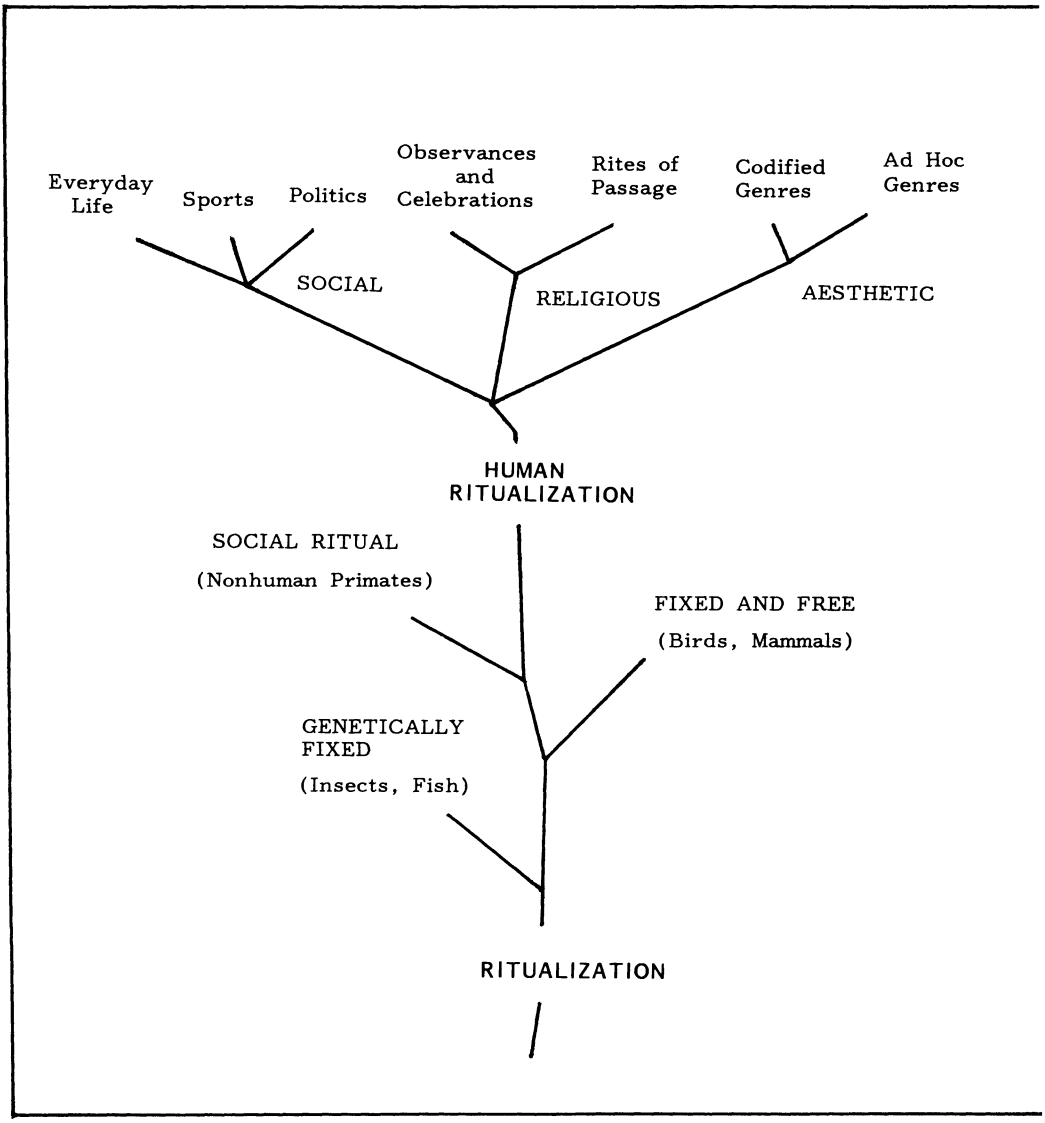

FIGURE 1: THE RITUAL TREE

VICTOR TURNER'S LAST ADVENTURE

Richard Schechner
New York University

Dans ses derniers travaux, Victor Turner a examiné les liens que l'on retrouve entre le processus rituel, les structures mentales, les fonctions, et les jeux. Il s'acheminait vers une synthèse de la sociobiologie et de l'anthropologie humaniste. Quoi qu'il soit advenu, ces recherches ont dissimulé un "voeu religieux": un désir de résoudre par acte de "foi" la question apparemment insoluble de la relation entre la "culture" et la "nature." Le rite peut tracer les grandes lignes, fournir une espèce de trame grossière, des comportements qui commencent avec les insectes et qui, éventuellement, s'étendent à la forme plus ou moins libre des activités sociales, religieuses et esthétiques. Vu sous cet angle, le rite est à la fois conservateur et créateur, avec un futur humain distinct qui est défini dans la mesure du passé éthologique. Le lieu de rencontre de ce passé et de ce futur se développe toujours dans l'esprit humain.

In his later work, Victor Turner examined links among ritual process, brain structure and function, and play. He was moving toward a synthesis of sociobiology and humanist anthropology. However, these investigations concealed a "religious wish": a yearning to resolve by means of "faith" the apparently intractable question of the relationship between "culture" and "nature." Ritual can be mapped out as a thickening nexus of behaviors which originates in insects and eventually branches out into the more-or-less free forms of human social, religious, and aesthetic behaviors. When seen this way, ritual is both conservative and creative, with a distinctly human future which is just as definite as its ethological past. The meeting place of this past and future is the still-evolving human brain.

INTRODUCTION

In his later work, Victor Turner posed some extremely challenging questions. A trademark of his generous genius was that he never stepped back from thinking *into* a problem merely because he had no clear way out. His admirable "not-yetness" and "unfinishedness" forces those who become interested in his work to wrestle through the night, much as Jacob wrestled with-and-

against his angel. More mundanely, he and I and whoever else was there (and often there were others) frequently sat around his kitchen table in Charlottesville, North Carolina, talmudically and histrionically arguing.

