VICTOR TURNER'S SOCIAL DRAMA AND T. S. ELIOT'S RITUAL DRAMA

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Cet article se présente comme une analyse de deux textes mis en opposition l'un face à l'autre: c'est une étude de Victor Turner au sujet d'une pièce de T. S. Eliot. Aucun argument ne démontre que l'un dérive de l'autre. Publiée en 1974, l'étude cherche à montrer que la théorie de Turner sur la nature du drame social exerce un impact sur l'interprétation du conflit opposant l'archevêque Thomas Becket au roi Henri II d'Angleterre en 1170. Le drame rituel d'Eliot, publié en 1935, commémore le martyre de Becket. Une différence considérable définit les genres et les intentions de ces deux oeuvres. Toutefois, la lecture de chaque texte, l'un éclairant l'autre, nous conduit à la discussion de leur critique respective et révèle le sens de métaphores dominantes inspirant l'interprétation que donnent Turner et Eliot du fait historique.

This article "intertextualizes" a case study by Victor Turner with a play by T. S. Eliot, without arguing that either is derived from the other. The case study, published in 1974, brings Turner's theory of social drama to bear on the confrontation between Archbishop Thomas Becket and King Henry II of England in 1170 A.D. The play is a ritual drama published by Eliot in 1935 for a commemoration of Becket's martyrdom. Thus, the genres and intentions of the two works differ considerably. Nevertheless, reading each text in the light of the other leads to a discussion of the mutual critiques they imply, and reveals the dominant metaphors that organize Turner's and Eliot's treatment of the same historic event.

INTRODUCTION

The confrontation between Archbishop Thomas Becket and King Henry II of England in 1170 A.D. has been anthropologically analyzed by Victor Turner and ritually dramatized by T. S. Eliot. I propose to show that, despite the difference of genre, the two treatments are comparable in that each depends on a system of dominant metaphors. My thesis is that Eliot's metaphors are essentially spatial, static, and circular, whereas Turner's metaphors are temporal, linear, and processual. The reason for this comparison is to show how a theologically-based play and a theo-

retically-grounded analysis can imply mutual criticisms and refinements. This undertaking illustrates the fruitfulness of linking the conceptually and textually oriented methods of religious studies with the social science methods of anthropology. First, Turner's theory will be outlined. This will be followed by a consideration of Turner's treatment of the case of Thomas Becket, and an examination of the play, *Murder in the Cathedral*, by T. S. Eliot (originally published in 1935). Finally, I will compare Turner's interpretation of the confrontation with that of Eliot.

TURNER'S THEORY OF SOCIAL DRAMA

Victor Turner's term for any conflictual social interaction is "social drama." Such interaction can be analyzed in four phases: (1) breach; (2) crisis; (3) redress; and (4) reintegration. Although Turner acknowledges the possibility of other models in addition to this agonistic one (Turner 1980:151), he tends to treat all social conflict in terms of it. He says he arrived at the model by observing social interaction among the Ndembu of west-central Angola in Africa, and then subsequently recognizing the same pattern elsewhere. Turner insists that he did not derive the model from Aristotle's description of tragedy on the stage and then impose it on social interactions (ibid.: 153). Consequently, his dramatistic method is anthropological rather than esthetic in origin. Despite his recognition that esthetic drama (which he calls "cultural performance") and social drama are dialectically related, Turner often assigns priority to social drama. In his "genealogy of genres," social drama is the "grandparent," while stage drama is the "child." The "parent" between generations is ritual. Thus, social drama is the basis of ritual and judiciary procedures, which then become the bases of cultural performances.

It is difficult to determine whether Turner imagines the movement of drama from one level to another as historical, causal-developmental, theoretical-methodological, or phenomenological-typological. He seems to vacillate among these possibilities. In any case, his "genealogy" becomes dialectical insofar as cultural performances such as narrative and drama function as paradigms which provoke further social dramas, thus completing the circle. Put simply, stories can "emplot" lives (ibid.:153). When stories do this, they reach below the level of consciousness and lay "fiduciary hold" on a person or group of persons (ibid.:154). Such persons, whom Turner refers to as "star groupers," seem possessed. Their actions seem driven by scenarios exercising cognitive, emotive, and conative force.

Of special importance is redress, the third phase of social drama. Redress: (1) evokes rituals and other cultural performances; and (2) gives rise to reflexivity (performances in which a society can contemplate itself). If we think of cultural per-

formances as derived from social performances, we must look for the origins of cultural performances not in social drama in general, but in redress, the third phase of social drama. Redress occurs when judiciary proceedings and religious ritual provide symbolic feedback during a crisis. Law, whose ritual dimensions Turner designates "ceremony" or "secular ritual" (ibid.:156, 161), *indicates*, while religious (or liminal) ritual *transforms*. Ceremony reflects normative, structured, social realities, while ritual, in the narrower sense of the term, dissolves order and casts things into a "subjunctive" mode. Turner states that this subjunctivity is the "mother of indicativity" (ibid.:164). Thus, one may amplify the previous analysis in the form of the following diagram:

Social Drama:

(a) Breach (b) Crisis (c) Redress (d) Reintegration

Ritual (Broad Sense):

(a) Ritual (strict sense): Subjunctive, Liminal, Religious.
(b) Ceremony: Indicative, Normative, Political.

