

BEYOND SYMBOLIC
REPRESENTATION
VICTOR TURNER AND VARIATIONS
ON THE THEMES OF RITUAL PROCESS
AND LIMINALITY¹

· BRUCE KAPFERER ·

ABSTRACT

Victor Turner's celebrated work *The Ritual Process* published in 1969 provided a radically new perspective on the study of ritual. It was a major departure from the dominant theoretical schools of the time that had discussed ritual primarily in terms of representation, reproduction, or mystification. In Turner's thinking ritual was re-conceived as a crucible for the emergence of original meaning, of new ways of structuring relations and for reorienting experience. Moreover, his concern reached well beyond the exploration of ritual as such and was ultimately aimed at the understanding of the possibilities and potentialities of human being. This article focuses on Turner's major contribution to the study of ritual and attempts to extend in some ways the direction to which the path that he blazed was leading. Ideas concerning the dynamics and virtuality of ritual are developed in relation to Turner's concepts of process and liminality.

Keywords: Victor Turner, ritual, process, liminality, dynamics, virtuality

Prologue

Turner came to anthropology after studying English literature at University College London, following a period as a conscientious objector in a bomb disposal unit during the Second World War. The former was profoundly to influence his direction towards an anthropology that strove to uncover the roots of human creative existential energies. Turner's broad knowledge and thirst for literature continued throughout his life, always deepening and expanding in the close companionship of his wife Edith. He would take special delight in the recitation of lines and verse that gave poignant expression to his beliefs and ideals. Turner's love of language and literature always opened out his anthropology in the fullest sense which resisted narrow disciplinary and professionalized notions that constantly threaten to constrain the potential of anthropological thought and practice. His war experience gave acute expression to the absurdity of social hierarchies and oppressive orders that too often were destructive of human being and its potentialities. Turner would describe his bomb disposal work as quintessentially liminal. Military bureaucracy, order and rank held no sense. Officers and men shared an existential unity in routine situations of bomb disposal where survival rates were extraordinarily low, where life and death were separated by the slimmest of margins and where chance, uncertainty and the fates were the ultimate arbiters.

Turner's critical work is *The Ritual Process* (1969): a celebration of the 'betwixt and between' of *communitas*, of creative and generative moments outside social orders, systems and structures, from which new orientations and structures of life emerge. It is a work which marked a turning point in his own personal life (see E. Turner 2005) and intellectual direction. Turner in his earlier and mainly ethnographic work had been exploratory as well as experimental, pushing various available perspectives in anthropology and more widely in the humanities and social sciences. One of the most brilliant examples of this is *Chihamba the White Spirit* (1962) where his deep ethnographic knowledge of a specific Ndembu healing cult (itself emergent in the irresolute social contradictions sharpened in the circumstances of modernity) opens towards an understanding of universal existential themes. In this work, Turner explores the questions and insights of Ndembu ritual practitioners and how they resonate with those apparent in world literature, the religious thought and practices of world religions and with the work of philosophers who attempt to explore the potentialities of the human psyche. *Chihamba* breaks out of a closed anthropological relativism and, far more than exemplifying what may already be known, engages Ndembu practice to extend understanding of the general through the particular. Of course here Turner develops from the emphasis that his associates at Manchester and the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in Zambia—especially Gluckman and Mitchell—placed on the analysis of events and situations. But he extended their ideas to the fullest, exemplified best of all in *Schism and Continuity in an African Society* (1957), demonstrating events as more than the illustration or the working out of structural processes and as, in themselves, creative, re-orienting moments. In retrospect, *The Ritual Process* may be considered as an expression of Turner's own Eureka moment.

In this work Turner does not merely build on others but realizes his own distinct contribution and direction in anthropology and its relevance for other fields of enquiry. Furthermore, he opens a liberating critique of anthropology that at the time was shifting away from its own hitherto marginal intellectual position and becoming conventionalized and stultified as a result of its growing professionalization and establishment within academia. In *The Ritual Process* Turner engages in a radical re-exploration of ritual, conceiving of it as the well-spring of ever new ways of constructing reality. Ritual had hitherto been regarded by anthropologists as the quintessence of the traditional and opposed to change. Conversely, Turner showed how the study of rites disclosed them as events of origination, of innovative construction and reorientation. It held lessons for a re-jigging of intellectual understanding of human processes. The sense of discovery, freedom and liberation that is a thoroughgoing dimension of *The Ritual Process* was undoubtedly fired by the new directions in his personal life and his move from England to the United States where he felt the shackles of social and intellectual constraint had been broken.

Turner was not alone in attempting to reorient anthropology. Gluckman's Manchester department was so directed, and Turner during his time there was perhaps the most inspirational. When Turner left Manchester, Gluckman's department was starting to sink into orthodoxies of its own making which Turner himself felt acutely. Elsewhere in anthropology new orientations were being struck, some being influenced by widespread social and political disaffection and a general sense of new beginnings following the ravages of war, the increasing awareness of the obscenity of the Holocaust and the growing pace of decolonization, among others, all of which exposed the corruption of past orders and the

imperialist visions of society that were implicated. I do not wish to suggest that the new directions in anthropology were necessarily fuelled by political and social radicalism, although this was certainly relevant to Turner, for many in anthropology anxious for revision were of more conservative bent. What I draw attention to is the fact that Turner's move in *The Ritual Process* was part of a general spirit in anthropology of the period that was concerned to break out of old functionalist and structural-functional paradigms.

The Ritual Process is published in 1969. Leach's important *Rethinking Anthropology* (1961) had already been in press for eight years and in 1966 Lévi-Strauss' *The Savage Mind*, Mary Douglas's neo-Durkheimian *Purity and Danger* as well as Fredrik Barth's transactionalist *Models of Social Organization* had also appeared. All were influential on a new generation of young anthropologists. Later, and no less significant, was the English translation of Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977) with its particular mix of phenomenology, American symbolic interactionism and Marxism. Around the same time Clifford Geertz was giving a new slant to North American cultural anthropology, his *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973) and especially his article "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight" (1972) having considerable impact across the humanities in the United States. Turner was interested in many of these new perspectives but less so with Leach's formalism and with Barth whose individualist pragmatics disagreed with Turner's own communitarian sense and Marxist sympathies. Lévi-Straussian structuralism is also a target for Turner of *The Ritual Process*, although he seems more open to certain features of structuralism in his later work. Bourdieu certainly expressed lines of thought that connected with Turner's already perceptible stress on practice. But Turner rarely referred to him, and Bourdieu at that time avoided a concern with ritual which he regarded in conventional Marxist terms: ritual as symbolic occlusion rather than an opening or a blazing of new paths which is Turner's emphasis. Douglas echoed Turner's interest in leaving the perceived Kantian fixity of a dominant Durkheimian anthropology, although she is more concerned to revise it rather than extend beyond. Douglas remains committed to a sociological universalism which accounts for cultural specificities whereas Turner indicates that particular culturally-based insights might break out of certain sociologically restricted visions leading to more general understanding. There were intellectual affinities between Douglas and Turner but Turner was attracted to psychoanalytic arguments and saw no place for a sociological dismissal of deep and even universal psychological processes. He saw some identity with Geertz's orientation and certainly Geertz's interest in social phenomenology and existentialism which Turner quite independently pursued. For a while, I think, Turner saw himself and Geertz to be on a similar path, particularly the Geertz of "Blurred Genres" (1980a), but he refused the relativism that Geertz never abandoned. Geertz's work on ritual and other kinds of event were far more traditionalist than that of Turner (or of Gluckman and his other colleagues): his study of the cockfight, as of other events in such works as *Negara* (1980b) and *A Social History of an Indonesian Town*, were strongly representational rather than, in themselves, as Turner develops, indicating new directions in which original conceptualizations and structurations are immanent. This is a point to which I will return in the body of this essay.