By itself, the word "ritual" is perplexing. Ritual has been so variously defined as concept, praxis, process, ideology, yearning, religious experience, and function that it means very little for the simple reason that it can mean too much.

A survey of the literature reveals that the "scientific" analysis of ritual can be divided into five categories: (1) ritual as part of the evolutionary development of organisms—including, but not limited to, the development of the brain; (2) ritual as a structure, meaning a thing with formal qualities and relationships; (3) ritual as a performance process: a dynamic system or action with both diachronic and synchronic rhythms and/or scenarios; (4) ritual as experience—as in what people feel individually or as part of a collective; and (5) ritual as a set of functions in human individual and social life.

The word "scientific" is placed in quotation marks because the above categories and the definitions they yield are not so much testable hypotheses as opinions belonging mostly to the domain of social and/or artistic criticism. But as Derrida (1978) and the second line of deconstructionists remind us, the boundary between scientific thought and criticism is fuzzier than blurry. In our emergent neo-medieval world, a new species of religious/artistic thought is replacing what was formerly called pure science. The placement of the word "scientific" in quotation marks is an act of respect in what is meant to be an essay in the domain of criticism. And although an attempt will be made to avoid the religious as such, it permeates discussions of ritual.

RELIGION IN WHAT GUISE?

Religion permeates discussions of ritual as the overt or covert assertion that ritual is good for people, necessary, or even biologically built-in, and that religion is a kind of divine right of ritual. To use Dostoevsky's metaphor, it seems that people are forever seeking to lay down their little bundles of liberty at the feet of some savior—someone or some concept that will "decide" for them and relieve them of that awful, not to say awesome, burden of choosing for themselves. For all I know, this view of life is correct, since the history of a long, multicultural obsession with religion is not a fantasy, but a recognition that people need superhuman authorities to guide them. This statement is ambivalent because there is no choice but to agree with history and regard ritual as at least necessary and maybe even "good for" people. What troubles me is that the anti-structural outbursts of a Buddha, a Jesus, or a Marx are soon taken up

by their "disciples," who are, in turn, interpreted by the "church" so that it is not long before things are turned upside up again.