Reflexivity:

Cultural Performances:

(a) Drama
(b) Narrative: Stories, Gossip, Chronicles.

Reflexivity, which Turner thinks can heal a breach in the social fabric by enacting it, is derived from rituals of both the juridical and religious sort. In turn, reflexivity is the kind of self-awareness that can lead to an esthetic frame of mind. Thus, it can produce drama and various sorts of narratives, including chronicle, story, and gossip. Because Turner does not explicitly state whether he thinks of dramas as a form of narrative, his discussion is more ambiguous than the above diagram makes the progression seem. Another caution about the above flow chart is that ritual does not *produce* reflexivity in the human mind so much as ritual *is* reflexivity in the somatic-performative mode.

Turner's model for understanding ritual consists of the phases of a rite of passage as schematized by Van Gennep (1960): separation, transition, and incorporation. As is well-known by now, Turner emphasizes the middle or "liminal" phase, regarding it as a powerful source of transformation and innovation in culture. Since he himself posits a parallel between the phases of a rite of passage and those of a social drama, one might wonder which is really the model for which:

Phases of a Rite of Passage:	Separation (preliminal) →	Transition (liminal) →	Incorporation (postliminal) →
Phases of a Social Drama:	Breach-Crisis	Redress	Reintegration

Does Turner perceive social dramas in terms of rites of passage, or does he perceive a rite of passage in terms of social dramas? Or, do such striking homologies between ritual experience and social experience occur as the result of some underlying, third factor? Although Turner neither raises nor answers this question, it is nevertheless clear why he emphasizes redress: if ritual transition is going to be carried out, it follows that its counterpart will also be carried out. To recapitulate this piecing together of Turner's argument thus far: (1) redress is the ritual hinge of social drama; (2) the model for ritual is the rite of passage; (3) the hinge of a rite of passage is its liminal phase; (4) liminality in ritual *is* a cultural mode of reflexivity; and (5) an increase in ritual reflexivity helps heal a social breach, and gives rise to esthetic narrative and drama.

Turner claims that ritual has a dramatic structure, a plot (Turner and Turner 1980:161). Sequencing in a ritual is irreversible. In maintaining this, Turner challenges theorists such as Eliade (1959), who treat ritual in terms of circular imagery. For Turner, ritual does not "return," but instead, goes somewhere. Ritual has a "point": namely, to transform. Although Turner is willing to imagine ceremony as circular, he sees ritual, in the "pure" sense (his term, Turner and Turner 1980:163), as linear.

By now it is obvious that Turner thinks of social conflict, ritual enactment, and stage drama as all being "dramatic," by which he seems to mean linear, conflict-laden, and time-bound. Whether the source of Turner's dramatism is one, the other, or all three of these is impossible to tell. Since he clearly sees "drama" everywhere, this inclines one to treat drama as part of his method.

Turner uses the term "narrative" to refer to: (1) the chronological connections between events; (2) indigenous (emic) words, stories, and gossip about those events; and (3) an anthropologist's (etic) account of the same events. Symbols are what connect the different levels of narrative (Turner and Turner 1980:145). Turner is especially careful to warn against the "cognitive ethnocentrism" of failing to recognize that an anthropologist's narrative is emic and culture-bound from the point of view of those who are indigenous to the culture being studied. He insists that an "anthropology of experience" must always strive to

know "men and women alive" (ibid.:143-144) before it tries to account nomothetically for their action. The nearest an observer can come to actual experience is to discover what events mean to men and women. For a definition of meaning, Turner relies on Dilthey (1976). He thus defines meaning as what "enables us to conceive of an intrinsic affinity between the successive events of life"—that is, memory's ability to negotiate a fit between past and present (Turner and Turner 1980:156). Obviously, such a definition of meaning commits its proponent to a method that is historical and time-conscious. An implication of this definition is that meaningful reflexivity is also retrospective and inescapably historical.

TURNER'S INTERPRETATION OF BECKET'S SOCIAL DRAMA

Until he became friends with King Henry II of England, the English cleric Thomas Becket (1118-1170 C.E.) had held minor clerical and civil offices. In time, Henry II ensured that Becket was elevated to the office of Archbishop of Canterbury, whereby the king probably thought he could control both church and state. Eventually, a bitter conflict arose between the two men. Since Becket had a mind of his own and insisted on the autonomy of ecclesiastical office, he soon found himself in defiance of his king. In 1170 C.E., responding to harsh words spoken by Henry II, a group of knights forced their way into Canterbury Cathedral and slew the archbishop. Three years later, accompanied by Henry's public penance and support, Becket was canonized as a martyr and saint. His veneration continues today with the shrine at Canterbury as its center.

Turner's analysis of Thomas Becket (1974:Chapter 2) focuses specifically on the Council of Northampton, which preceded his martyrdom by six years. At this council, Thomas lost all hope of reconciliation with Henry. One might have expected Turner to concentrate on the "ultimate drama" (1974:79) at Canterbury in 1170. Instead, Turner focuses on the earlier drama at Northampton because: (1) he believes this to be the initial breach of a social drama; and (2) there is suggestive historical evidence that it was during this week-long council that Becket began to enact a "root paradigm," that of the martyr entering upon the *via crucis*.