Along with Geertz, Turner could be seen as a forerunner of American postmodern anthropology which grew in the wake of anti-Vietnam and anti-imperialist protest. The literary turn in postmodernism was certainly of appeal to Turner whose own mastery of

literature was everywhere evident, but he never eschewed the potentials of the social and other sciences although maintaining a great wariness for their overdetermined, anti-humanist, excessively rationalist potential.

The Ritual Process is distinct from most of the approaches with which it may be seen as broadly cognate. Turner himself in his own spirit of generosity continually established parallels with others and drew freely from a wide array of sources. He saw the importance of other approaches in his championing of an anthropology that was concerned with the plenitude of human being and which asserted no driving overweening and singular perspective. His thorough, in fact anthropological, commitment to the authority of ethnography and the human potentialities it displays must refuse any domination or subservience to the royal or sovereign abstractions of theory. Turner was a Renaissance Man for the modern age, perhaps more Nietzschean than most. *The Ritual Process* and indeed much of his subsequent work on the dramatic and performance dimension of life is explicitly directed to the Apollonian and Dionysian forces in human action that Nietzsche so wonderfully pursued in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Unlike other approaches of his peers and in the social sciences generally, Turner does not seek a final position, perspective or theory that will make sense of it all. The powerful implication of *The Ritual Process* is that human practices are constantly throwing up different and new forms of constructions, as well as resistances to them, in which life discovers myriad directions. Moreover, it is within the practices themselves that frames for their comprehension can be found rather than in abstractions that are imagined independently of them.

In the discussion that follows I will focus on Turner's major contribution to the study of ritual, recognizing, however, that his concern reached well beyond the understanding or exploration of ritual as such. Ritual is Turner's catalyst for the development of a general reorientation of the understanding of human being which crosscuts the various disciplines regardless of their categorization as sciences, social sciences or humanities. Concentrating on the liminal moments of rite and stressing ritual as process, Turner not only radically questioned static and traditionalist approaches to ritual but effectively engaged ritual to the task of critically addressing dominant perspectives and theories. He is particularly antagonistic, and well in advance of his time, to those social science perspectives largely influenced by Durkheim that are strongly representational and which he describes as pursuing the "vain task of trying to find out in what precise way certain symbols found in the ritual, poetry, or iconography of a given society 'reflect' or 'express' its social or political structure (...)" (Turner 1974: 270). Such orientations effectively deny the ongoing creative and generative dimensions of human practice which he shows is the potential of ritual: ritual as generation rather than reproduction. My objective in the rest of this essay is to pursue Turner's linked concern with process and the liminal with respect to rite, in particular, but acknowledging the larger implications of his arguments. I attempt a development arguing for an emphasis on dynamics rather than process and as well for a consideration of the concept of 'virtual' which I think points up the generative dimensions of that which Turner underlines in the liminal.

Before I proceed, let me note briefly that while the concepts of process and dynamics are able to be used interchangeably, I will contend that a focus on dynamics, rather than process, better moves the understanding of ritual beyond an emphasis on symbolic meaning, reflexivity and representation. An emphasis on ritual as process is of course crucial but the

orientation to dynamics that I ultimately pursue here is directed to those aspects of ritual practice which may establish both the perceptual ground for the organization of cognition and above all the basis for the construction of meaning as well as the extension towards new horizons of meaning. I focus on ritual dynamics as a structuration of perception and of cognition in which particular human potentialities both of experience and of meaningful construction may be formed. The concept of the virtual or virtuality, as I develop it, is to be distinguished from the virtuality of cyber-technology. As I will explain, the virtual of ritual is a thoroughgoing reality of its own, neither a simulacrum of realities external to ritual nor an alternative reality. It bears a connection to ordinary lived realities, as depth to surface. I stress the virtual of rite as one in which the dynamics of cosmological, social and personal construction achieve a particular concentrated intensity or plateau of creation and generation.

The dynamics of ritual process

Turner's use of Van Gennep is significant in his shift of focus towards process and his shift away from the hitherto stress of ritual as a representation or reflection on the realities that surround its performance. Although Van Gennep (1960 [1909]), of course, did not ignore the importance of representation in ritual, he did not write of ritual in the Durkheimian sense as a kind of 'collective representation', a symbolic formation of the social or expression of society. Rather, Van Gennep's orientation was to conceive of rite as a conjunctive, transitive or transitional process, and as a reformatory or transformational organization of action facilitating change *within* society. Van Gennep highlighted the internal processual stages and shifts within rituals whereby distinct phases were contracted or elaborated in accordance with the problematics of the crisis or transition (e.g. birth, initiation, marriage, or death) to be resolved or effected.

Van Gennep had done little more than set out a schema for the understanding of ritual processes and their contribution to the reproduction of social orders and their relations. His concern with process paralleled that of Hubert and Mauss (1964) in their analysis of *Sacrifice* which likewise focussed on the ritual process (isolating stages of separation and conjunction). Although Hubert and Mauss expanded on the Durkheimian distinct and representational symbolic categories of the sacred and the profane, they discerned a constitutive and transformational dynamic in the sacralizing/desacralizing process of rite to be compared with the importance assigned to the liminal by Van Gennep which Turner developed.²

It is one of Turner's major contributions to the analysis of ritual that he recognized the potential of Van Gennep's approach for understanding ritual as a process that could create or generate original circumstances for human psychological and social existence. For Van Gennep, ritual was demonstrated as a process in the conventional sense of a course of action or a progression of linked events. This view of ritual as process persists in much anthropological analysis and misses the more radical import of Turner's direction, which exceeded that of Van Gennep.

Turner was directed to ritual as process in the more philosophical meaning of becoming. In this way he concentrated on the capacity of ritual to bring forth (in the ancient Greek sense of *techne*) and to change the very ground of being. He grasped the ritual process as

not merely a machine for social reproduction or for maintaining the cosmological and cultural categories of meaning within which persons and their social relations were constituted (ritual as a mechanism for repeating the same in the sense of Eliade's notion of 'the eternal return'). Turner concentrated rather on the process of ritual as the generative source for the invention of new cosmological and other cultural categories within which original constructs of persons and their relations might be created. This was a radical reorientation in the anthropological analysis of ritual. Turner broke away from conventional anthropological approaches that regarded ritual both as a technology of traditional, relatively static societies, a mechanism for their reproduction, and as a means for the delusion and mystification of populations which facilitated the legitimacy of dominant orders.

Turner effectively made ritual (and especially their 'betwixt and between' liminal moments which he regarded as the potent points of transition, transformation and creation) a basis for the development of a general cultural, social and political theory. In his vision, this was all the more so because he understood ritual formations worldwide as embedding the grounded and fundamental ingredients of human symbolic construction and their enduring paradoxes.