RITUAL, PERFORMANCE, AND SCIENCE

My feelings are divided about this. As a director of performances, I have certainly done my share of deconstructing/reconstructing. Although I have tried to be honest in my manipulations, who knows? When spectators danced with each other in *Dionysus in 69*, ducked for cover in *Cops*, or followed the stars around the room in *The Tooth of Crime*, my intention was to give them accurate metaphors in their bodies of the *mise-en-scene*—something they couldn't get by just looking. And when I asked performers during a preparatory improvisation for *The Prometheus Project* to consider whether, if they were given a half-hour's warning of nuclear attack, they would go to ground zero to be painlessly and instantly vaporized, or choose to survive in a condition of nuclear winter, I was building an understructure with the performers for the whole performance. This is a performance that does not "oppose" nuclear holocaust so much as meditate on the problem of why, when everyone opposes nuclear war, human societies seem hell-bent on trooping into the collective furnace. Could it be that Zeus was right and Prometheus was wrong?

My performances have always had a ritual quality. They have played on and with the repetition of rhythms, including harmonically incremental intensities of both sound and gesture, the multiple ambivalences of sharing space among spectators and performers, and the condensation and relocation of actions taken from both ordinary life and elsewhere. As I have pointed out in other writings (1985 and in press), the "performance process" and the "ritual process" as outlined by Van Gennep (1960) and brilliantly elaborated by Turner (1969, 1974, 1982, 1985, and in press) are strictly analogous. What intrigues me most is the troublesome area where "characterization" leaves off and the "real person" begins. Although I can direct a play where characters are neatly confined within lines written by playwrights and move elegantly on stages designed by architects, what has always appealed to me about the theater is its unavoidable tension between "artificiality" and "real-lifeness." As the English playwright Heathcote Williams said, "On the ladder of artificiality theater is on the lowest rung" (1973:vii). Therefore, theater is always playfully and dangerously tumbling back into the actual, the contingent, and the absolute here and now. Whether theater artists are directors, actors, or perhaps scenographers, our job is to articulate this tumbling and to confound everyone—performer and spectator alike—concerning the location of "reality." As we shall see, difficulty in locating reality and in giving it a specific place is a key problem in Victor Turner's later work. This categorical

inability to locate reality suggests a radical relocation or dislocation of fate; not only Oedipus, but the actor playing Oedipus could have chosen differently, and can still do so—but only in play, and only as make-believe. The "character" doesn't exist except as the player plays him; and the player exists as character only in the realm of play. Yet even as they play, the performers cannot entirely leave behind their own contingent personal and social selves. So, when those performers choose ground zero or nuclear winter, they are choosing both as themselves and as characters. They are participating in being double agents: they are at once actors and spectators of their own actions. These performed actions give spectators the chance to meditate between (un)realities and to consider nuclear war without having to experience it. I would guess that a function of ritual is always this subversion of experience—to substitute or undermine ordinary experience with another hyper-experience. This hyper-experience is not abstract, but just the opposite: it is made of definite sensuous items to do, smell, hear, see, and touch. More than any other kind of art or entertainment, ritual is synaesthesis. There is also a corresponding set of skills known to the ritualists for operating the performances.

It is not important that the ordinary spectator or participant know all of this, any more than a medical patient needs to understand what a drug is or how it works. Possibly even more than physicians, shamans emphasize the necessity of keeping the secrets of the trade to themselves; performers of Noh drama likewise, not to mention people of the circus. There is something peculiarly unscientific about performance, including the performances of scientists. The stated purpose of science is to "get at" and/or "test" a/the truth. The means of this "getting at" is a shared body of knowledge, while the purpose of performance is to "play with" and "make fun of/out of" experience. Yet I believe performance is the larger category, and that performance contains science. Scientists no less than artists have never lost touch with the trickster, the alchemist, the wizard, the conman.

RITUAL AND THE EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS

How far back all this goes. The unintentional (not thought out, not subject to change or alteration) deceits of nonhuman animals become the playful arts and sciences of people. And these deceits—transformations, condensations, alterations of behavior and body structure—are what ethologists call ritual.

Ethologists use the term ritual without quotation marks, but if there are similarities between animal rituals and human arts, there are also important differences. Although the patterned "waggle dance" of bees may look like dancing to a choreographer like Jerome Robbins, the bees are not "emically" dancing. Where everything is genetically determined, there can be no learning or

improvisation. And where there is no contingency, there can be no lying, but only deceit; the difference being precisely the player's consciousness concerning her/his range of choice. Even a ballet dancer can choose one night simply not to go up on point even though the choreography tells her to do so. She may lose the role, or even her job, but she can still choose to dance flat-footed. Not so with the "dancing" bees; if they go wrong, there is something wrong with their DNA. Human performance art is paradoxical, a practiced fixedness founded on pure contingency: the weird delight people have in going up on point, or in watching a trained trapezist make three-and-a-half somersaults, or even in applauding the choreographed ineptitude of clowns.

