—it cannot be legislated for or normated, since it is the *exception,* not the *law,* the miracle not the regularity, primordial freedom not *anangke,* the causal chain of necessity. But, nevertheless, there is something about the origin of a group based even on normative communitas which distinguishes it from groups which arise on the foundation of some "natural" or technical "necessity," real or imagined, such as a system of productive relations or a group of putatively biologically connected persons, a family, kindred, or lineage. Something of "freedom," liberation," or "love" (to use terms common in theological or political-philosophical Western vocabularies) adheres to normative communitas, even although quite often the strictest regimes devolve from what are apparently the most spontaneous experiences of communitas. This rigor comes about from the fact that communitas groups feel themselves initially to be utterly vulnerable to the institutionalized groups surrounding them. They develop protective institutional armor, armor which becomes the harder as the pressures to destroy the primary group's autonomy proportionally increase. They "become what they behold." On the other hand, if they did not "behold" their enemies, they would succumb to them. This dilemma is presumably not resoluble by a growing, changing, innovative species which invents new

tools of thinking as well as of industry and explores new emotional styles as it proceeds through time. The opposition of the old may be as important for change as the innovativeness of the new, inasmuch as together they constitute a problem.

Groups based on *normative* communitas commonly arise during a period of religious revival. When normative communitas is demonstrably a group's dominant social mode one can witness the process of transformation of a charismatic and personal movement into an ongoing, relatively repetitive social system. The inherent contradictions between spontaneous communitas and a markedly structured system are so great, however, that any venture which attempts to combine these modalities will constantly be threatened by structural cleavage or by the suffocation of communitas. The typical compromise here—and I refer the reader to *The Ritual Process,* Ch. 4, for illustrative case histories—tends to be a splitting of the membership into opposed factions, a solution which endures only as long as a balance of power is maintained between them. Usually the group which first organizes, then structures itself most methodically, prevails politically or parapolitically, though the key communitas values shared by both groups but put into abeyance by the politically successful one may later become resurgent in the latter. Thus the Conventual Franciscans succeeded in getting the Spiritual Franciscans condemned for their *usus pauper,* or extreme view of poverty, but the Capuchin Reform, beginning about three centuries later in 1525, restored many of the primitive ideals of Franciscan poverty and simplicity, which were practiced before the split into Conventuals and Spirituals in the thirteenth century. In symbological terms we have to distinguish between symbols of politico-jural systems and those making up religious systems. *Usus pauper* was a political symbol marking the factional cleavage between the two wings of Franciscanism, while "My Lady Poverty"—itself perhaps a Franciscan variant on the themes of "Our Lady Mary" or of "Our Holy Mother the Church" was a cultural symbol, transcending political structural divisions. Communitas tends to generate metaphors and symbols which later fractionate into sets and arrays of cultural values; it is in the realms of physical life-support (economics) and social control (law, politics) that symbols acquire their "social-structural" character. But, of course, the cultural and social-structural realms interpenetrate and overlap as concrete individuals pursue their interests, seek to attain their ideals, love, hate, subdue, and obey one another, in the flux of history. I will not advance at this point the view that the "extended-case method," with the social drama as one of its techniques, offers a useful way of studying symbols and their meanings as events within the total flow of social events, for I am still concerned with the problem of the relationships between symbols, the liminal, the liminoid, communitas, and social structure.

Communitas exists in a kind of "figure-ground" relationship with social structure. The boundaries of each of these—insofar as they constitute

explicit or implicit models for human interaction—are defined by contact or comparison with the other. In the same way, the liminal phase of an initiation rite is defined by the surrounding social statuses (many of which it abrogates, inverts, or invalidates), and the "sacred" is defined by its relation to the "profane"—even in a single culture there is much relativity here, for if A is "sacred" to B, he may be simultaneously "profane" to C, and "less sacred" to D. Situational selection prevails here, as in many other aspects of sociocultural process. Communitas, in the present context of its use, then, may be said to exist more in contrast than in active opposition to social structure, as an alternative and more "liberated" way of being socially human, a way both of being detached from social structure (and hence potentially of periodically *evaluating* its performance) and also of a "distanced" or "marginal" person's being more attached to *other* disengaged persons (and hence, sometimes of evaluating a social structure's historical performance in common with them). Here we may have a loving union of the structurally damned pronouncing judgment on normative structure and providing alternative models for structure.