The critical importance of Turner's position is that he was not concerned with developing a theory of ritual. This is obviously an impossibility at the very least because of the extraordinary diversity of the phenomenon and the fact that there is wide disagreement as to how the analytical or descriptive construct of ritual should be defined (see Handelman 1990; Asad 1993). Nonetheless the pursuit of a theory of ritual continues with some interesting but in my view limited and all too frequently overly ethnocentric and occasionally mystical results (e.g. Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994; Bell 1992, 1997; Rappaport 2000; E. Turner 1992; Willis 1999). The great merit of Turner's reorientation is that he considered whatever were conceived to be ritual practices (that is, practices centred first and foremost within the physical, mental and social beingness of human being) as themselves already including their theoretical possibility.³ This possibility was not about ritual *per se* but rather a theoretical possibility derived from the close analysis of ritual that led to a larger understanding of human being as a whole, that is as a continuing and endlessly diversifying and differentiating entity in culture and in history. The powerful argument that he began was that processes observable in ritual action—especially those that are creative, generative and innovative—are constantly repeated (regardless or not of whether they are recognized as being ritual) in the contexts of major moments of social and political change. Furthermore, they often dramatically appear at transformative moments (as Turner, 1974, himself described for Hidalgo's Mexican insurrection, for the European crisis of '68, for the Vietnam protests, or no doubt could have applied to the events of the fall of the Berlin Wall). More than simply expressive of change, they are moments of symbolic formation, perhaps 'switch points' in Weber's sense, which may fashion original ontological grounds and establish new horizons of meaning and orientation. These, Turner went on to argue, did not necessarily emerge as well-worked logical and rational orders. This might occur as a rationalization after the fact which obscures the accidental, haphazard, ill-grasped nature at the moment of their emergence.

I have concentrated on Turner because his is the main route, within anthropology, for a discussion of ritual dynamics which is grounded in the phenomenon of ritual action itself. Most anthropologists have applied theoretical perspectives that have not been grounded in

the observation of rites but in non-ritual action. They have borrowed freely from linguistic philosophy (e.g. the application of the Austinian concept of performative by Rappaport, 2000), from drama and performance theory (e.g. Schechner 2002), from Bourdieu's theory of practice (e.g. Bell 1992), from cybernetics and systems theory (e.g. Shore 1999), among numerous others. Such perspectives have proved insightful. However, they subordinate ritual to the logic and rationale of practices that are not necessarily those of ritual, as this may be realized in a diversity of instances. They obscure the theoretical potential that may be abstracted from ritual practice that can both extend an understanding of ritual specifically and generally, as well as of practices that may be related to rite but which can by no means be reduced to it.

Other scholars not committed to anthropology as a discipline yet certainly within the imagination of anthropology's potential (which is founded in the empirical investigation of difference and the unfamiliar) have recognized perhaps better than many anthropologists the potential in ritual for creating a larger understanding of the action of human beings. I mention, for example, the work of Ernst Cassirer (1955) in relation to the mythopoesis of human action which derives from an attention to rite, and in particular the research of Susanne Langer (1942, 1953) who extends particularly the ideas of Cassirer and Whitehead. Langer (whose work was critical for Turner and also other anthropological theorists of rite such as Geertz and Rappaport) concentrates on aesthetic forms in terms of their symbolic and dynamic properties. She conceives of aesthetic processes, for her the quintessential domain of the symbolic, as demonstrating the capacity for communicating simultaneously the immediately concrete and the abstract, leading to the construction of complexity through relative economy or simplicity.⁴ For Langer, as for numerous others, ritual is the major crucible for the development of these potencies. It is the dynamics of the symbolic in rite and in the aesthetic (in their unity of feeling and form) that the distinct capacities of human consciousness, mind and the potentialities of human creativity (as manifest in the arts and the sciences) are revealed (see too Kapferer and Hobart [eds] 2005).

Symbolic Form and Symbolic Dynamics

Langer uses the term dynamics rather than process. This concept escapes the progressive, successional, usage of the term process which, while it accentuates the active, changing and transformational character of rite, obscures the constitutive force of ritual, as this is realized through the compositional forces of ritual action. The notion of process as used by most anthropologists also maintains a powerful representational stress which reduces the significance of the inner dynamics of rite as I will develop.

The term process as Turner particularly engages it is, of course, explicitly opposed to statics. I use the concept of dynamics to encompass both process or change and statics or stasis. As I will develop later, ritual as a relatively unchanging form, for example, is nonetheless dynamic. That is, it constitutes a dynamic field of force having affect and effect upon those who are involved in its domain. Further, the inner dynamics of a rite—even though it may be repeated in much the same way over long periods of time—are not opposed to statics or change. The dynamics of what might be conceived of as a generally repeatable or unchanging form is the key to the continuing vitality of some rites: their capacity to regenerate

participants and their realities often in original ways (see Williams and Boyd 1993 on a similar point).

Langer engages a Kantian notion of dynamics (which concentrates on the forces creating experience) focussed on the specific constructional dimensions of aesthetic or symbolic forms (music, dance, the plastic arts, language, etc.). With Kant, Langer is concerned to break out of a philosophical metaphysics which underlines her interest in dynamics, which in her usage bears close connection to notions in physics (in which dynamics and statics are not opposed). The concentration I place on dynamics (rather than process) is influenced by Langer's direction.

I have applied some of Langer's ideas to the exploration of ritual dynamics of Sinhala *tovil* or healing rites (Kapferer 1983). In this case, for example, I elaborate some of the particular temporal and spatial dynamics in performance of music and dance, their relation to the production of trance experience and then the movement out of trance through the intervention of the particular dynamics of comic-drama. The whole performance of Sinhala exorcism is explored as manifesting a complex, interrelational dynamic of different aesthetic or symbolic processes which have perceptual and conceptual effects integral to the (re)construction of experience and the (re)formation of person and self (see Kapferer 1979). One point of such an attention to the compositional dynamics of rite is that it opened up further understanding of a diversity of symbolic processes. This is so because of the particular problematic of the rites (oriented to overcome disruptions caused by demon attack) and the demand placed upon them to intervene technically within the existential ground of self-formation. The rites are pragmatically oriented to develop and exploit particular symbolic formations in such a way as to shape human perception and thereby transform experience. In so doing, the ritualists in their rites have discovered dynamic potencies that potentially have the capacity to transform experience and possibly the situations of experience.⁵

The pragmatist linguistic notion of performative is now commonly referred to in discussions of the dynamic constitutive potency of rite. But this is an extension of the spirit of the symbolic interactionist dictum made famous by W. I. Thomas: "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (1928: 571–572), and fundamental in most symbolic understandings of the ritual process. The perspective carried through into a discussion of ritual dynamics does not allow for the potency of ritual action independent of its constructed ideational meaningful scheme. Or to put the point in another way, the potency of the meaningful action of rite may be in substantial part the property of particular dynamics upon which meaningful constructs may subsequently or simultaneously build.

Beneath the Symbolic

Steven Friedson (1996) in a brilliant study of music-trance-dance among the Tumbuka people of Malawi makes this observation. He demonstrates how a specific cross-rhythmic drumming introduced at a particular moment in a healing rite creates the perceptual illusion of something materially solid entering within the body, moving around inside it, and then, as the drumming and healing continue, being withdrawn from the body. The force of this illusion and its process is deepened in the meanings that are built into this experiential development. It is important that the illusion—illusion as a physical materiality brought

about through immediate perceptual sense experience—is independent of the meanings (the interpretations) that are placed upon it. (Friedson suggests that the basic illusory experience would be grasped by anyone made the focus of such drumming.) The perceptual experience is integral to the dynamics of the ritual event but is further elaborated through other dynamics of conceptual construction (of culturally specific interpretation).

The general point should not be lost. This is that the force of much ritual maybe in the dynamics of the rite qua dynamics, in the way sensory perception is dynamically organized, which then simultaneously becomes the ground and the force behind the meaningful constructions that are woven into the dynamics.