The development of ritual among our species can be diagrammed as a tree (see Figure 1). This figure shows how the specific functions and properties of human rituals are built, but are different from those of other animals. It was this link and those differences—the participation of ritual in the evolutionary process—that occupied Victor Turner at the end of his life. This might seem to those who followed Turner's earlier work on "ritual process" to be an odd turn. Why should someone who put so much stock in ritual's anti-structure, including its creative and generative force in individual and cultural life, suddenly seem to embrace sociobiology?

Turner laid out his evolutionary approach to ritual only once, in "Body, Brain, and Culture" (1983), while his work on ritual process, liminality, communitas, and anti-structure populated most of his writing after *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (1967). Still, had he lived, I think Turner would have gone on with this investigation because it promised to clarify the crisis (= crux, cross, crossing, decisive meeting place) of ritual, religion, and science.

Surely Turner was aware of this crisis. He begins "Body, Brain, and Culture" by saying: "The present essay is for me one of the most difficult I have ever attempted. This is because I am having to submit to question some of the axioms anthropologists of my generation—and several subsequent generations—were taught to hallow. These axioms express the belief that all human behavior is the result of social conditioning" (1983:221). Turner then reviews some of the most current theories of ritual and ritualization, which are different to the degree that ritual is the performance and ritualization is the process yielding such events. He emphasizes his own position that "ritual is not necessarily a bastion of social conservatism; its symbols do not merely condense cherished sociocultural values. Rather, through its liminal processes, it holds the generating source of culture and structure" (1983:223). But these "liminal processes" are precisely those which are undercut by the ethological viewpoint.

Turner sees this and recognizes that his own position is apparently contradicted by the classical ethological position where, again in Turner's words, ritual is treated as "genetically programmed behavior" (1983:224). Turner reconciles his position with that of the ethologists by appealing to both brain structure and brain function. For him, the human brain is a liminal organ operating somewhere between the genetically fixed and the radically free. According to Turner, the development of the neocortex in humans, with its extreme bilaterality and complicated interactions with the brain stem and limbic system, seems to enable humans to step outside of ordinary evolutionary constraints—almost.

Turner outlines the "triune" brain proposed by neuro-anatomist Paul MacLean (1973, 1976), who asserts that there is an old "reptilian" brain controlling movement, a newer "limbic" brain concerned basically with emotions, and a relatively very recent "cerebral neocortex" brain of cognitive thought. The recent cerebral neocortex is divided into left and right lobes, each with distinct functions. These three brains are interdependent. "The highest and newest portion of the cerebral cortex has by no means detached itself from an ancient 'primitive' region, but functions as it does precisely 'by virtue of its relationship to the old emotional circuitry'" (1983:225).

Then Turner poses the decisive question:

> What is the role of the brain as an organ for the appropriate mixing of genetic and cultural information in the production of mental, verbal, or organic behavior? . . . To what extent is the upper brain, especially the neocortex, which is the area responsible in mammals for coordination and for higher mental abilities, on a longer leash in terms of control by the genotype or genome, the fundamental constitution of the organism in terms of its hereditary factors? Does socioculturally transmitted information *take over* control in humankind, and, if so, what are the limits, if any, to its control? Does the genotype take a permanent back seat, and is social conditioning now all in all? The picture thus built up for me was of a kind of *dual control* leading to . . . a series of symbiotic coadaptations between what might be called culturetypes and genotypes. (1983: 225)

But isn't Turner begging the question? He is saying that humans have evolved a brain that has all but freed itself from genetic restraints, and that humans are in effect genetically determined to be free, or at least genetically determined to be "coadaptive." This idea puts into scientific language a fundamentally religious idea, classically stated by Milton in *Paradise Lost* as "sufficient to stand but free to fall," where standing

and falling refer to divine grace and to the ultimate destination, in Christian terms, of each individual soul. In its contemporary guise, this idea asserts that human behavior is "to a degree" genetically determined. The sociobiologists think that this is a high degree of determination and the humanists think that it is a low degree. Turner resolves the contradiction between the ethological (sociobiological) viewpoint and his own earlier work with:

> . . . if ritualization, as discussed by Huxley, Lorenz, and other ethologists, has a biogenetic foundation, while meaning has a neocortical learned base, does this mean that creative processes, those which generate new cultural knowledge, might result from a coadaptation, perhaps in the ritual process itself, of genetic and cultural information? (1983:228)

Movement and feeling, the first two of MacLean's triunity, are to a high degree genetically based, while cognitive functions are less so. The special kind of performance called "ritual" is the interface between these—the cultural arena where the reptilian and old-mammalian brains meet the neocortex. Not only is the contradiction healed, but Turner's "ritual process" is firmly strapped into the driver's seat of evolution—an evolution in which humans will codetermine what is to happen to them socially and biologically. Furthermore, the main arena of evolutionary development is displaced from within individual human beings (the genotype) to collective human cultural action (the ritual process).

As a theater director, I ought to like this model if I want my art to be central to the future of humankind. In this model, those who understand the ritual/performance process are at the hub of coadaptive evolutionary development.

The fate or future of the collective—of humans as a species, and probably of many of our sister species as well—may depend on the kind of "coadaptation" Turner speaks of. Experiments in the areas of recombinant DNA, cloning, and artificial intelligence are yielding precise methods of elaborating on, and perhaps even controlling, evolution. It is still an open question whether this represents an advance in freedom, or a deep kind of mindlessness posing as free choice. Surely humans, both positively and negatively, consciously and without forethought, are influencing evolutionary patterns everywhere on the globe. Norman Myers estimates that intervention will result in the extinction of "at least one-quarter of all species . . . , possibly a third, and conceivably even more. With so many plants and animals gone, there will be a fundamental shift in evolution itself, as evolutionary processes go to work on a vastly reduced pool of species and as a few new species arise to fill in the gaps" (1985:2).

Although this is "coadaptation" with a vengeance, it is not the kind Turner is talking about—or at least the outcome is radically different than the one Turner hoped for. In fact, Turner's idea of how the brain works in relation to evolution has two different scenarios. In one scenario, he focuses on the collective, coming close to embracing a notion of a superbrain, an overbrain, "a global population of brains . . . whose members are incessantly communicating with one another through every physical and mental instrumentality" (1983:243). In the second scenario, he follows a more conventional evolutionary theory in which variation in the genotype, working on a strictly individual basis, accumulates changes in enough individuals to alter the species.

It is also not exactly clear why Turner speaks of a triune brain. There are really four, or even five, brains in his model: the three brains described by MacLean (1973, 1976), an extra brain for the lateralized neocortex, and the overbrain of the "global population of brains." Thus, each human has or participates in the following brains: (1) reptilian; (2) old mammalian; (3) right frontal lobe; (4) left frontal lobe; and (5) collective overbrain. As for the attraction of the metaphor of the triune brain, it is interesting to speculate how many parts of the brain there would be in cultures whose sacred number is four. Perhaps Christianity ought seriously to consider a Trinity plus two—the traditional Father, Son, Holy Ghost, plus the Virgin and . . . ?

However many brains there may be, Turner's evolutionary process is fundamentally the orthodox process where accumulating individual changes lead to changes in the species. The question is: Why should this change be positive, as Turner assumes it will be? The answer may be in Turner's acceptance of traditional Christian values. Without stating this directly, Turner hopes that each individual will love his/her neighbor as him/herself, and when abused, will be able to turn the other cheek. For the evolutionary emancipation of the brain to work constructively and not destructively, people's day-to-day values as they are lived will have to approximate the values preached by and to them. But the tendency of modernism, especially in its nineteenth and twentieth-century phase of extreme nationalism and materialism, has been anything but loving—not to mention the long and often bloody history of Christianity.

Finally, there are examples such as the dark shadow of Hitler's "eugenics"—including the unspeakable experiments of Mengele—threatening any positive outcome of coadaptation. If we are to "improve" our species at the genetic level, who will determine what is good and what is bad, and how will this be determined? Again, the only answers appear to be religious—that is, in the realm of consciously articulated ethics founded on an acknowledged scheme of superhuman authority such as God, science, or the collective. A yearning for this kind of authority by many people in many cultures under stress has given rise to a variety

of "fundamentalisms" in Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and more recently, Maoism and its most crazed offshoot, the Khmer Rouge emptying Cambodia's cities (cf. Wallace 1956).

