

INTRODUCTION



LIMINALITY, STRUCTURE/ANTI-STRUCTURE AND EGALITARIAN DYNAMICS

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Victor Turner's major focus on the liminal as a general theoretical orientation began in *The Ritual Process* (1969) and continued in much of his writing to follow. The chapters presented here were written in the context of seminars and discussions concentrating on dimensions of egalitarianism in which Turner's development of the liminal concept was considered to be highly relevant.

The powerful implication in Turner's idea of liminality is that it is the core dynamic of sociocultural processes: of the constantly changing directions, parameters, registers of human existence everywhere. The liminal is apparent at the margins, boundaries and transitional, often dangerous, vulnerable points of the human passage through existence. Turner gives the idea of the liminal a central, indeed a pivotal significance in the understanding of the dynamic generative courses of human life, both creative and destructive. He concentrates on the critical intensities (antithetical, contradictory, negating, reductive) that are the dynamic of the liminal. At their most abstract he describes them to be structuring and anti-structuring: the one crucial in the other with processual, changing, reorientational, transitive, transformational effects. Turner explicitly considers a vital dimension of structure to be a hierarchizing, ordering dynamic that is overcome by negating, radically ahierarchical energies that release, perhaps paradoxically, new orientations in human life and social assemblages. The transitive force or potential of the liminal opens to new possibilities of existence and understanding.

Our initial concern in this Introduction is to outline some of the key methodological influences leading to the writing of *The Ritual Process* and its core

ideas, which relate to the approach to egalitarianism behind this volume. *The Ritual Process* is a book about change and transition at a time of transition and change for Turner and for anthropology. When published, there was ongoing post-Second World War reconstruction in most areas of life; anthropology was expanding and effectively being re-established in a world where there was a concern to break from the constraints and inequities of a past implicated in the human destructions of war. Still a relatively new university discipline, anthropology was in the throes of reinventing itself. For example, as a critic of colonialism, its dehumanization and especially racism, it re-evaluated (away from anthropology's colonialist associations and implications) the general conceptual significance of its hitherto emphasis on non-Western societies for its understanding of the human species as a whole.

Turner's *The Ritual Process* is one outstanding example,¹ as it repositioned the role of ritual in anthropology. If ritual was at the root of human consciousness (so much a view in archaeology and in anthropology, a mark of a strong evolutionist bias) it is also at the crux of human being's continual becoming. *The Ritual Process* is through and through a work about ritual as harbouring the conjunctive forces of human change: emancipatory, creative and generative as they may well be constraining, restrictive and destructive. In ritual, conventionally conceived as an engine of the irrational, Turner finds dynamics that supersede or encompass or stand apart from the rationalisms or rationalities (even of science, and manifest in its discoveries and excitements) that might claim to overcome it. In this sense, *The Ritual Process* sees ritual as more than the seat of the irrational of consciousness, as in so much understanding, but rather as revealing some of the human dynamics vital in the human formation of history. In ritual, Turner discovers equalitarian² expressions that are at the heart of human consciousness (ontologically universal in) basic to the unity of human being, as this is simultaneously the ground upon which human diversity and differentiation arises as a continually (re-)originating and creative phenomenon. Turner's path-breaking work in anthropology sees in rite equalitarian/egalitarian forces as inseparably joined in struggle with the hierarchical that emerges from, as it were, the same equalitarian ground. Reaching beyond its importance as a work about ritual, *The Ritual Process* is through and through concerned with an egalitarian impetus as being ingrained in human being as such, an inexhaustible energy of human creation and history. Edith Turner (2012) makes this explicit in her application of the concept of *communitas* to progressive social movements, although the approach here is more concerned with its ambiguities and contradictions, its negative as well as positive aspects (see Friedson this volume).

Published nearly fifty years ago, *The Ritual Process* maintains its relevance. Egalitarian issues and cries for liberation have achieved renewed intensity at

the current historical moment. In the context of Covid-19, climate change, digitalization, and such crises as the Ukraine war, the global situation is arguably approaching what Max Weber might have described as a switch point in history (see Holbraad, Kapferer and Sauma 2019), or, in Karl Jaspers' ([1949] 2011) conception, an axial age (see Kapferer and Kapferer this volume). It is certainly a period of considerable social and political transition in which Turner's thought has renewed significance.