Much of the dynamics of rite, and I am concentrating here on those that are internal to it, are a property of its performance structure. This relates to the particular integral dynamics of specific events within the rite (their aesthetic properties, orientation of participants and the dynamic of their interrelation, the form and content of acts) and to the dynamics of their relation to each other. Here attention to what can be called the structuration of the unfolding performance is important. It is in the performance structuration of ritual that transformational possibilities of the dynamics of rite perceptually and cognitively can occur, an argument that Lévi-Strauss (1963) powerfully indicated in his article on “The Effectiveness of Symbols”. Csordas (1993) carries the idea much further in his phenomenological, rather than structuralist, orientation. He focuses on the dynamics of embodiment in Merleau-Ponty’s (1962) sense whereby, in the organization of the body (body hexis) in the dynamics of ritual action, perceptual and cognitive processes, transitions and transformations are produced. The dynamics of rite in the context of embodiment involve not only the playing out of structure but its creation—the point that Victor Turner was stressing in his work whereby he countered a static Durkheimian representational orientation that had clogged much anthropological discussion of rite.

Bourdieu’s (1977) adaptation of phenomenological perspectives (especially that of Merleau-Ponty) in his development of the concepts of habitus in relation to body hexis requires some comment, especially since he has explicitly attached this practice-oriented perspective to the analysis of ritual (see also Kapferer 1997). In Bourdieu’s argument the habitus is not a set of static or determinant oppositions, as they might be in many structuralist approaches. What dimensions of the habitus are brought into opposition is dependent on the movement and positioning of persons through, for example, a structured space. Moreover, the meaning that may be emergent through such movement and positioning is embodied (as it is produced) through the (repeated) body movement. One of the first, and most successful, examples that Bourdieu gives of this approach is his analysis of the Kabyle house (see Bourdieu 1977). Such an orientation can be applied to the formation of a ritual space. However, I stress a ritual space as a highly active space (a shifting field of force), a habitus that, as part of its vital dynamic, is orienting and reorienting the bodies of participants, directing them into meanings which they are frequently made to produce and enjoined to bring before their conscious awareness. In Bourdieu’s terms the dynamic of many rites might be conceived of as being simultaneously the construction and embodiment of a lived habitus. This is one way in which I explored the significance of the Sinhala Buddhist anti-sorcery ritual known as the Suniyama (Kapferer 1997).

This rite takes the form of a rebirthing or regenerative sacrifice oriented in relation to a building which can be described as being designed in terms of a cosmic habitus, a ‘house of

the ordering dynamic of existence'. This building (which the ritualists describe as a cosmic palace, *Mahasammata Maligava*) itself is conceived as having force. Thus, as itself an aesthetic form, it works through participant perception: drawing participants within its space, reorienting and, effectively, re-ontologizing and facilitating the embodying within participants of the Buddha doxa that the cosmic building and the development of the ritual context in which the building is set comes to articulate. I stress the great ontological import of this rite. It is performed to overcome the crisis of sorcery which is conceived as in fact leading to ontological destruction. Sorcery in its most acute projection is seen—in the context of the Suniyama ritual—as returning its victims to a fragmented condition virtually at the dawn of creation, to a moment before the emergence of human consciousness when human beings invent or through the imagination construct their realities into existence (a major import of the cosmic palace and its relevant mythology, see Kapferer 1997).

One aspect of the dynamics of rite that needs stress is the way it may organize what Rappaport (2000) refers to as the ritual gathering within its formational motion. The notion of ritual gathering embraces what is otherwise referred to as audience or spectators. But these words are far too passive and they allow for far too easy an equation of theatre performance with ritual performance, when there are often major distinctions. It is these differences (see below), rather than the similarities, a thrust of so much discussion concerning rite, that demand closer attention. In much ritual the ritual gathering (that is those not directly engaged with the production of the rite) is also participant and vital in the production of rite and its dynamics. Schieffelin's (1976) account of *giso* rites among the Kaluli people of the southern highlands of New Guinea is a major demonstration of this fact. I have shown for Sinhala healing rites (Kapferer 1984) how performance sets up a dynamic of exclusion and inclusion for members of the ritual gathering, using them in fact to achieve various transformations in experience and meaning of central participants.

Ritual dynamics and the larger context

Much work on ritual is concerned with the relation between rite and its larger political and social context. How does ritual, and especially its internal dynamics, effect changes in its embracing context either for the way persons are (re)oriented within it or for the way social processes within the wider context are directed?

The main way this has been addressed is highly dependent on the particular functional integration of rites within larger cosmological, political and social dynamics or processes within embracing totalities. That is, the rite is part of the dynamic of the whole enabling various processes to be facilitated within it. Life crisis rites of birth, initiation and death in such a situation are not merely representative of changes, they effect them. For example, youths are initiated into age grades, and the socio-political order of a society at least partly conditioned through an age grade system accordingly reproduced. Such rites of initiation, because of their dynamic integration within a larger process, and upon which wider processes are dependent, might be expected to have major personal and psychological constitutive force.

Similarly, other kinds of rites, because of the dynamic centrality (and dependency) vested within them of encompassing cosmological, political and socio-economic processes, might be critical, not just for the maintenance of socio-political orders, but for effecting radical adjustments and transformations or disjunctive transmutations of major historical significance.

Anthropological and historically-based ethnographies are replete with examples. Rappaport's (1968) discussion of the New Guinea Maring *kaiko* pig sacrifice is one. The *kaiko* in Rappaport's argument is driven to be performed in circumstances of ecological overload which gathers significance in socio-cultural terms. The ceremony itself operates along the lines of a cybernetic-systemic feedback loop that readjusts the dynamic of the socio-political ecological order of the Maring as a whole, potentially setting off socio-cultural and ecological processes in new directions. The *kaiko* intervenes through its own internal dynamic that switches and transmutes ongoing processes around it.

Systems structured in relation to cosmic kingship yield great potency to the dynamics of the rites that concentrate on cosmic or divine kings. These are active in (re) forming the realities on which the potency of the king depends (see Gluckman 1954; Geertz 1973; Heesterman 1993; de Heusch 1981; Sahlins 1980; Seneviratne 1978; Valeri 1985). They are more than merely hegemonic; that is, vital in the ideological support of a system of power. Rites of cosmic kingship are critical in the formation of hierarchical structures at all points in the dynamics of the reproductive change of that order (often extremely complex in its diversity and frequently manifesting forms of contestation and resistance). This is so from the level of the body and person, to the processes of domestic and wider kinship relations, and overall for the formation of a religio-political order. I emphasise the importance of the inner dynamic of such rites of cosmic kingship.

This is demonstrated extremely well when such systems are invaded by forces whose dynamic structure and orientational cosmology are entirely distinct. Thus the advent of Captain Cook off the Hawaiian Islands at the time of the Makahiki Festival (an annual rite of social and political reformation focussed on the king) set the reproductive implications of this rite off in new directions. These were not merely because of the potency of hitherto external forces as such but because of the mediating potency of the rite itself. It made Cook and the material and social values associated with his presence dynamically internal to the political and social reproductive machinery that were integral to the dynamics of the major rites of Hawaiian kingship that were condensed into the ritual formation of the Makahiki festival (see Sahlins 1980). The making meaningful of the events involving Cook, in Hawaiian terms and through ritual, was a process which involved a revaluation of the conceptual categories which were engaged in the ongoing production of everyday life. As a consequence the nature of everyday Hawaiian life was changed by Hawaiians themselves even as they thought they were maintaining it.