Victor Turner was not a fundamentalist, nor was he dogmatic or tolerant of dogmatists. As I knew him, he always prized and lived the fluid, the dynamic, and the processual anti-structural generation of new ideas and new ways. Here I am referring not to what Turner himself felt or thought, but to a dark twist that could be given to some of his ideas. Intrigued as I am by coadaptation, when I turn over its implications—as if arguing with Turner around his Charlottesville kitchen table—I think that coadaptation may be his utopian wish—a wish that I, a left-handed person through and through, see the sinister side of.

EXPLAINING RITUAL

Turner next explains the experience of ritual—the celebrated feeling of "spontaneous communitas"—as the simultaneous excitation of the two hemispheres of the cerebral cortex. In offering this explanation, he is following the work of Fischer (1971) and d'Aquili, Laughlin, and Lex (1979). Referring to d'Aquili et al., Turner states:

> In particular they postulate that the rhythmic activity of ritual, aided by sonic, visual, photic, and other kinds of "driving," may lead in time to simultaneous maximal stimulation of both systems, causing ritual participants to experience what the authors call "positive, ineffable affect." They also use Freud's term "oceanic experience," as well as "yogic ecstasy," also the Christian term *unio mystica*, an experience of the union of those cognitively discriminated opposites typically generated by binary, digital left-hemispherical ratiocination. I suppose one might also use the Zen term *satori* (the integrating flash), and one could add the Quakers' "inner light," Thomas Merton's "transcendental consciousness," and the yogic *samadhi*. (1983: 230)

Turner's speculations fit nicely those of Carl Jung, and also parallel the most recent work of the theater director and theorist Jerzy Grotowski (1968; see also Kumiega 1985 and Osinski [in press]). Grotowski is trying to do what Jung wrote about, namely to identify and perform "archetypes" of human ritual action. There is a clear outline for Grotowski's "objective drama" project which is currently underway at the University of California at Irvine. Working with "masters of ritual" performance from Haiti, India, and other parts of the world, Grotowski, his students, and the professional performers are trying to find, learn, and perform definite rhythms, sounds, and gestures that seem to

"work" in a number of the world's rituals. Rather than starting from a basis of meaning, Grotowski and his fellow researchers begin with strictly "objective" elements, including tempo, iconography, movement patterns, and sounds. This research is not historical, and does not concern itself with, for example, how "Om" and "Amen" may both be based on near-Eastern mantras. Instead, the research is concerned with such questions as how the open "uh" sound followed by a "hummed" closure might not only be an "objective correlative" of Indo-European and Semitic ritual, but may also be founded on brain structure and function. If that is the case, this sequence of sounds will be found elsewhere on earth, arising not from diffusion or cultural convergence, but from archetypes in the human brain. Ultimately, Grotowski wants to make a new performance bringing together the performative expressions of these archetypes. If the theory of objective drama is correct, this new work should be extremely powerful. And if Turner had lived long enough to go on with his last adventure, he would have been very interested to find out if a Grotowskian performance made from ritual actions, which were in turn derived from a number of different cultures, shared with the source cultures certain attributes at the level of brain activity—autonomic nervous system responses, brain waves, and so on. Furthermore, since Grotowski is working cognitively—that is, theatrically—with brain stem and limbic materials, Turner may have seen Grotowski's experiment as a paradigm of coadaptation.

It would be foolish to undervalue the work of two such visionary pioneers as Turner and Grotowski—even more so where their work independently converges. But I note that in the past, great works of art and effective ritual performances have always been very definitely situated in a given culture, while efforts to transcend or to accumulate cultures finally fail at precisely the point they want to make: creating actions as powerful as, or even more powerful than, the sources. In whatever performative or literary redaction, anthologies of cultures such as Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890) strike me as either premature or pollyannaish efforts at one-worldness or, worse, expressions of Western hegemony: attempts by Western minds to synthesize—that is, to bring under Western dominance—all of the world's cultures.