What Turner does *not* do with this social drama is organize the historical data chronologically or present them in terms of the four phases of social drama: (1) breach; (2) crisis; (3) redress; and (4) reintegration. In fact, Turner's scheme falls into the background. Having noted that King Henry II tries to *begin* at the redressive stage, Turner remarks, " . . . Breach soon becomes crisis and crisis grew so severe that available, formal means of redress proved inadequate, throwing back the situation into deeper crisis . . ." (1974:79).

One can infer from this statement that Turner's theoretical insistence on the linear, temporal nature of social drama and ritual is not as strict in practice as it sometimes sounds. As Turner alludes to the phases of social drama here, they seem to be repeatable and do not necessarily follow a single, chronological order. Rather, they are less a rigid scenario or plot structure and more akin to "layers" of consciousness or action. Yet Turner was deeply resistant to cyclical models (see, for example, Turner and Turner 1980:154) because he associated cyclical models with the timeless, abstract structures produced by synchronic methods (see Turner 1971:349-353). Like Evans-Pritchard, Turner felt that anthropology ought to be closely linked to history and its diachronic methods. "Social dramas," he says, "represent . . . the time axes of fields" (1971:363). Nevertheless, when Turner speaks of social dramas as "possessing a regularly recurring 'processional form' or 'diachronic profile'" (1971:351), one can hardly resist pointing out that terms like "recurring," "form," and "profile" connote structures which are abstracted from their time-bound historical contexts.

Turner (1974:63) states that his study of the Icelandic sagas (1971) led him to the study of Becket. In both cases, he introduces the social dramatistic scheme but abbreviates his actual use of it to a page or so (see, for example, 1971:369; 1974:79). Both analyses are split between a discussion of theoretical terms (e.g., "arena," "field," "paradigms," "root metaphors") and the chronicling of historical contexts. The specifically anthropological contribution of Turner's reading of the Icelandic sagas concentrates on kinship, while his treatment of Becket concentrates on the martyrdom paradigm. In both cases, Turner seems to have to let go of his model of social drama in order to follow the actual course of events. The result is a less than perfect integration of narrating and theorizing, both of which are in themselves provocative. I suspect that the technical terms of Turner's theory serve as a repository for the "timeless," structural side of his interpretation, while chronicling and narrating carry the processual side. If forced by data to choose, he typically narrates. Occasionally, the storyteller overcomes the anthropologist. For example, consider Turner's tone and personal involvement in the following passage:

> This was Thomas' [Becket's] low point, the rock bottom of his life, Black Monday. Picture the gloom and desperation of the scene. There was Thomas, sick on his pallet in St. Andrew's monastery outside Northampton town, having been debarred by royal pressure from taking up the more comfortable quarters to which his rank entitled him—but in a strange way foreshadowing his exile among Cistercian monks in Pontigny and his attempt to emulate the humility of the ideal monk. The king was all cold cruelty, masked in moral law and accusation. The weather was dank and dull, as I have

> often known it myself in the Northampton area in autumn. (1974:84)

Turner's central thesis about Becket is that he is controlled by an "archetypal" paradigm (1974:92), which Turner speaks of as being "in people's heads" (1974:96). The curious thing about this terminology is how static and timeless "archetypal" sounds, and how intellectualistic "people's heads" rings. Such connotations go against the grain of Turner's own insistence that symbols are dynamic and emotion-laden. In any case, his point in introducing the notion of an archetypal paradigm is to suggest that the series of events beginning at Northampton is best treated not as if it were a series of political or moral decisions (1974:69), but rather as if it were a "fate," "genetic code," or "rite" (1974:72). The evidence that Becket himself was unconsciously driven by (if not consciously aspiring to) a model is his deliberate choice to violate the liturgical calendar by saying the Mass of St. Stephen the Martyr out of season. This mass begins, "Princes sat and spoke against me: and the wicked persecuted me . . ." (Psalm 118). Turner does not appear to sense any contradiction between treating the paradigm as having a "fiduciary hold" (1974:64) on Becket and suggesting that Becket "stage manages" (1974:66) the whole affair. His general point is that people in the throes of crisis act from preconscious roots, and that these roots stylize and dramatize actions.

T. S. ELIOT'S RITUAL DRAMA

In order to gain a perspective on Victor Turner's interpretation of Becket, I want to examine T. S. Eliot's play, *Murder in the Cathedral* (1963; originally published in 1935). Were it not for Turner's "incursive nomadism" (his term), it might seem like an odd mixing of genres to compare a case study and a play, since neither the forms nor the authors' intentions are quite parallel. But just as there is story-telling and drama in Turner's analysis, so is there a ritual and dramatic theory of action in Eliot's play. Although both Turner and Eliot were Catholic (the one Roman Catholic, the other Anglo Catholic), we should not consider their differences to be an indigenous squabble over meaning, since Turner writes as an anthropologist and Eliot as a Christian poet. I am prone to view Eliot's play as the more emic view, and Turner's as the more etic.

In his play, *Murder in the Cathedral*, T. S. Eliot is not at great pains to tell a story. Since this play was written to be performed at the 1935 Canterbury Festival on the very grounds where King Henry II incited the slaying of Archbishop Thomas Becket, Eliot could assume that most of his audience knew the story of the historical events which the play dramatizes. In this case, Eliot did not produce art for its own sake. The very fact

that his play was written for the occasion of the martyrdom which it commemorates makes it ritual drama.