The boundaries of the astructural model of human interconnectedness described by ideological communitas are "ideally coterminous with those of the human species" (and sometimes extend even beyond that to a generic "reverence for life"). Therefore, those who are experiencing, or have recently experienced communitas often attempt to convert a social structural interaction or a set of such interactions (involving the primacy of institutionalized status-role behavior over "freewheeling" behavior) into a direct, immediate and total confrontation of human identities, that is, into spontaneous communitas. Communitas tends to be inclusive (some might call it "generous"), social structure tends to be exclusive, even snobbish, relishing the distinction between we/they or in-group/out-group, higher/lower, betters/menials. This drive to inclusivity makes for proselytization. One wants to make the Others, We. One famous case in the Western tradition is Pentecost, when people of different linguistic and ethnic groups claimed, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, to understand one another completely sub- or trans-linguistically. After that the Pentecostal throng went forth to missionize the world. The glossolalia of some modern Pentecostals appears to be connected with the notion that whereas articulate speech divides people of different linguistic groups and even expedites "sin," among those of the same speech community, nonsense (archaic) speech facilitates mutual love and virtue. But these conversion attempts by communitarian individuals may be interpreted not only by the power elites of social structure, but *also* by the rank and file who feel safe in their obedience to norm, as a *direct threat* to their *own* authority or safety, and perhaps especially to their institution-based social identities. Thus the expansive tendencies of communitas may touch off a repressive campaign by the structurally entrenched elements of society, which leads in turn to more

active, even militant opposition by the communitarians (cf. here the historical process set in train by many millenarian or revitalistic movements); and so on, in an ever spiraling struggle between the forces of structure and the powers of communitas. The struggle is rather like what Frye and David Erdman—drawing on Blake's symbols—have called the Orc-Urizen cycle. "Orc" here represents revolutionary energy and "Urizen" the "law-maker and the avenging conscience" (S. Foster Damon); the cycle itself is a partial anticipation of Pareto's "circulation of elites," the "lion"-like revolutionary elites being succeeded by the "fox"-like strategists and tacticians of power maintenance.

In spite of—and, to a considerable extent, because of—this conflict, communitas serves important functions for the larger, structured, centristic society. In *The Ritual Process* I noted that

> Liminality, marginality, and structural inferiority are conditions in which are frequently generated myths, symbols, rituals, philosophical systems, and works of art. These cultural forms provide men with a set of templates, models, or paradigms which are, at one level, periodical reclassifications of reality (or, at least, of social experience) and man's relationship to society, nature, and culture. But they are more than (mere cognitive) classifications, since they incite men to action as well as thought. (1969:128-129)

When I wrote this, I had not yet made the distinction between ergic-ludic ritual liminality and anergic-ludic liminoid genres of action and literature. In tribal societies, liminality is often functional, in the sense of being a special duty or performance *required* in the course of work or activity; its very reversals and inversions tend to compensate for rigidities or unfairnesses of normative structure. But in industrial society, the *rite de passage* form, built into the calendar and/or modeled on organic processes of maturation and decay, no longer suffices for total societies. Leisure provides the opportunity for a multiplicity of optional, liminoid genres of literature, drama, and sport, which are not conceived of as "antistructure" to normative structure where "antistructure is an auxiliary function of the larger structure" (Sutton-Smith 1972:17). Rather are they to be seen as Sutton-Smith envisages "play," as "experimentation with variable repertoires," consistent with the manifold variation made possible by developed technology and an advanced stage of the division of labor (1972:18). The liminoid genres, to adapt Sutton-Smith (he was referring to "anti-structure," a term he borrowed from me, but he claimed that I used it in a system-maintenance sense only),

> not only make tolerable the system as it exists, they keep its members in a more flexible state with respect to that system, and, therefore, with respect to possible change. Each system [Sutton-Smith goes on] has structural and anti-structural adaptive functions. The normative structure represents the working equilibrium, the anti-structure represents the latent system of potential alternatives from which novelty will arise when contingencies in the normative system require it. . . . We might more correctly call this second system the *proto-structural* system because it is the precursor of innovative normative forms. It is the source of new culture. (1972:18-19)

In the so-called "high culture" of complex societies, the liminoid is not only removed from a *rite de passage* context, it is also "individualized." The solitary artist *creates* the liminoid phenomena, the collectivity *experiences* collective liminal symbols. This does not mean that the maker of liminoid symbols, ideas, images, and so on, does so *ex nihilo*; it only means that he is privileged to make free with his social heritage in a way impossible to members of cultures in which the liminal is to a large extent the sacrosanct.