An egalitarian or egalitarianizing ethos, a freeing, liberating, opening sensibility, runs throughout Turner's development of the liminal. It could be said that *The Ritual Process* extends from Turner's strong egalitarian orientation. Such is deep within his biography prior to and in the course of him becoming an anthropologist, and was to be ingrained in his liminal idea and its general theoretical significance (see Deflem 1991). Victor Turner's intellectual commitments, especially literary, shared with his life companion and collaborator Edith, express an egalitarian ethos (see Edith Turner 2006). William Blake was a particular Turner favourite, whose great mythic libertarian romanticism was a regular source of inspiration. His experience in a bomb disposal unit, as a conscientious objector, during the Second World War, fed Turner's egalitarian anti-authoritarian values. As he would describe his experience of the dangers of bomb disposal, the highly intense situation of imminent death, held little room for the distancing rites and rules of military rank. Presumably too, it gave an intensity to Turner's enthusiasm for life, so much the feature of his anthropological perspective and his engagement with ritual as the main source of key ideas relating to the liminal.

Turner credits Arnold van Gennep's classic *The Rites of Passage* (1909) as the inspiration for his development of the liminal concept, although as we will propose, van Gennep's work was more of a catalyst for ideas that were already in formation: the liminal being a cohering concept for their realization that went well beyond van Gennep.³ Turner together with Max Gluckman saw an identity between van Gennep's perspective and Gluckman's general anthropological approach, which sought to understand social life as a dynamic process through attention to situated events, what was described as 'situational analysis' (see Gluckman 1940 [1958], 1961; Mitchell, 1956, 1983; Garbett 1970; Werbner 1984; Evens and Handelsman 2008; Kapferer 2005, 2015). Gluckman's orientation was a deviation within the dominant Durkheimian/Maussian social anthropological paradigm, with a strong historical understanding augmented by a Marxist leaning. Such influenced the broad intellectual frame for what Gluckman was to establish as his 'Manchester School', announced and set out in Gluckman's BBC Reith Lectures, and published as *Custom and Conflict* (1955) (see also Gluckman 1968).

Turner was a leading adept, and his first major and now classic ethnography, *Schism and Continuity in an African Society* (1957), exemplifies key

potentials of Gluckman's perspective. Furthermore, the writing of this monograph together with the field experience upon which it was based, opened the way to Turner's own radical redirection for social anthropology, *The Ritual Process*.

Schism focused on successive critical sociopolitical events of conflict in village society that revealed and momentarily resolved the effects of underlying contradictions in principles of social organization (that of virilocal residence at marriage in matrilineal systems), exacerbated by the village fracturing impact of the colonially mediated inclusion of traditional society within an encompassing and expanding globalizing world capitalist order. Here Turner realized a major significance of Gluckman's anthropological concern, which was not to separate the traditional from the modern so much as to see them as different shapes of the contemporary, and to examine their enmeshing and mutual differentiation and production within overarching global forces.⁴

Ritual was not Turner's primary interest in *Schism*, although it was addressed as having an integrative function in articulating a new arrangement of sociopolitical relations. Turner concentrated on the dynamic intensity of events expanding Gluckman's situational analytic perspective. He did so by concentrating on the internal process of events, showing how their dynamic not only refracted the tensions of change (intensifying already underlying contradictions) but were vital in setting redirections in social life and articulating significant shifts in the structuring of social relations. Turner conceived of events as following a Hegelian dialectical dynamic of breach, crisis, redress to reintegration (see Turner 1957: 91–94), where a new resolution of contradiction-driven conflict was reached in a continuing unfolding emergence of the social.