In ritual drama, the actions of the drama are no surprise. Since people know what is coming, interest does not depend on being kept in suspense until the end. The primary actions of such a performance are its drawing "forward" of the political-ecclesiastical event of December 1170 A.D., its drawing "down" the mercy of God and Christ, and its evoking the intercessions of Blessed Thomas, as the concluding *Kyrie* of the play illustrates. For one kind of audience member, these actions must have been liturgical; for another kind, entertainment. However, this divergence of intention is probably no different from that of most ritual dramas. The fact that the 1935 event was both ritual and drama invites this intermingling of frames and motives. Eliot's script opens with a chorus of poor women from Canterbury who are waiting in the seasonal limbo between harvest and new year. The theme of waiting dominates their song. "For us, the poor," they say, "there is no action,/ But only to wait and to witness" (1963:13). Their action of walking to the cathedral precincts is but the "presage of an act" (1963:11). Their feet and eyes have been "forced" by this incipient foreboding of action. They fear Becket's action will disrupt their cycle of "living and partly living."

An activist ideology might regard all waiting as impotent passivity. A Marxist version would interpret waiting as evidence of the function of peasant religion as an opiate. But Eliot has something different in mind, namely the waiting of martyrs and saints. Even if the waiting of the peasant women were parasitic—the circling of vultures ready to suck Becket's blood and pick his bones—there is another kind of inaction that demands to be differently understood. Passive inaction is an opiate, while receptive inaction is not. Eliot poetically characterizes ritual proper—the sort Turner would have called "transformative"—as being essentially receptive. Receptive inaction waits for destiny, that more inclusive action which is in the hands of God. When the Second Priest complains about the "foolish, immodest and babbling women," Thomas Becket replies:

> They know and do not know, what it is to act or suffer.
> They know and do not know, that action is suffering
> And suffering action. Neither does the agent suffer
> Nor the patient act. But both are fixed
> In an eternal action, and eternal patience
> To which all must consent that it may be willed
> And which all must suffer that they may will it,
> That the pattern may subsist, for the pattern is the action
> And the suffering, that the wheel may turn and still
> Be forever still. (1963:21-22)

One might surmise that Eliot had just finished reading either Kenneth Burke (1969) or a Buddhist philosopher. Especially when symbolized by the image of a turning wheel, eternal action sounds very much like the "action which is repose" or the "overcoming from underneath" of Asian thought. Grover Smith (1956:190) states that at the time Eliot wrote the play, he was interested in Aristotle; this at least accounts for the similarities to Burke. Eliot's view of action is in keeping with both Christian mysticism and Catholic theologies of martyrdom and sainthood, to which Aristotle contributed significantly via Thomas Aquinas.

Ritual action of the liturgical sort is not supposed to be ordered in some arbitrary fashion. Rather, liturgists intend this action to accord with ultimate principles of order: God and the cosmos as an expression of his *logos*. Not only is liturgical action patterned, it is supposed to replicate a greater, nonarbitrary pattern which "subsists" and is "forever still." Actually, the notion of replication does not go far enough; it is too Platonic for Eliot's Aristotelian Thomism. In Eliot's play, the same passage quoted above, in which Thomas Becket patronizes the women, is quoted back to him by one of the Tempters (1963:40-41). This quotation is almost verbatim except for the omission of one line: "For the pattern is the action / And the suffering." What the Tempter does not know, but Becket does, is that the pattern is not somewhere else in eternity, but here in the "sordid particulars." The action does not simply imitate a pattern; it *is* the pattern. Put another way, a ritual gesture does not imitate the *logos* so much as incarnate it. Although Becket is higher on the ladder of ecclesiastical hierarchy than either the priests or the women of the chorus, he both knows and does not know what action and passion (suffering) are. As "agents," people move and act. As "patients," they suffer and are still. In this they do not differ from the wheel of the cosmos, which at its circumference turns, and at its center is forever still. The difference between the actions of performers and the movements of the wheel is that, except in special moments like martyrdom or meditation, ritual actors seem unable to do both at once. Instead, they oscillate back and forth between activity and passivity, between taking cosmic law into their own hands and resigning from responsibility for the direction of their own feet. The knights in the play typify the first possibility, and the chorus of women, the second.

I have said there are no surprises in ritual drama, but in social drama, there are. The audience watching a ritual drama may know what is going to happen in a play about Becket, but Becket, caught in a ritualizing event, does not know what is going to happen to him, even if he suspects the knights will kill him when he enters the cathedral. He "knows and does not know." What he does not know is presented to him by the Tempters, who "do not wait upon ceremony" (1963:23).

In deciding on a course of action, Becket is tempted to do a number of things. But, he says, ". . . The substance of our first act / Will be shadows, and the strife with shadows" (1963:23). Among the shadowy deeds that tempt him are: (1) to forget the past and return to his easy friendship with the king; (2) to give up his ecclesiastical office and again be chancellor under the king (then, to use this office with intelligent self-interest to obtain justice); and (3) to form alliances with the English barons. Becket says he expected these three temptations, but the Fourth Tempter, who "precedes expectation," presents a surprise. Although the other tempters at least identify themselves by function, the fourth tempter has no name. The temptation he offers, as he quotes Becket back to himself, is twofold and specifically ritualistic. It is to exercise the power of the keys in excommunicating the king (1963:37), and to seek the way of martyrdom (1963:39). This is the temptation "to do the right deed for the wrong reason" (1963:44). The temptation is to turn a religious act into a political one, thereby making the greater cause which Becket ought to serve, serve him instead.