When we compare liminal with liminoid processes and phenomena, then, we find crucial differences as well as similarities. Let me try to set some of these out. In a crude, preliminary way they provide some delimitation of the field of comparative symbology.

1) *Liminal phenomena* tend to predominate in tribal and early agrarian societies possessing what Durkheim has called "mechanical solidarity," and dominated by what Henry Maine has called "status." *Liminoid phenomena* flourish in societies with "organic solidarity," bonded reciprocally by "contractual" relations, and generated by and following the industrial revolution. They perhaps begin to appear on the scene in city-states on their way to becoming empires (of the Graeco-Roman type) and in feudal societies (including not only the European sub-types found between the tenth and fourteenth centuries in France, England, Flanders, and Germany, but also the far less "pluralistic" Japanese, Chinese, and Russian types of feudalism, or quasi-feudalism). But they first begin clearly to develop in Western Europe in nascent capitalist societies, with the beginnings of industrialization and mechanization, the transformation of labor into a commodity, and the appearance of real social classes. The heyday of this type of nascent industrial society was in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—climaxing in the "age of enlightenment." It had begun to appear in Western Europe in the second half of the sixteenth century, particularly in England, where, a little later, Francis Bacon published his *Novum Organum* in 1620, a work which definitely linked scientific with technical knowledge. Liminoid phenomena continued to characterize the democratic-liberal societies which dominated Europe and America in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These societies were characterized by universal suffrage, the predominance of legislative over executive power, parliamentarianism, a plurality of political parties, freedom of workers and employers to organize, freedom of joint stock companies, trusts, and cartels to organize, and the separation of church and state. Liminoid phenomena are still highly visible in the post-World War Two managerial societies of organized capitalism of the modern United States, Western Germany, France, Britain, Italy, Japan, and other countries of the Western bloc. Here the economy no longer is left even ostensibly to "free competition," but is planned both by the state itself—usually in the interests of the reigning industrial and financial upper middle classes—and by private trusts and cartels (national and international), often with the support of the state, which puts its consider-

able bureaucratic administrative machinery in their service. Nor are liminoid phenomena absent from the systems of centralized state collectivism exemplified by Russia and China, following their revolutions, and by the "people's democracies" of Eastern Europe (with the exception of Yugoslavia, which has been moving in the direction of decentralized collectivism). Here the new culture tries to synthesize, as far as possible, humanism and technology—not the easiest of tasks—substituting for natural rhythms the logic of technological processes, while attempting to divest these of their socially exploitative character and proposing them to be generated and sustained by the "popular genius." This, however, with collectivism, tends to reduce the potentially limitless freedom of liminoid genres to the production of forms congenial to the goal of integrating humanism (in the sense of a modern, nontheistic, rationalistic viewpoint that holds that man is capable of self-fulfillment, ethical conduct, etc., without recourse to supernaturalism) and technology.

2) *Liminal phenomena* tend to be collective, concerned with calendrical, biological, social-structural rhythms or with crises in social processes whether these result from internal adjustments or external adaptations or remedial measures. Thus they appear at what may be called "natural breaks," natural disjunctions in the flow of natural and social processes. They are thus enforced by sociocultural "necessity," but they contain *in nuce* "freedom" and the potentiality for the formation of new ideas, symbols, models, beliefs. *Liminoid phenomena may* be collective (and when they are so are often directly derived from liminal antecedents), but are more characteristically individual products, though they often have collective or "mass" effects. They are not cyclical, but continuously generated, though in the times and places apart from work settings assigned to "leisure" activities.

3) *Liminal phenomena* are centrally integrated into the total social process, forming with all its other aspects a complete whole, and representing its necessary negativity and subjunctivity. *Liminoid phenomena* develop apart from the central economic and political processes, along the margins, in the interfaces and interstices of central and servicing institutions—they are plural, fragmentary, and experimental in character.