Turner was not such a synthesizer. He was always urging people to look for the "minute particular" and to experience the intrinsically unique flavor of this or that culture, subculture, or individual. He delighted in the unique. But "Body, Brain, and Culture" (1983) signals his passionately felt need to locate, or relocate, a universal or global basis for the ritual process. I think he believed the future of the world depended on it—as well it might. Near the end of his essay he said:

> I am really speaking of a global population of brains inhabiting an entire world of inanimate and animate entities, a population whose members are incessantly

> communicating with one another through every physical and mental instrumentality. But if one considers the geology, so to speak, of the human brain and nervous system, we see represented in its strata—each layer still vitally alive—not dead like stone, the numerous pasts and presents of our planet. . . . Each of us is a microcosm, related in the deepest ways to the whole life-history of that lovely deep blue globe swirled over with the white whorls first photographed by Edwin Aldrin and Neil Armstrong from their primitive space chariot, the work nevertheless of many collaborating human brains. (1983:243)

Much as I admire Turner's work and the adventurer's risks he was always willing to take, I am uncomfortable with his attempt to relocate, and thereby resolve, the "problems" of ritual action in the workings of evolution, or more specifically, the human brain. Having said this, I will also say that I am attracted to these very ideas which I expounded in my own way in "Magnitudes of Performance" (in press), and which also animate Grotowski's active performance work. It is clear that the problems I am working on constitute a bundle of troubles for me as well as for Turner. This essay is as much a statement to myself as about Turner. I am poorer for the fact that Turner cannot directly respond and move the dialogue ahead another step.

If it is too easy to relocate ancient problems of "free will" versus "fate," either as classical Marxism (all collective free will) or sociobiology (all genetic fate), Turner's coadaptive compromise seems overgenerously Christian. Does it solve anything to give Edward O. Wilson what is Wilson's and Marx what is Marx's? However one parcels out responsibility, what, if anything, guides the human future remains obscure in the extreme. The forces within and without human individuals, societies, and environments are more than we understand.

PLAY AND TRICKSTERS

Turner possibly felt this same uneasiness, for he slipped a few pages about play into "Body, Brain, and Behavior." "As I see it," he wrote, "play does not fit in anywhere: it is a transient and is recalcitrant to localization, to placement, to fixation—a joker in the neuroanthropological act" (1983:233). Right on. But play can't be exiled so easily; certainly it is as much "in" the brain as ritual, and its ethological evolutionary roots can be as surely traced. Yet what Turner says about play cannot be understood neurologically or in terms of orthodox evolutionary theory. In "locating" play, Turner reverts to his own classical definitions, which have little to do with either ethology or neurobiology.

> The neuronic energies of play, as it were, lightly skim over the cerebral cortices, sampling rather than partaking of the capacities and functions of the various areas of the brain. . . . Play is, for me, a liminal or liminoid mode, essentially interstitial, betwixt-and-between all standard taxonomic nodes. . . . As such play cannot be pinned down by formulations of left-hemisphere thinking—such as we all must use in keeping with the rhetorical conventions of academic discourse. Play is neither ritual action nor meditation, nor is it merely vegetative, nor is it just "having fun"; it also has a good deal of ergotropic and agonistic aggressivity in its odd-jobbing, *bricolage* style. . . . Like many Trickster figures in myths (or should these be "anti-myths," if myths are dominantly left-hemisphere speculations about causality?) play can deceive, betray, beguile, delude, and gull. (1983:233-234)

This brings Turner back to his own earlier work—the twenty years or so he spent delving into the "ritual process," "liminality," "anti-structure," the "subjunctive mood," and the "performative genres." The Trickster play gives Turner a ticket out of the brain as a locked-in system. This Trickster is forever shuttling between hemispheres, among the three parts of the triune brain, and in between categories. As such, play is an activity that has not yet been defined—or, in Turner's terms, play is categorically uncategorizable, the "anti-" by means of which all categories are destabilized. This Trickster is the artist, the performer, the playful anthropologist, the adventurer.