Becket views this temptation as emerging from his "soul's sickness" (1963:40). In its face, he can neither act nor suffer action without damnation. He is doubly bound. Yet in the end, the passionate action of becoming a martyr is precisely what makes his gesture efficacious and revelatory. The deed arising from the depths of his temptation becomes the ground of the ritual of dying in faith. Untransposed, the deed would of course destroy him, but done for the right reason, it sustains him. "Right" does not mean "good." Nor does "reason" mean "rationally justifiable." Becket is wiser than this and says, "Sin grows with doing good" (1963:45). The action of the heights can tempt as surely as any action of the depths. What Becket must find is the action that is both. This kind of action can arise only at the still point. It is an action with no name.

Structurally, the prose interlude is the still point of the play. Its homiletical prose contrasts sharply with the dramatic poetry of the first and second parts of the play that it separates. The sermon is preached on Christmas morning—by Christian reckoning, the hinge of time. In his homily, Archbishop Becket points to the paradox involved in reenacting Christ's passion and death in the Mass, while at the same time celebrating his birth:

> For who in the World will both mourn and rejoice at once and for the same reason? For either joy will be overborne by mourning, or mourning will be cast out by joy; so it is only in these our Christian mysteries that we can rejoice and mourn at once for the same reason. (1963:48)

By comparing the death of martyrs to that of Christ, this sermon suggests that the only valid reason for an action such as

allowing one's own death is the will of God. This amounts to implying that such a deed is unmotivated, at least in any psychosocial sense. The right sort of action is one which God himself performs through a person. Here we approach the liturgical motive proper. Perhaps we should call it a non-motive. Although there are other motives (personal, political, and social), from a martyr's point of view they are secondary to the problem of overcoming attachment to any motive whatsoever, including unconscious ones.

Thomas Becket's struggle is to find a motive for action that is neither willful activism nor resigned passivity. His dying as a martyr is at once a ritual, ethical, political, psychological, and theological conundrum. Ritually, martyrdom is formal self-sacrifice in the context of an historical tradition of such gestures. Ethically and politically, it is a choice which is pressured on all sides by group interests, and which is capable of substantially altering the balance of power. Psychologically, it is a contest between the self and its shadows, a struggle of self against the desire for revenge. Theologically, martyrdom presents the difficulty of aligning temporal deeds with eternal ones and of orienting the cycles of this world to the movement of the great cosmic wheel.

The chorus's song which opens Part II of Eliot's play emphasizes spatial and temporal orientation: Where are the signs of Spring? Is the wind stored up in the East? East and Spring are the directional and seasonal symbols that orient the event taking place in Canterbury. The chorus queries: "Between Christmas and Easter what work shall be done?" ". . . The time is short/But waiting is long" (1963:54). The playwright's task is to orient the action that everyone—audience, chorus, and characters—knows is going to happen. Not the outcome, but only the orientation of the action is in question. When questions of orientation displace those of outcome, ritual begins to overshadow drama.

The slaying of Thomas Becket occurs on December 29, 1170. Between Christmas and this date, the feasts of St. Stephen the Martyr, St. John the Apostle, and the slain Holy Innocents have been celebrated, almost as if establishing Becket's lineage. However, all of time—that of natural and liturgical season, as well as that of eternity—is now coagulated by virtue of the action of passion which is about to transpire on Thursday:

> What day is the day that we know that we hope or fear for?
> Every day is the day we should fear from or hope from.
> One moment
> Weighs like another. Only in retrospection, selection,
> We say, that was the day. The critical moment.
> That is always now, and here. Even now, in sordid
> particulars
> The eternal design may appear. (1963:57)

By carrying in banners of the martyrs, the priests orient the deed in ecclesiastical history. The knights arrive and, by rhetorically rehearsing Becket's actions, such as the fact that he once anathematized the king and fled to France for seven years, they orient his martyrdom in secular political history. As always, the chorus orients the action cosmologically and cyclically; it both knows already, and still does not quite know, what is going to happen. What the knights know by decision and counsel with the king, the women know by premonition, in their veins, brains, and guts (1963:68). Even though they do not commit the deed, they consent through complicity and must beg Becket's forgiveness. The chorus forgets easily—"humankind cannot bear very much reality" (1963:69)—but its feet always remember.

Spatial orientation follows the temporal. The priests, in an effort to save their archbishop's life, drag him into the cathedral and bar the door. He will die in a sacred place. Becket shouts at them to open the door; a sanctuary is not a fortress. The priests try to convince Becket that the knights have become beasts and the door has always been barred against animals, but Becket accuses them of arguing by results. In carrying out this deed, he believes that only form and motive, not end, must be considered. He must become a "patient" who suffers action rather than an agent who commits it, and he must assent to it, not simply be its victim.