Sri Lanka at the time of the British colonial conquest, although vastly different from the Hawaiian situation, demonstrates some similarities. The invasion by the British of the medieval Sinhala capital of Kandy in 1815 resulted in the deposition (and exile) of the Sinhala king and the British appropriation of the annual festival of the kingship to their political interests. The festival was continued with the critical difference that it celebrated the British colonial ascendancy over the Sinhalese. Effectively they transmuted the rite into a festival of British hegemony, a rite which simultaneously represented British sovereignty and became an agency of Indirect Rule through Sinhala political and social institutions (see Seneviratne 1978). Indirect Rule at the time, of course, was not yet a conscious articulated British colonial policy (Sri Lanka and Fiji were in numerous ways the sites where the policy was worked out). I suggest that, indeed, the appropriation of the Kandy festival did for a while operate as a successful "apparatus of capture" (see Deleuze

and Guattari 1988). Through the artifice of this rite, whose inner dynamics condensed forces for the annual regeneration of relations and subjectivities throughout the erstwhile Sinhala realm, the British, perhaps unintentionally, were active in a reevaluation of the very cosmological terms of the continued existence and repetition of the rite. Moreover, the British capture of a socially and politically central rite, integral to the social reproduction of the realities into which they had intruded, was a factor in the creation of a capitalist modernist world vital to the support of British colonial hegemony. The festival would become entirely representative of British power and later expressive of the power of Sinhala elites freed of the colonial yoke. In other words, a theatre for the display of power rather than the regeneration of its circumstance. But for a while it did, through its inner dynamics, have force in facilitating the encysting of a new political and economic formation (see Seneviratne 1978).

With social and political processes of demythologization and the gathering secularism associated with modernization and globalization, the dynamics of rite are not likely to have such ramifying effects through social and political space. The major exceptions, perhaps, are rites in those cults that closely define their own socio-political realities as in the total institutional forms of certain new religious movements (e.g. some contemporary Pentecostalism, perhaps cults such as Sai Baba, or Amma in Kerala, numerous contemporary African cults, etc.).

But here I have conceived the effects of inner ritual dynamics as being dependent on what anthropologists once described as the functional integration of the symbolic practice of rite into its larger socio-political field. When such functional integration is broken (as in processes of demythologization), ritual is often analysed as a site of traditionalist irrationalism, perhaps a totalizing form that in postmodernity is incongruent with contemporary realities. There are, of course, bound to be exceptions for in modern realities ritual forms or practices are routinely (re)invented, often taking the shape of the diverse and heterogeneous realities of which they are a part. This is by no means necessarily a phenomenon of the present for descriptions of rites everywhere indicate that they are often borrowed (sometimes bought). Their very hybridity is a vital dimension of their potency. While this is recognized by students of rite the tendency is to treat such practices—in the circumstances of contemporaneity—in rationalist terms: for example, as fetishized practice, as mystification. While their hybridity, fetishism and, indeed, mystifying propensities may be conceived as the dynamics of ritual, and often appropriate to understanding the force of rite, they are no less general categories of explanation, founded in modernist rationalism, and do not necessarily demand a close examination of the actual dynamics of rite. Moreover, such understandings continue the totalizing functionalist orientation that assumes the integration of the rite with its encompassing context although reissued as a malintegration (the concepts of mystification and fetishism explicitly suggest this). As a result the rite becomes a source of misconception about the nature of larger processes.

Some rites may gain their force, even a continuing potency, despite changes and transformations in the cultural and socio-political worlds of their performance, precisely because they are, to a degree, independent of larger realities. Attention to the change of the internal content and structure of rites may occasionally be too strongly based in the assumption that it is in their change that they maintain relevance to the larger context. Undoubtedly, rites change over historical time but such a fact may be less significant than

their relatively unchanging constancy through time. Ritualists themselves frequently insist that their rites—often central or core rites such as sacrifice—are repetitions of the same originary rite. There is ideological and instrumental value in such a claim which obscures the fact that changes have taken place. Nonetheless, there is much evidence for the broad continuity of ritual form (and content) over time and, indeed, a tension (even an ideological commitment) not only to maintain structure and content but also to force a disjunction of the rite from its embracing context.

Anthropologists and other scholars have often defined a critical dimension of ritual performance to be its radical suspension of ordinary everyday realities. Such a notion underpins Turner's concept of liminality and is integral to its changing or transformational power. His analysis insists on the liminal as a levelling, subversion and negation of quotidian lived-in structures of life. Turner's development of this position has yielded much insight, as have similar notions of ritual and festival as expressing crucial dimensions of the ludic or play (e.g. Huizinga 1971 [1938]; Bakhtin 1988; Turner 1982; Handelman 1990; Koeppling 1994). These perspectives all indicate important aspects of the internal dynamics of rite, especially its socially critical as well as creative potencies. The comedic and playful character of some rites (as the ludic outside the context of ritual) is an important feature of their capacity to break out of determining logics, to cross registers, and generate novel meanings and understandings.

But I wish to push ritual as a radical suspension of ordinary realities in a slightly different direction and to suggest that it is the very disjunction of the world of rite from its larger context that contributes to the force of much ritual dynamics. I add to this notion the non-representational character of the world of rite as this is formed in its disjunctive space. I mean by this that the processes of rites are not always to be conceived of as directly reflective of outer realities, as has been the thrust of conventional symbolic analyses.

This is not to say that they do not grasp or represent meanings that are integral to broad abstract cosmological notions, often giving such ideas explicit, grounded and experienced manifestation in the concretized pragmatics of ritual processes. Such cosmological ideas may be implicated in everyday non-ritual practices, perhaps part of their tacit meaning, and, at least, available to the construction and interpretation of ordinary and routine occurrences. They may even be metaphoric of larger processes but this is secondary, frequently an analytic construction made by scholars who maintain themselves as being external to the phenomenon in question and committed to other rationalities. The analytical insistence is sometimes of the kind that rite is an inversion of the real; in extreme positions, a fetishism, a mystification. Herein is the dynamic function of rite (see in different ways Bloch 1986; Taussig 1987; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Staal 1989). Undoubtedly there is point to such assertions, but they are often formed from standpoints outside of ritual and unsympathetic to it. The view is founded, as I commented before, in the approach that assumes the functional integration of rite into its embracing polity and society. Thus rite is either negatively or positively integrated.

Ritual virtuality: the dynamics of the virtual

The direction I take here is one that concentrates on ritual as a virtuality. That is, as a dynamic process in and of itself with no essential representational symbolic relation to

external realities: for example, as a coded symbolic formation whose interpretation or meaning is ultimately reducible to the socio-political and psychological world outside the ritual context. The approach to virtuality that I develop accentuates the internal dynamics of rite as the potency of the capacity of ritual to alter, change or transform the existential circumstances of persons in non ritual realities. This, I suggest, demands no necessary change in the overall cosmological symbolic shape or practiced elements or events defining the rite (for example, of a particular cultural type and project) as this has been historically developed. Thus a rite that has been fashioned in the circumstances of specific historical processes (for example, some rites of healing in Sri Lanka that were constructed after the manner of rites of ritual cleansing and regeneration of cosmic kings in ancient Sri Lanka, see Kapferer 1997) may continue—because of the nature of its inner dynamics—a vital changing or transformational function. Its traditionality is already a practice of modernity: it is always already modern (see Kapferer 2002).⁶

My use of the concept of virtuality draws predominantly from the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1994) but is also influenced by Langer's notion of the virtual.⁷ They develop the term away from connotations of the kind that indicate that it is somehow less than real or in one way or another a model of reality or else an ideality. These approaches cling to representational forms of argument and, therefore, drive analysts to discover the meaning of ritual action either in subterranean psychologies or in outer political and social existences. The virtual is no less a reality, a fully lived existential reality, than ordinary realities of life. Yet it is substantially different. I draw attention to two aspects.