4) *Liminal phenomena* tend to confront investigators rather after the manner of Durkheim's "collective representations," symbols having a common intellectual and emotional meaning for all the members of a given group. They reflect, on probing, the history of the group, i.e., its collective experience, over time. They differ from preliminal or postliminal collective representations in that they are often reversals, inversions, disguises, negations, antitheses of quotidian, "positive," or "profane" collective representations. But they share their mass, collective character.

Liminoid phenomena tend to be more idiosyncratic or quirky, to be generated by specific named individuals and in particular groups—"schools," circles, and coteries. They have to compete with one another for general

recognition and are thought of at first as ludic offerings placed for sale on the "free" market—this is at least true of liminoid phenomena in nascent capitalistic and democratic-liberal societies. Their symbols are closer to the personal-psychological than to the "objective-social" typological pole.

5) *Liminal phenomena* tend to be ultimately eufunctional even when seemingly "inversive" for the working of the social structure, ways of making it work without too much friction.

Liminoid phenomena, on the other hand, are often parts of social critiques or even revolutionary manifestoes—books, plays, paintings, films, etc., exposing the injustices, inefficiencies, and immoralities of the mainstream economic and political structures and organizations.

In complex modern societies both types coexist in a sort of cultural pluralism. But the liminal—found in the activities of churches, sects, and movements, in the initiation rites of clubs, fraternities, masonic orders and other secret societies, etc.—is no longer society-wide. Nor are liminoid phenomena, which tend to be the leisure genres of art, sport, pastimes, games, etc., practiced by and for particular groups, categories, segments, and sectors of large-scale industrial societies of all types. But for most people the liminoid is still felt to be freer than the liminal, a matter of choice not obligation. The liminoid is more like a commodity—indeed, often *is* a commodity, which one selects and pays for—than the liminal, which elicits loyalty and is bound up with one's membership or desired membership in some highly corporate group. One *works at* the liminal, one *plays with* the liminoid. There may be much moral pressure to go to church or synagogue, whereas one queues up at the boxoffice to see a play by Beckett, a performance by Mort Sahl, a Superbowl Game, a symphony concert, or an art exhibition. And if one plays golf, goes yachting, or climbs mountains, one often needs to buy expensive equipment or pay for club membership. Of course, there are also all kinds of "free" liminoid perform-ances and entertainments—Mardi Gras, charivari, home entertainments of various kinds—but these already have something of the stamp of the liminal upon them, and quite often they are the cultural debris of some unforgotten liminal ritual. There are permanent "liminoid" settings and spaces, too—bars, pubs, some cafés, social clubs, etc. But when clubs be-come exclusivist they tend to generate rites of passage, with the liminal a condition of entrance into the "liminoid" realm.

I am frankly in an exploratory phase just now. I hope to make more precise these crude, almost medieval maps I have been unrolling of the obscure liminal and liminoid regions which lie around our comfortable village of the sociologically known, proven, tried and tested. Discussing both "liminal" and "liminoid" requires studying symbols in social action, in praxis, not entirely at a safe remove from the full human condition. It means studying all domains of expressive culture, not the high culture alone nor the popular culture alone, the literate or the nonliterate, the

Great or the Little Tradition, the urban or the rural. Comparative symbology must learn how to "embrace multitudes" and generate sound intellectual progeny from that embrace. It must study *total* social phenomena.

I would like to conclude by considering some of the relationships between *communitas,* "flow," the liminal, and the liminoid. Let me briefly try to explain what Mihali Csikszentmihalyi and my friend John McAloon mean by "flowing." "Flow denotes the holistic sensation present when we act with total involvement," is "a state in which action follows action according to an internal logic which seems to need no conscious intervention on our part. . . . we experience it as a unified flowing from one moment to the next, in which we feel in control of our actions, and in which there is little distinction between self and environment; between stimulus and response; or between past, present, and future" (Csikszentmihalyi 1972). Some recent research by Callois, Unsworth, Abrahams, and Murphy (and by McAloon and Csikszentmihalyi) has focused on various forms of play and sport (liminoid metagenres of our society) such as mountaineering, rock-climbing, soccer, hockey, chess, long distance swimming, handball, etc., in which the state of flow can be experienced. McAloon and Csikszentmihalyi extend their notion of "flow" beyond play to "the creative experience" in art and literature, and to religious experiences, drawing on many scientific and literary sources. They locate six "elements" or "qualities" or "distinctive features" of the "flow experience." These are:

1) *The experience of merging action and awareness:* there is no dualism in "flow"; while an actor may be aware of what he is doing, he cannot be aware that he is aware—if he is, there is a rhythmic behavioral or cognitive break—self-consciousness makes him stumble, and "flow," perceived from the "outside" becomes non-"flow" or anti-"flow." Pleasure gives way to problem, to worry, to anxiety.

2) This merging of action and awareness is made possible by a *centering of attention* on a limited stimulus field. Consciousness must be narrowed, intensified, beamed in on a limited focus of attention. "Past and future must be given up"—only *now* matters. How is this to be done? Here the conditions that normally prevail must be "simplified" by some definition of situational relevance. What is irrelevant must be excluded. Physiological means to simplify experience are drugs (including alcohol) which do not so much "expand" consciousness as limit and intensify awareness. Intensification is the name of the game. In games this is done by formal *rules* and by such *motivational* means as, for example, competitiveness. A game's rules dismiss as irrelevant most of the "noise" which makes up social reality, the multiform stimuli which impinge on our consciousness. We have to abide by a limited set of norms. Then we are motivated to *do well* by the game's intrinsic structure, often to *do better* than others who subscribe to the same rules. Our minds and our wills are thus disencumbered from irrelevances and sharply focused in certain known directions. *Rewards*

for good knowledge and invincible will, when harnessed to tactical technical skill, complete the focusing. But for our authors the flow's the thing, not the rules, motivations, or rewards. This involves "inner resources" too, the "will to participate" (which like all liminoid phenomena goes back to voluntariness; one *opts* to play), the capacity to shift emphases among the structural components of a game or to innovate by using the rules to generate unprecedented performances. But it is the limitation by rules and motive, the centering of attention, which encourages the flow experience.

3) *Loss of ego* is another "flow" attribute. The "self" which is normally the "broker" between one person's actions and another's, simply becomes irrelevant. The actor is immersed in the "flow," he accepts the rules as binding which are also binding on the other actors—no self is needed to "bargain" about what should or should not be done. The rules ensure the reduction of deviance or eccentricity in much of manifest behavior. Reality tends to be "simplified to the point that is understandable, definable, and manageable" (Csikszentmihalyi 1972:11). This holds good, Csikszentmihalyi says, for "religious ritual, artistic performance, games." Selfforgetfulness here does not mean loss of self-awareness. Kinesthetic and mental awareness is indeed heightened, not reduced; but its full effect comes when flow is recollected later "in tranquility." If flow itself is broken, as we have seen, the special kind of awareness of self intrinsic to it is lost. Again, there is no solipsism, mere autism, about the experience. Flow reaches out to nature and to other men in what Csikszentmihalyi calls "intuitions of unity, solidarity, repletion and acceptance"; all men, even all things, are felt to be one, subjectively, in the flow experience. Much evidence is brought forward to support this; Lévy-Bruhl's "participation mystique" and Suzuki's "non-dualistic (Zen) experience" are cited, as are the comments of athletes and sportsmen.

4) A person "in flow" finds himself "*in control of his actions and of the environment.*" He may not know this at the time of "flow," but reflecting on it he may realize that his skills were matched to the demands made on him by ritual, art, or sport. This helps him to "build a positive self-concept" (p. 13). Outside "flow," such a subjective sense of control is difficult to attain, due to the multiplicity of stimuli and cultural tasks—especially, I would hold, in industrial societies, with their complex social and technical division of labor. But in the ritualized limits of a game or the writing of a poem, a person may *cope,* if he rises to the occasion with skill and tact. With control, worry goes, and fear. Even, as in rock climbing, when the dangers are real, the moment flow begins and the activity is entered, the flow "delights" outweigh the sense of dangers and problems.