Turner's schema for the analysis of the dynamic crisis of events anticipated what he was to develop as the potential of the liminal concept, effectively a point of crisis and a moment of differentiation and (re)creation.⁵ His decision to present his event ethnography dramatologically extended on Gluckman's (1940 [1958]) own situational event analysis innovation describing a bridge-opening in Zululand, and Gluckman enthusiastically accepted Turner's methodological move.⁶ It brought the key players in the process of events to life, their personalities, the nature of their existential struggles, the forces engaged in their shifting relations (the stuff, or imponderabilia, of everyday life) that are the basis of anthropological intuition (an important aspect of the recommendation of immersive fieldwork) into the analytical foreground for conceptual formation and general understanding. The potential of Gluckman's situational method⁷ was further realized, bringing the richness of the anthropological field experience, so often excluded in commanding theoretical approaches, into analytic play. Thus ritual that Turner experienced as thoroughly critical to Ndembu life became more centrally placed in explan-

atory interpretation. The stage was set for Turner's performance-symbolic aesthetic perspective, to which he was already predisposed, to become so distinctive in his ritual analyses and anthropology generally.

Turner's major ritual ethnographies (1967, 1968) follow *Schism*, culminating in *The Ritual Process* (1969), which like Gluckman's *Custom and Conflict*, but perhaps more radically so, constituted a major redirection in social anthropology. It was bound to happen for methodological as well as for a variety of personal reasons of life crisis: among them career changes and larger events in the embracing social and political context.⁸ We concentrate on the methodological acknowledging that this cannot be easily separated from the whole context of Turner's unfolding lifeworld.

Turner had reached a descriptive and analytical impasse, which he partially solved with his dramatological innovation that was consistent with the situational analytic frame. This was a method that was directed not merely to illustrate argument and theory but to problematize it. That is, to match theory and the understandings it achieves with the evidence, with the complexities of life and its situations in such a way that theory and conceptual understanding might be challenged, exposed to its limitations, perhaps giving rise to new concepts and theory.

Turner was already dissatisfied with the a priori abstractionism of Durkheimian functionalism and with a relatively flat materialism that excluded much of the lived field experience of the fieldwork encounter in the interests of the confirmation of the then commanding theoretical discourses. Ritual was an example, with so much of its anthropological conceptualization or definition being determined within the rationalism and frames of Western scientific positivism, not to downplay the tendency to subordinate what is identified to be ritual to Western cultural/religious assumptions (Asad 1993). In other words, ritual, its definition and understanding, was subordinated to dominant and dominating discourses that obfuscated or refused key dimensions of the phenomenon at hand. Ritual was set within the rationalist objectivist abstract terms of commanding theoretical narratives in such a way as to demonstrate their potencies of comprehension over those that ritual practices addressed and the potentials of understanding that they may have opened towards. Ritual in effect was/is treated as a 'minor discourse',⁹ frequently quite literally so (e.g. as evolutionarily inferior to the secular Western modern), not to be considered seriously within its own parameters of understanding with regard to the opening of new horizons of possibility. This, we think, is what Turner was saying in *The Ritual Process* with reference to his statement that ritual was insufficiently addressed in his experience at Manchester.¹⁰ Turner's concentration on ritual, as we have indicated, led to an opening up of some of the analytical constraints imposed on social anthropology of the time. His path through ritual steered towards

a more holist (wholistic) anthropology in which the discipline could realize some of its larger potential and promise, and demonstrate the ambition behind anthropology's foundation: anthropology as a subject that could contribute towards a general and universal understanding of human being transcendent of relativism in which the practices of all human beings were important not merely as demonstrations of theory but as revealing and suggestive of new and general understanding. Turner was realizing, in effect, anthropology as no longer so much the discipline of minor discourses as the subject that might reveal the major in the hitherto minor, that could overcome the limitations in dominant and dominating perspectives.

Through his focus on ritual, Turner began to move away from the dualism that characterized much Western commanding thought. Thus he shifted away from Cartesian mind/body dualism, which separated the mental from the material. Ritual in its practice, in performance, gives expression to sensibilities (the subjunctive in Turner's usage) that cannot be adequately grasped cognitively, verbally or symbolically, independently of direct experiencing. Meaning is embodied and immediately communicated (in the sense philosophically addressed as 'presentational' by Susanne Langer [1942], referenced by Turner, following Whitehead rather than Kant). Dichotomizing and oppositional logics of the kind that separate the traditional from the modern or contemporary, and the small from the large scale, are modified to draw greater attention to their intermeshing, the production of the one from within the other, as well as cross resonances. In the non-dualist holistic perspective that Turner pursues through ritual are revealed civilizational themes common to all human being regardless of space or time, or scale or complexity, including their critical dynamics and historical generating force.