When Becket is killed, the action ramifies. Ritually, it becomes a transaction in which the saint offers his blood to pay for Christ's death, just as Christ had sacrificed his blood to buy Becket's life (1963:75). Eventually, the event will have the effect of a sacrificial cleansing. But presently, for the chorus, it is a polluting action because its orientation is eternal rather than cyclical:

> These acts marked a limit to our suffering.
> Every horror had its definition.
> Every sorrow had a kind of end:
> In life there is not time to grieve long.
> But this, this is out of life, this is out of time,
> An instant eternity of evil and wrong.
> We are soiled by a filth that we cannot clear, united to supernatural vermin,
> It is not we alone, it is not the house, it is not the city that is defiled,
> But the world that is wholly foul. (1963:77-78)

The drama among the characters ends here, but that between characters and audience intensifies. The knights turn directly to the audience and ask us to judge between them and Becket. Arguing in rhetorical prose that they are fair-minded Englishmen, men of action rather than word, they argue their case like modern, liberal lawyers. They claim they deserve our applause. Even if they

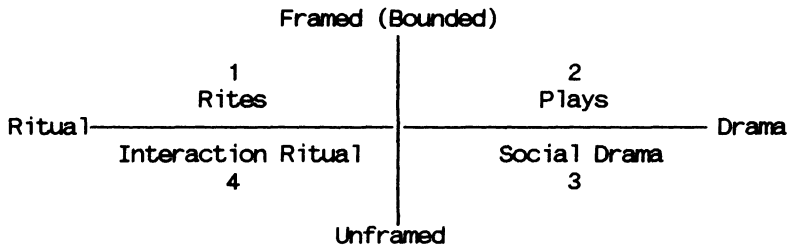
are guilty, they say, the audience is also guilty. The passivity of the audience is considered complicity similar to that of the chorus. The Fourth Knight, like the Fourth Tempter, presents the most convincing case. He seizes on the ambiguous aspects of who *really* killed the Archbishop (1963:83). His answer to his own rhetorical question is that Becket's action constitutes suicide rather than martyrdom; the Archbishop deliberately set out to provoke his own death. If this is true, Becket's action is not patience or passion at all, but disguised aggression.

The case is left unsettled and the verdict unrendered as the priests take over and form a bridge to the final chorus. The third priest berates the knights, who have already exited, accusing them of trying to justify their actions by weaving fictions that unravel during the very moment they weave them. They will never succeed, even by losing themselves in "filthy rites" and "libidinous courts" (1963:85).

The chorus has the last word, but its language and petitions are priestly and accompanied by a "Te Deum" sung in Latin in the background. The concluding notes are of confession, petition, and thanksgiving. Whatever the nature of Becket's final motive—whether it was suicidal or sacrificial—the concluding action and widest frame of the play is liturgical. The ending is not happy, moving from the confession of sin to thanksgiving and praise. Since its movement is just the reverse, one is led to read it as ironic. We know very well that the chorus, waxing archaic and priestly in its last chant, will surely do the same thing again. There will always be the need for "mercies of blood" (1963:81); the cycle must go on, the wheel must turn again.

COMPARING A RITUAL DRAMA AND A SOCIAL DRAMA

Although the events at Canterbury in 1170 A.D were social drama, T. S. Eliot's play of 1935 was ritual drama. And Victor Turner's essay of 1974 was a social dramatistic analysis. The social forms of drama and ritual are relatively "unframed" (cf. Goffman 1974). By this, I mean that because they are almost invisibly embedded in the fabric of society, their patterns are observable only to trained observers. In contrast, esthetic forms of drama and religious forms of ritual are "framed"; that is, bounded, differentiated, and set apart as nameable genres of action. T. S. Eliot's play is doubly framed as ritual and as drama, whereas Victor Turner's study attempts to frame a series of events that to the participants probably seemed chaotic and without pattern or order. The variables can be diagrammed on two intersecting axes:



Framed ritual or "rites" fall in the first quadrant; an example is the liturgy of the Mass. A rite is not secondary in the sense that ritual action is necessarily derived from social action. Rather, a rite is secondary in the sense that it has been cordoned off and its actions have been selected, deliberately arranged, and elevated. The actions of the Mass are "other" than ordinary ones. The second quadrant, framed drama, contains most of the modern plays which are performed in theaters. Whereas rites are differentiated by being elevated into norms, plays are increasingly differentiated by having attention focused on them as art forms rather than as agents of social reinforcement or religious edification. Since Eliot's play, by both intention and social location, is not quite theatrical in this sense, it falls near the midway point between the ritualistic and dramatic poles.

Quadrant three contains unframed, or social drama. Events in this quadrant are unframed insofar as the actors are completely unaware of social events around them. There is no dramatic process or ritual structure, but merely chaos. The framed/ unframed polarity is not only concerned with people's awareness of events as such, but also with the degree to which a society or individual recognizes an action as distinct or nameable. Something is framed when it is bounded; it is unframed when it no longer has its own niche or identity. Whenever participants in ordinary social interaction begin to think of themselves as playing parts in a play or enacting ritualized roles, framing has begun. Looking back, Turner can frame the events of 1170 A.D. as a social drama in four acts. Drama is present not because an actor decided to perform it, but because a trained observer has seen events dramatistically. One way to frame action is to impose a theory on it; another way is to impose an image on it. The framing of the social drama of 1170 began rapidly. By 1173, people regarded the event as a "deed." As I use the term, a deed is a gesture or event which has been singled out as an orientation point around which other actions can cluster as a center. An event becomes a deed if people return to it, imitate it, or measure themselves by it as if it were a standard.