First, I stress the virtuality of rite as a kind of phantasmagoric space (see Kapferer [ed.] 2002). That is, as a dynamic which allows all kinds of potentialities of human experience to take shape and form. It is, in effect, a self-contained imaginal space—at once a construction but a construction which enables participants to break free from the constraints or determinations of everyday life and even from the determinations of the constructed ritual virtual space itself. In this sense the virtual of ritual may be described as a determinant form that is paradoxically anti-determinant, able to realize human constructive agency. The phantasmagoric space of ritual virtuality may be conceived as a space whose dynamic not only interrupts prior determining processes but also is a space in which participants can reimagine (and redirect or reorient themselves) into the everyday circumstances of life (see too Williams and Boyd 1993).

The virtuality of such ritual spaces, and the kinds of dynamics that can be produced in them, might be seen as similar to the virtualities of contemporary technologically produced cyber realities. Nonetheless, I consider ritual virtualities of the kind I have been outlining as distinct. They are not attempts to reproduce the existential processes of real realities (and, therefore, virtually real, simulacra, or not quite real). I reiterate the earlier point that the virtuality of ritual reality is really real, a complete and filled out existential reality but in its own terms.

Neither can ritual virtualities be understood as alternate or parallel realities. I have stressed the non-referentiality of ritual virtuality to external reality. This, of course, does not mean that it is independent of such reality. Ritual is a vital dimension of what I am calling the really real or for want of a better term, actuality. But this is so in a distinct sense which relates to what I regard as the critical second aspect of what I take to be the character of many rites and their dynamics of virtuality.

Deleuze and Guattari suggest that the virtuality of which they write constitutes a descent into processes of the really real. Herein is the distinction between virtuality and reality, or actuality. Actuality is described as chaotic and I follow their usage. The ordinary everyday realities that human beings live, construct and pass through are continuously forming, merging and flowing into each other. They are chaotic in the sense that they are fractal-like, always changing and shifting, immanent within and structuring, differentiating in form, cross-cutting and intersecting as persons move through space and alter standpoint. The structures of life, relevant expectations, orders within which action is framed, the moods and senses of living are relatively seamlessly melding into each other, eased perhaps, and often subconsciously, by rules or mini rites of entry and egress. This chaotic dimension (or chaosmos) of ordinary lived processes constitutes the reality of actuality. The virtual reality of ritual, in contrast, is a slowing down of the tempo of everyday life and a holding in abeyance or suspension some of the vital qualities of lived reality. This is what Deleuze and Guattari point to as the descent into reality of the virtual, as they employ the concept. I suggest that this is a critical quality of the virtuality of rite. Thus ritual as virtual reality is thoroughly real, even part of the reality of actuality. However, through its slowing down and temporary abeyance of dimensions of ordinary flow, it is an engagement with the compositional structuring dynamics of life and so is in the very midst of life's processes.

The virtuality of rite can be regarded as critical to what I referred to as its *techne*. It is not a modelling of lived processes (as is indicated in some ritual analyses) but a method for entering within life's vital processes and adjusting its dynamics. By entering within the particular dynamics of life by means of the virtuality of ritual, ritualists engage with positioning and structuring processes that are otherwise impossible to address in the tempo and dynamics of ordinary lived processes as these are lived at the surface.

This orientation to ritual as a virtual reality (careful to distinguish it from common understandings in contemporary cyber discourse) expands an understanding of the dynamics of many (if not all) kinds of ethnographically recorded rites. I refer, for example, to what some scholars such as Geertz and especially Lévi-Strauss have described as the obsession of ritualists with detail and the exactitude of their operations. These operations I take to be connected with the building—within virtual space—of the compositional formation of reality into which ritual descends. The apparent repetitive dynamic of so much ritual is a dimension of the radical slowing down in the virtuality of rite of the tempo of ordinary life: its speed, continuous shifts in standpoint, changes in perspective and structures of context—the chaos of lived existence. What is routinely described in ritual analysis as the suspension of quotidian realities, is not so much their suspension as a holding at bay some of the chaotic qualities of reality so that some of the dynamics of reality formation can be entered into and retuned, readjusted.⁸

Here it is relevant to recall some of my earlier comments concerning Bourdieu's notion of habitus and its application to rite. Bourdieu conceives of various routine lived spaces and practices (ritual and non-ritual) as exercises of the habitus, whereby the dispositional schemes of life are reproduced, themselves becoming the creative and generating forces in the continuous differentiating production of everyday realities. While ritual dynamics can be usefully conceived in such a way, the formulation of rites as virtual realities draws attention to the potential many possess for enabling entry to, and problematisation of, a habitus. Indeed, I suggest, engaging machinically within the habitus so as to reconstruct, restore or

introduce radical new elements into the dynamic structurings of its possibility. The aesthetics, repetitions, careful detailing, the slowing of tempo, shifting positioning of participants, recontextualizations et cetera are major means for readjusting the processes within life which, among many other things, permit life as it is lived to regain its uninterrupted flow.

There are numerous examples provided in ethnography. Initiation rites, I think, provide clear instances. Famous examples are those among Amerindians, referred to by Clastres. The *cisungu* girl's initiation rites among Bemba-speaking peoples of Central Africa provide a well-known illustration (see Richards 1956; La Fontaine 1985; the reanalysis by Handelman 1990, and the highly original work of Simonsen 2000).

My own analysis of anti-sorcery Sinhala healing rites among the Sinhalese (Kapferer 1997) explicitly engages the notion of ritual as virtuality and in the twofold sense of an imaginal space and as a technical site for entering within the dynamics of reality formation. Thus the personal and social crisis that sorcery manifests can (within the Sinhala Buddhist context) be grasped as a moment when cosmological unities which are embedded in ongoing practice are effectively shattered, blocking and inhibiting the flow of life and its manifold projects. The dynamics of the virtual space of the Suniyama rite is one where cosmological unities are re-insisted as an imaginal order, and the hierarchical principles—vital in the differentiating structuring flow of reality—brought once more to fruition. Participants located in the imaginal space of the rite re-embody its processes as vital to the ongoing generation of life in all its chaotic actuality. The Sinhala Suniyama rite also explicitly is concerned with descending inside space/time dynamics, repositioning participants within such processes and bringing forth their capacity to constitute unselfconsciously dimensions of ordinary life, to move unhindered through its various orders and processes. Within the virtual space of the rite, participants engage in exercises of structuration of relations (via the dynamics of the gift) and of consciousness (via the practice and power of language—the major significance of comedic episodes in the rite (Kapferer 1997: 162–167)—regaining their composure with the flows of actuality.

The ritualists who perform the Suniyama claim that it has maintained its form and content since its invention at the beginning of time and the formation of human socio-political orders. Of course this is an ideological statement among much else authorizing their work. No doubt it has changed over time, although there are clearly major elements within it that can be demonstrated as fairly close to what has been recorded for similar practices well into medieval times. We are all familiar with similar claims in other traditions such as those of critical rites within Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hindu India et cetera. The concentration that I have placed on ritual dynamics and especially upon ritual as virtuality indicates that it is indeed the dynamics of rite (as so many ritualists claim), rather than the fact of the empirical change of the form and content of such rites, that is one aspect of their continued force in many contemporary contexts. Their features, which for some scholars make them inappropriate to contemporary actualities, disguise the crucial potencies of their dynamics that an attention to them as virtualities highlights.