> [Play] has the power of the weak, an infantine audacity in the face of the strong. To ban play is, in fact, to massacre the innocents. If man is a neotonic species, play is perhaps his most appropriate mode of performance. (1983:235)

In finding a place for play in-and-out of the evolutionary neurological program, Turner feels that it plays "a similar role in the social construction of reality as mutation and variation in organic evolution" (1983:236). To do this, play had to be "detached" from the nervous system's "localizations," thus enabling "it to perform the liminal function of ludic recombination of familiar elements in unfamiliar and often Auite arbitrary patterns" (1983:236). Some of these patterns might prove adaptive, culturally speaking. Thus, play is for Turner a dynamic model of the brain itself: free to move, to find its own ways, and to actively contribute to the evolutionary process. Finally, Turner's model is not structural, but audaciously processual.

CONCLUSION

From an orthodox viewpoint, the difficulty with all of this is that Turner is moving too freely between strict, analogous, and metaphoric thinking. But these contradictions are only surface phenomena, and I am not overly disturbed by them. What is actually happening—and what is so exciting to work from—is Turner's eager searching for appropriate ways to integrate his life's work with data which are new for him concerning the brain. One should not treat "Body, Brain, and Culture" as the fruit of that search, but as its first seeding—or more properly, as an early exploratory voyage, a first rehearsal.

Turner was very much a man of the theater. He would try, take it again, work out another way, fix a routine, and then run it in a new context. He was forever polishing his act. But he was not slick, and he enjoyed most the deconstructive process of workshop followed by the myriad possible reconstructions of rehearsal. He was not shy about showing work in progress. In fact, he was fascinated by the progressive method of working, and it was those areas of human experience that are most processual—pilgrimage, ritual, theater, and dance—all of which are performative genres, that occupied his mind and body.

Still, this does not tell us what, except for the sheer dazzling restlessness of his spirit, brought Turner to attempt a synthesis between his own brand of speculative humanistic anthropology and sociobiology. Again, I think the answer is religion. Like so many of us, Turner was an optimist in terms of his own life, but much more pessimistic when contemplating the future of the species, including life on earth. Troubled by the state of the world, he may have been seeking a synthesis not mainly between two scientific viewpoints, but between science and faith.

If God (or whatever it is) is the very formulation of the world, than this formulation ought to be most strongly present in the brain, the world's most complicated and sophisticated organ. To put it in Hindu terms, if Atman (the innermost, impersonal Self) and Brahman (the Absolute) are one, then by examining the brain—the very seat of Atman—humans might learn a great deal about Brahman. They may even find "where" Brahman is—not where in the sense of Broca's area or the hippocampus, but in the system of relationships and neuro-electronic-chemical exchanges among each individual's several brains. Or, humans may discover that Brahman has no individual basis, but exists only in the coordinated work of many brains. Or that the same collectivity—the same "triune" existence—as there is within each brain transcends all individuals.

Such contemplation is two steps from the ultimate metatext. The first step is within human grasp: an independent artificial intelligence. The second is contact with superior nonhuman be-

ings: the extraterrestrial connection. I am saying what I think Turner might have been coming to. He realized that an organ of contemplation such as the human brain is not capable of absolute self-examination. If forced to contemplate itself, the human brain will go crazy (or mystically fuzzy) dealing with too many layers of metatextual reflexivity. But the brain might either create an exterior organ of thought or actively seek to come into contact with nonhuman others with whom it could communicate. Many experiments point in these directions. And it's not only with apes and dolphins that we want to talk. It would seem that if humans are to survive, the next step is communication with some genuinely thoughtful other.

Here, science fiction, popular literature, and film is far ahead of science, but not ahead of religion. For has it not been religion's project from the very beginning of human history to locate, establish, and keep contact with nonhuman beings? And do not those who believe in gods think of these beings not as "symbols," but as actually existing others? Part of the anthropological romance has been to go to far-away places and live with people who daily communicate with and experience divine (or demonic) others. Especially for "positivists," this has been a heady/hearty encounter. And now, as positivism fades, even scientists of the first order want to meet nonhuman others themselves, first-hand, face-to-face, brain-to-brain. How, or if, this will be accomplished is not yet clear.

From this perspective, Victor Turner's last adventure is a trope modeling his desire to contact those others we humans need to negotiate fate with.

Science fiction? Fiction as science? Or coadaptation in a most definite, concrete way?

NOTES

1. This essay was accepted for publication in *Anthropologica* in 1984. Another version was subsequently scheduled for publication in *The Anthropology of Performance* by Victor Turner, New York: PAJ Publications (Division of Performing Arts Journal, Incorporated; in press).

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