If one were to define ritual only in terms of intentional action, the term "unframed ritual" in quadrant four would be self-contradictory. However, it is helpful to consider certain

actions, such as habitually repeated or stylized ones, as potential ritual gestures. Interaction ritual is a term referring to tacit, barely recognizable ritual processes. Unframed ritual is "nascent" (see Grimes 1982:Chapter 4) or "decadent," and is still gaining or beginning to lose its distinctions from ordinary actions. Lack of a frame (cf. Mary Douglas's definition of "grid," 1973: Chapter 4) may indicate that the action lacks a social consensus. Thus, a comparatively unframed ritual is likely to be highly individualized, if not idiosyncratic, even though part of what may make it ritualized is that it seems to repeat or recapitulate other actions. Ritualization consists of actions that can be "seen as" ritual, but which actors themselves may not consider to be such. Victor Turner refers to such events as "liminoid" (Turner and Turner 1978:253).

Even though T. S. Eliot's work is a ritual drama focused on an ultimate moment in Thomas Becket's life, and Victor Turner's work is a social dramatistic analysis focused on an initial phase in Becket's life, these two works are by no means incommensurate, as the following chart illustrates:

TURNER	ELIOT
1. "Ritual Paradigms and Political Action: Thomas Becket at the Council of Northampton," a social dramatistic analysis. (1974:Chapter 2)	1. *Murder in the Cathedral*, a ritual drama.
2. Analysis focused on breach, an initial phase.	2. Dramatization concentrated on redress, a concluding moment.
3. Primary drama is in phases of social interaction.	3. Primary drama is in the eras of Christian history.
4. An etic, political frame for an emically religious event.	4. An emically religious frame for an etic political event.
5. Lapses into hagiographic storytelling.	5. Lapses into Aristotelian theorizing.
6. Too little analysis?	6. Too little narrative?
7. Social drama threatening to become ritually fixed.	7. Sacrificial rite threatening to become dramatically polluted.

8. Political motivation as the principle of explanation.	8. Political motivation as temptation.
9. Becket both "stage manages" and is in the "fiduciary hold" of a paradigm (i.e., his martyrdom is both manipulative and unconscious).	9. Becket knows and does not know (i.e., he neither unconsciously chooses nor deliberately avoids martyrdom).
10. Paradigms are in "actors'" heads.	10. "Eternal design" is in the sordid particulars."
11. Paradigms emplot actions which, in turn, form patterns.	11. The pattern *is* the action.
12. Dominant metaphors: temporal, linear, processual (e.g., "flow").	12. Dominant metaphors: spatial, circular, static (e.g., the "forever still" center).

Although Eliot and Turner make quite different uses of it, drama is the continuum between them. Turner's dramatistic theory of action leads him to locate drama first of all in social interaction, and then to find drama analogized or reflected on the stage. Even though Eliot is a poet, he does not locate the primary drama on the stage, although a more "platonic" playwright might have done so. As a Christian dramatist, Eliot has located the primary drama in history, specifically in the events that link the crucifixion of Jesus to Becket's death, and which in turn link both of these to the commemorative festival of 1935. Turner has erected an etic, political frame around events that devotees would frame religiously, while Eliot casts a religious frame around an event which historians regard as political. Nevertheless, both men retain elements of the religious-political dialectic. In both treatments of Becket, the dialectic is deliberate, although each work sometimes seems to "lapse" into its own opposite genre—Turner's interpretation into hagiographic storytelling, and Eliot's Becket into Aristotelian theorizing about action. The outcome of this is that Eliot's drama, classic though it has become, is not strong on narrative. Similarly, Turner's treatment of Becket contains too much narration and too little analysis for anthropologists with nomothetic goals in mind.

By emphasizing the paradigm that grips Becket, Turner's interpretation makes the events of the social drama appear to be like a rite. And despite Eliot's sparse attention to characterization or plot, his poetry manages to dramatize a sacrificial rite. For all that might be said about the kinship, or even the identity of ritual and drama on a theoretical level, one or the other may dominate in actual performance. Even though Turner analyzes a social drama which is usually characterized by flow,

an archetypal paradigm threatens to fix the action into a rite or fate. The opposite is true for Eliot, whose Becket is in danger of undermining the efficacy of martyrdom by yielding to dramatically-instigated acts. What for Turner is a principle of explanation is for Eliot's Becket a temptation—namely, to do the right thing for a wrong (i.e., political) reason.

Both Turner and Eliot depict Becket as undergoing a motivational struggle. However, Turner's characterization of Becket has him vacillating between manipulative stage managing (*a la* Goffman) and unconscious compulsion. Because it is "beneath conscious prehension" (1974:64), Turner's "fiduciary hold" is not a synonym for faith. By contrast, Eliot's Becket, who knows and does not know, is hardly unconscious and struggles to reject both stage managing and benevolent political action. Although we do not know if he achieves this, Eliot's Becket aims at faithful action, which is neither mere resignation nor willful coercion.