The orientation that I have essayed to ritual dynamics, and especially ritual as virtuality, extends from other perspectives (specifically Turner), although it does indicate some redirections. The flat, linear, triadic ritual process of Van Gennep and Turner, through the conception of the virtual as I use it, becomes a descent into the ground of reality rather than a making and a marking of a stage in a linear progression. What I am saying is already

strongly implicit in Turner's work. His initial interest in psychoanalysis (both Freud and Jung) is testimony to this, but an attention to the virtuality of rite enables the understanding of ritual to remain with its particular dynamics, to remain with the specific phenomenology of ritual practices, without reducing them to authorities who are at significant distance from their practice. In the approach to virtuality I have essayed here, there is a move away from Turner's anti-structural orientation more towards a dynamic of structuration. Although the representational, meaning-driven, symbolic perspective continues to be important there is a shift to ritual as a dynamic for the production of meaning rather than necessarily predominantly meaningful in itself: a perspective that tends to overvalue ritual as representation and places a huge stress on processes such as reflexivity. Fritz Staal (1989) has innovatively attacked the obsession with meaning in ritual analysis but he, as with Lévi-Strauss before him who is committed to meaning but as abstraction, misses the critical import of the dynamics, repetitions, compartmentalizations, detailings of rite that this discussion of the virtual suggests.

My attention to dynamics here indicates some reconsideration of various performance approaches as well, while not negating their value. Performance is a greatly over-used concept. In many ways everything can be conceived as a performance in one sense or another—even the relatively self-enclosed practice of writing and reading—which is a factor in the stress on interpretation and reflexivity (often of a highly individualistic kind) in the analysis of ritual. But the dominant notion of performance in ritual analysis is that drawn from the theatre, which I regard as being acutely problematic. Ritual is conventionally seen as similar to the drama of theatre and, indeed, sometimes as the primordial form of theatrical drama (e.g. Harrison 1997 [1913]; Turner 1982; Geertz 1972; Schechner 2002; Emigh 1996). The observation is highly questionable but even if it is so, an attention to ritual dynamics might reveal ritual as closer to what goes on behind the scenes in theatrical performance than what is overtly presented. Much ritual is directed to the foregrounding of the mechanics of construction and production, the rules and procedures for the creation and reinvention of the ongoing shifting illusionary scenes of everyday life. Rather than engaging the theatrical metaphor of performance, an orientation from the perspective of dynamics pursued in this essay might re-conceive ritual performance as a dynamic field of force in whose virtual space human psychological, cognitive and social realities are forged anew so that ritual participants are both reoriented to their ordinary realities and embodied with potencies to restore or else reconstruct their lived worlds. I note that the conception of ritual performance as a dynamic field of origination is already implicit, if not thoroughly explicit, in Victor Turner's reorientation of the analysis of ritual in terms of his concept of process.

Concluding remarks

Turner's work on ritual radically changed what were then dominant orientations. No more merely a system of collective representations or a form which reflected the character of external realities or a mechanism of the reproduction of, or transformation into, the same, ritual was re-conceived as a crucible for the emergence of original meaning, of new ways of structuring relations and for reorienting experience. Ritual was no longer the dead hand of traditionalism. If it resounded with primordial quality and sense, ritual processes were recognized by Turner as engaging such primordialism to the creation and invention of new

orders and orientations of reality. Moreover, Turner saw rite not so much as something to be explained as a phenomenon for the demonstration of grand theory but rather as a site within which the theoretical imagination could be excited and frames for the exploration and understanding of the possibilities and potentialities of human being could be explored. Turner's writing both conceptually and ethnographically remains exemplary of the potency of his vision. What I have attempted here is to extend in some limited ways the direction to which the path that he blazed was leading. One aim was to break out of the Van Gennepian mould to which Turner cleaved. Integral though it was for breaking away from some of the conventional, largely Durkheimian, approaches of his time it clouded, nonetheless, some of the potentiality of Turner's re-orientation. Thus my concern here has been to develop the concepts of dynamics and the virtual as ways of expanding the great import of Turner's intervention not only for the study of ritual but for the human sciences in general.

What I have discussed with reference to a concentration on ritual dynamics will apply in highly various ways to that which is described as ritual action. This is especially so with regard to the virtuality of rite. I consider that what I have suggested is likely to be most relevant to rituals that are directed to alter the circumstances (simultaneously social and psychological) in which the experience of participants have hitherto been constituted. That is, with rites that are not so much concerned with presenting the nature of apparent reality (varieties of public and formal ceremonial, rites of commemoration, parades, festivals etc.) as with entering directly within the forces of their production, construction and reinvention.

NOTES

.....
¹ This paper is a revised version of a lecture presented in the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Helsinki, in honour of Victor Turner on March 17th, 2007. Another version of this paper has also been published in Don Handelman and Galina Lindquist (eds), *Ritual in Its Own Right*, Berghahn: Oxford 2007. I wish to thank Professor Jukka Siikala for giving me the opportunity to present this lecture and for the very helpful comments from students and staff who gathered to the occasion.

² In certain aspects, Durkheim's concept of the sacred as developed by Hubert and Mauss can be viewed as a liminal space in the sense developed by Turner. The passage through or towards the sacred in Hubert and Mauss's analysis of sacrifice might be conceived of as effecting both a transition and a transformation.

³ Victor Turner, of course, was highly influenced by 'situational and extended-case' analysis developed by Manchester anthropologists who conducted their fieldwork in central and southern Africa. The idea emerged from Max Gluckman's initial inspiration gained from fieldwork in Zululand. Essentially, the idea was that practices themselves already contain their own theoretical understanding. A further idea was that such theoretical understanding, locked within practice, was open horizontal. That is, there were myriad different concatenations of practice that might reveal the 'logics' (not the closed system of philosophical logic, but practical logic in Bourdieu's sense) integral within and driving the practice. Ritual, I think, for Turner was a kind of natural event, constituted as such by participants. In this sense it was more primary than the events of Gluckman's situation analysis that were constructed in their significance by the anthropological observer rather than by the participant. Gluckman and his colleagues in their approach to events or situations were concerned with process and dynamics. But Turner, in his consideration of ritual expanded the idea. The influence of situational analysis as developed by Gluckman and others is clear in Turner's early work and it should be noted for it extends an understanding of the intellectual milieu that drew Turner to the work of Van Gennep.

⁴ Thus Langer argues that it is in ritual contexts where the symbolic is elaborated that the conditions for the formation of language are established. Symbolic processes reduce complexity and it is in this dynamic that language can emerge. The simplicity of the symbolic enables the communication of otherwise complex and irreducible experience.

⁵ Williams and Boyd (1993) have extended Langer's approach to aesthetics to an understanding of Zoroastrian ritual.

⁶ Where ancient rites are seen to continue into modernity, this is often conceived as a "reinvention of tradition" (see Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). Undoubtedly this is so, and is well-demonstrated in many of the festivals of contemporary Europe which have been explicitly re-invented. It is also true of many ritual reinventions in a diversity of contemporary nationalist movements. But this is not always the case even though their personal, social and political import is achieved or reinvented in contemporaneity. But in this sense rites through their repetition are always being reinvented simultaneously with the attempt to make them continuous with what was practiced before. Ritual in the sense I am suggesting here is both continuous and inventive. These are not necessarily contradictions or oppositions as appears to be the implication of some invention of tradition perspectives.