5) "Flow" usually "contains coherent, *non-contradictory demands for action,* and provides *clear, unambiguous feedback* to a person's actions. This is entailed by the limiting of awareness to a restricted field of possibilities. Culture reduces the flow possibility to defined channels—chess,

polo, gambling, liturgical action, miniature painting, a yoga exercise, etc. You can "throw yourself" into the cultural design of the game or art, and know whether you have done well or not when you have finished the round of culturally predetermined acts—in the extreme case, if you survive you have performed adequately—in other cases, the public or the critics have an important say, but if you are a real "pro," the final judge is yourself, looking back. Flow differs from everyday in that it contains explicit rules "which make action and the evaluation of action unproblematic" (p. 15). Thus, cheating breaks flow—you have to be a believer, even if this means temporary "willing suspension of unbelief," i.e., choosing (in liminoid fashion) to believe that the rules are "true."

6) Finally "flow" is "autotelic," i.e., *it seems to need no goals or rewards outside itself.* To flow is to be as happy as a human can be—the particular rules or stimuli that triggered the flow, whether chess or a prayer meeting, do not matter. This is important for any study of human behavior, if true, for it suggests that people will culturally manufacture situations which will release flow, or individually seek it outside their ascribed stations in life if these are "flow-resistant."

Csikszentmihalyi goes on to link "flow theory" with information theory and competence theory—but I am not convinced by these speculations. I think he has superbly pinpointed and ascribed qualities to this experience —which *has* to be dealt with phenomenologically in the first place (though we may be able to get more "objective" later with EEG patterns, changes in metabolic rates, etc.).

I would like to say simply that what I call *communitas* has something of a "flow" quality, but it may arise, and often does arise, spontaneously and unanticipated—it does not need rules to trigger it off. In theological language it is sometimes a matter of "grace" rather than "law." Again, "flow" is experienced within an individual, whereas communitas at its inception is evidently between or among individuals—it is what all of us believe we share and its outputs emerge from dialogue, using both words and non-verbal means of communication, such as understanding smiles, jerks of the head, and so on, between us. "Flow" for me is already in the domain of what I have called "structure"; communitas is always pre-structural, even though those who participate in it have been saturated in structure—being human—since they were infants. But "flow," for me, seems to be one of the ways in which "structure" may be transformed or "liquefied" (like the famed martyr's blood) into communitas again. It is one of the techniques whereby people seek the lost "kingdom" or "anti-kingdom" of direct, unmediated communion with one another, even though severe subscription to rules is the frame in which this communion may possibly be induced (the "mantric" frame, one might say).

In societies before the Industrial Revolution, ritual could always have a "flow" quality for total communities (tribes, moieties, clans, lineages,

families, etc.); in post-Industrial societies, when ritual gave way to individualism and rationalism, the flow experience was pushed mainly into the leisure genres of art, sport, games, pastimes, etc. Since work was complex and diversified, its pleasurable, optational equivalent, palliative, or medicine, the domain of leisure genres, also became complex and diversified. However, it was often inversive of the work domain in form if not in function—since the function of many games is to reinforce the mental paradigms we all carry in our heads which motivate us to carry out energetically the tasks our culture defines as belonging to the "work" sphere.

The point here is that ritual (including its liminal phase) in archaic, theocratico-charismatic, patriarchal, and feudal societies (even a little in city-states becoming empires) and certain ancillary institutions such as religious drama provided the main cultural flow-mechanisms and patterns. But in those ages in which the sphere of religious ritual has contracted (as Durkheim puts it), a multiplicity of (theoretically) non-serious, non-earnest genres, such as art and sport (though these may be more serious than the Protestant ethic has defined them to be), have largely taken over the flow-function in culture. Communitas is something else, for it does not have to be induced by rules—it can happen anywhere, often in despite of rules. It is more like the "Witness" in Hindu thought which can only watch and love, but *cannot* act (i.e., cannot "flow" in games terms) without changing its nature.

One final point: I have left out both from communitas and "flow" an essential feature—the *content* of the experience. This is where the analysis of symbols begins—the symbols of chess, of Impressionist art, of Buddhist meditation, of Christian Marian pilgrimage, of scientific research, of formal logic, have different meanings, different semantic contents. Surely, the processes of communitas and flow are imbued with the meanings of the symbols they either generate or are channeled by. Are all "flows" one and do the symbols indicate different kinds and depths of flow?

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