Turner metaphorically locates the paradigms that compel Becket "in actors' heads." By comparison, Eliot places the "eternal design" in the sordid particulars. Even though Eliot's conception might seem to remove such a design from the possibility of criticism, its roots in culture and politics are never denied. Thus, eternity is no less (or more) accessible than the insides of actors' heads. Eliot's Aristotelian insistence that the pattern *is* the action means that one cannot avoid cultural criticism when thinking theologically. The difference between Turner and Eliot on this point is probably that Eliot would be less willing than Turner to subject theological standards to cultural criticism. On the other hand, Turner is more prone to see the connection between paradigm and action as automatic, and as unmediated by highly self-conscious, ethical reflection. Turner locates reflexivity in the time after, not the time before or during, a crisis.

In the final analysis, many of the differences between Eliot as a dramatist and Victor Turner as an anthropologist are the results of their dominant metaphors. By appealing to temporal, linear, or processual metaphors—"flow," for example—Turner conceives of action as phasic. By using spatial, circular, or static metaphors—e.g., the center that is "forever still"—Eliot treats actions as if they were layers or rings.

Though this comparison could continue, its basic parameters are now drawn, and it is obvious that I am not content merely to "apply" Turner's theory to Eliot's play, thus casting Eliot's play in the role of "data." Nor am I willing to admit that the differences in form and social function of dramatic and scholarly work warrant their compartmentalization. If we allow the play to question the theory, and do not merely apply the theory to the play, we are forced to ask Turner whether it is adequate: (1) to consider either narrative or social drama as only linear; and (2)

to claim that all rituals have a dramatic plot. Eliot's play helps us notice the static, circular side of Turner's interpretation. Although Eliot's play is dramatic, it makes minimum use of plot, thus calling into question Turner's treatment of all rites as narratively structured.

If we allow Turner's theory and case study to question Eliot, we must ask whether it is really clear that Becket was conscious of the intricacies of martyrological theology. Was Becket unwittingly compelled by *images* rather than theology? Secondly, to what extent is martyrdom only a retrospective view? Perhaps martyrs do not "exist" except in the hearts and minds of those who wish to "invent" them after the fact.

Reading or seeing Eliot's play makes one keenly aware that the only access to the social drama which Turner analyzes is through data which are strongly marked by earlier ritual drama. In other words, one may interpret the ritual drama as hermeneutically primary, even though the social drama is historically primary. The paradigm which Turner locates historically in actors' heads can just as well be located in the Mass, in yearly Canterbury Festivals, or even in Turner's head. "Where" one locates the paradigm is important, although by no means obvious. There is no reason why the paradigm cannot arise in two heads: Becket's, and because he is British (Scottish) and Catholic, Turner's. However, it is not easy to locate the martyrdom model both in the "depths" (Turner 1980:163) and on the "surface," which is where we would locate it metaphorically if we believe that Becket may have been stage managing.

Another problem which emerges from the comparison of Eliot and Turner is whether stage drama is a reflection of social drama, or vice-versa. On principle, can we assign priority to one or the other? Does the drama occur between Becket and King Henry II, between Turner and Becket, or between Eliot and Turner? Perhaps there are several overlapping dramas: (1) within Becket's head; (2) between Becket and Henry; (3) between Turner and Becket; and, if we are to be fully reflexive, (4) between Turner's and Eliot's readings of the affair.

If we take Eliot's interpretation seriously, we cannot simply consider the social and political forces surrounding Becket. Instead, we must also consider: (1) Becket's motivational struggle; and (2) the exegesis of the event as offered by pilgrims, performers, and the clergy at Canterbury. Theologies of martyrdom and ecclesiastical assessments of Becket's act are both partly "indigenous exegesis," and partly competing anthropological theory. On one level, the emic and etic accounts of Becket's actions are in conflict. Eliot's specification of Becket's motive is overridden not only by Turner's social dramatism theory, but also by *any* theory that argues from results or assumes the priority of stage-managed martyrdom. Among other things, Eliot's

Becket implicitly challenges the omni-competence of any social-psychological interpretation of action. To do this, Eliot does not merely hide behind dogma, but presents an argument. In his Christmas sermon, Becket does not announce some infallible revelation, but presents an argument for serious reflection and serious consideration of theological attitudes in addition to serious consideration of the results or phases of a process. Through Becket, Eliot challenges any view of action that either makes it the result of personal decision and "willpower," or construes it more passively as the product of reified social "forces." In fact, Turner also criticizes those who reify culture and make it a causal agent (see Turner and Turner 1980:144). When seen as a motive for action, "culture" is no less mystical than Eliot's "eternal design."

The process of juxtaposing a *theory* and *case study* of the Becket social drama against a *ritual dramatization* of that same drama, and thus confusing two orders of conceptualization, may seem to be stepping over a sacred boundary. But the conflict between the two orders (i.e., between Becket and King Henry II, and between Eliot's drama and Turner's dramatism) is real. Whether or not theorists would like to keep the two spheres—explanation (etic) and belief (emic)—separate, these two spheres are sometimes, as a matter of historical and social fact, experienced as competing and clashing. There may be no strategy more indebted to Turner than allowing his own research to enter into the arena of debate with a scholarly dramatist such as Eliot.

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