⁷ Langer's usage of the concept of virtual appears to be distinct from that of Deleuze and Guattari, this is especially so because of her stress on symbolism and symbolic meaning. But as with Deleuze and Guattari she tries to avoid metaphysics and draws explicitly from physics and particularly optics. The virtual, for her, is a dimension of the real, or the actual, in so far as it describes the dynamics, lines of force et cetera upon which human perceptions and meaningful constructions of reality depend. Aesthetic forms achieve their specific potency in their organization of a particular dynamic perceptual field.

⁸ The main sorcery rite performed in southern Sri Lanka, the *Suniyama* (Kapferer 1997), is directed explicitly to repositioning the victims of sorcery within space/time. Much anxiety and suffering grasped as sorcery is seen to be a direct result of the inauspicious location of victims in space/time as a consequence of their birth date and time. The Suniyama operates to reposition them by developing around them a new organization of space/time coordinates which frees them from previous inauspicious effects.

REFERENCES

-
- Asad, Talal** 1993. *The Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail** 1988. *Rabelais and His World*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Barth, Fredrik** 1966. *Models of Social Organization*. London: Royal Anthropological Institute.
- Bell, Catherine** 1992. *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bell, Catherine** 1997. *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bloch, Maurice** 1986. *From Blessing to Violence: History and Ideology in the Circumcision Ritual of the Merina of Madagascar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre** 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cassirer, Ernst** 1955 [1923–1929]. *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*. 3 vols. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Clastres, Pierre** 1989. *Society Against the State: Essays in Political Anthropology*. Trans. Robert Hurley and Abe Stein. New York: Zone Books.
- Csordas, Thomas J.** 1993. *The Sacred Self: A Cultural Phenomenology of Charismatic Healing*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- de Heusch, Luc** 1981. *The Drunken King, or, The Origin of the State*. Trans. Roy Willis. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari** 1988. *A Thousand Plateaus*. Trans. Brian Masumi. London: Athlone Press.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari** 1994. *What Is Philosophy?* Trans. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson. London: Verso.
- Douglas, Mary** 1966. *Purity and Danger*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

- Emigh, John** 1996. *Masked Performance: The Play of Self and Other in Ritual and Theatre*. Pittsburgh, University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Friedson, Steven** 1996. *Dancing Propbets: Musical Experience in Tumbuka Healing*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Geertz, Clifford** 1965. *The Social History of an Indonesian Town*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Geertz, Clifford** 1972. Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight. *Daedalus* 101 (1): 1–37.
- Geertz, Clifford** 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- Geertz, Clifford** 1980a. Blurred Genres: the reconfiguration of social thought. *The American Scholar* 49 (2): 165–179.
- Geertz, Clifford** 1980b. *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Gennep, Arnold Van** 1960 [1909]. *The Rites of Passage*. Trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Cafee. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Gluckman, Max** 1954. *Rituals of Rebellion in South-East Africa*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Handelman, Don** 1990. *Models and Mirrors: Towards an Anthropology of Public Events*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Harrison, Jane** 1997 [1913]. *Ancient Art and Ritual*. New York: Kessinger.
- Heesterman, J. C.** 1993. *The Broken World of Sacrifice: An Essay in Ancient Indian Ritual*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Hobsbawm, Eric, and Terence Ranger** (eds) 1983. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hubert, Henri, and Marcel Mauss** 1964. *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Functions*. Trans. W. D. Halls. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Huizinga, Johan** 1971 [1938]. *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Humphrey, Caroline, and James Laidlaw** 1994. *The Archetypal Actions of Ritual*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Kapferer, Bruce** 1979. Mind, Self and Other in Demonic Illness: The Negation and Reconstruction of Self. *American Ethnologist* 6: 110–133.
- Kapferer, Bruce** 1983. *A Celebration of Demons*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Kapferer, Bruce** 1984. The Ritual Process and the Problem of Reflexivity in Sinhalese Demon Exorcisms. In John J. MacAloon (ed.), *Rite, Drama, Festival Spectacle*. Philadelphia: Institute for Human Issues.
- Kapferer, Bruce** 1997. *The Feast of the Sorcerer: Practices of Consciousness and Power*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Kapferer, Bruce** 2002b. Sorcery, Modernity and the Constitutive Imaginary: Hybridizing Continuities. *Social Analysis* 46 (3): 103–128.
- Kapferer, Bruce** (ed.) 2002. *Beyond Rationalism*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Kapferer, Bruce, and Angela Hobart** (eds) 2005. *Aesthetics in Performance: Formations of Symbolic Construction and Experience*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Koeping, Klaus-Peter** 1997. "The Ludic as Creative Disorder: Framing, De-Framing and Boundary Crossing." In K.-P. Köpping (ed.), *The Games of God and Man: Essays in Play and Performance*. Hamburg: Lit Verlag.
- La Fontaine, Jean S.** 1985. *Initiation*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Langer, Susan K.** 1942. *Philosophy in a New Key*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Langer, Susan K.** 1953. *Feeling and Form*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Leach, Edmund** 1961. *Rethinking Anthropology*. London: University of London.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude** 1963. *Structural Anthropology*. London: Penguin Books.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude** 1966. *The Savage Mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice** 1962. *The Phenomenology of Perception*. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich** 1995 [1872]. *The Birth of Tragedy*. Trans. Clifton P. Fadiman. New York: Dover.
- Rappaport, Roy A.** 1968. *Pigs for the Ancestors*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Rappaport, Roy A.** 2000. *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, Audrey I.** 1956. *Cisungu: A Girl's Initiation Ceremony among the Bemba of Northern Rhodesia*. London: Faber & Faber.

BRUCE KAPFERER

- Sahlins, Marshall** 1980. *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Schechner, Richard** 2002. *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. London: Routledge.
- Schieffelin, Buck** 1976. *The Sorrow of the Lonely and the Burning of the Dancers*. New York: St. Martins Press.
- Seneviratne, H. L.** 1978. *Rituals of the Kandyan State*. London: Athlone Press.
- Shore, Bradd** 1999. *Culture in Mind: Cognition, Culture and the Problem of Meaning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Simonsen, Jan Kjetil** 2000. *Webs of Life: An Ethnographic Account of Chisungu Female Initiation Rituals among Mambwe-Speaking Women in Zambia*. Ph.D. diss., University of Oslo.
- Staal, Frits** 1989. *Rules without Meaning: Ritual, Mantras, and the Human Sciences*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Taussig, Michael** 1987. *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Thomas, W. I. and D.S. Thomas** 1928. *The child in America: Behavior problems and programs*. New York: Knopf
- Turner, Edith** 1992. *Experiencing Ritual: A New Interpretation of African Healing*. Pittsburgh: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Turner, Edith** 2005. *Heart of Lightness: The Life Story of an Anthropologist*. Oxford: Berghahn.
- Turner, Victor** 1957. *Schism and Continuity in an African Society*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Turner, Victor** 1962. *Chibamba the White Spirit*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Turner, Victor** 1969. *The Ritual Process*. London: Routledge.
- Turner, Victor** 1974. *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Turner, Victor** 1982. *From Ritual to Theatre*. New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications.
- Valeri, Valerio** 1985. *Kingship and Sacrifice: Ritual and Society in Ancient Hawaii*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Williams, R. G., and James W. Boyd** 1993. *Ritual Art and Knowledge: Aesthetic Theory and Zoroastrian Ritual*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.
- Willis, Roy** 1999. *Some Spirits Heal, Others Only Dance: A Journey into Human Selfhood in an African Village*. Oxford: Berg Press.

BRUCE KAPFERER
PROFESSOR
SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN
Bruce.Kapferer@sosanttr.uib.no