Ritual or ritualization is a phenomenon of human crisis. In this sense it is a universal human phenomenon apparent and emergent at critical moments in the process of life, regardless of its designation as religious or secular (the distinction Turner makes between the liminal and the liminoid carries this implication). For this reason, forms of ritual practice might be conceived as a potentially important source of concepts and theory generally applicable to all human beings (the more so in Turner's approach, where ritual is ubiquitous, generated in the crises of process, and is itself a processual dynamic). In other words, ritual rather than the basis for a divided understanding of human being (e.g. a separation of the non-modern from the modern, or of the rational from the non-rational) may be the ground for a relatively unified understanding of human being, a promise of anthropology and a motivation behind the publication of *The Ritual Process*.

Some six years following the publication of *The Ritual Process*, Turner makes this more explicit in his republication of his first two major ritual essays following *Schism*: 'Chihamba: The White Spirit' and 'Ndembu Divina-

tion: Its Symbolism and Techniques' in *Divination and Revelation* (1975). In his Introduction to this volume, Turner reflects on the significance of the essays for the anthropological direction he was then well-establishing.

Divination is thoroughly about structure, its conflicts, its differentiations, its exclusions. Its dynamic is analytic (the reasoning within structure): atomizing, reductive, often intensely divisive in practice (e.g. in sorcery). Divination for the Ndembu and generally across cultures and situations reveals the process of structure for what it is, a dynamic that creates or generates the orders of existence, of human life, but also the organizational formations, the fault lines, points of contradiction and conflicts that are vital in structural collapse, whether social or personal. Divination is deconstructive of the forces within structures that may break human unities, which are particularly apparent at liminal and transitional moments and times in human ongoing experience and history. These are also when anti-structural forces are given rise, in what Turner highlights as *communitas* – that drive against the dividing, separating forces of structure, potentially establishing a new basis for human reorientation and organizational formation.

I have frequently written about *communitas*, meaning by this, relationships [that] are undifferentiated, equalitarian, direct, extant, non-rational, existential, 'I-Thou' (in Ludwig Feuerbach's and Martin Buber's sense), between definite and determinate identities. The empirical base of this concept was to some extent my experience of friendship during the war as a non-combatant private soldier in a British bomb disposal unit. But it was mainly village life in Africa [that] convinced me that spontaneous, immediate, concrete relationships between individuals not only were personally rewarding but also had theoretical relevance. *Chihamba's* dramatic . . . climax in the social anti-structure of universal friendship, following the ritual slaying of *Kavula*, seems to me the epitome or concentrated essence of African village *communitas* raised to metaphysical power by symbolic action. (Turner 1975: 21–22)

For Turner, *communitas* is more profound than notions of togetherness, solidarity, and so on, although no doubt there is a strong sense of it, and certainly some of its spirit, in such concepts. He identifies different kinds of *communitas* but these manifest at root the deep essence of the experience in the Ndembu *Chihamba*, which Turner presents as virtually pre-ideological and universal across humanity. Thus aspects of the anti-structure of *communitas* in *Chihamba* resonate with similar expressions in great religious and political movements and philosophies worldwide, and, as Turner indicates, in the themes of great literature (of Melville's tale of the cosmic struggle with Moby Dick, or Dante's ascent to Paradise in the Divine Comedy).

Turner refuses the critique that his idea of the liminal, and especially the concept of *communitas*, was born of his conversion to Catholicism. He re-

jects the criticism of Robin Horton (1964, repeated in Werbner 2020) that the concept of *communitas* is Thomist, noting that Aquinas himself repudiated his *Summa Theologica* that Turner is accused of presenting (Turner 1975: 18–19).

Communitas is the unity of being and most specifically, as he writes the *urgrund*, of human being, humanity. It is non-structural and anti-structural only in relation to structure. Prior to structure it is also the fundamental unity of being from which humanity, in the processes of its diversification, differentiations and hierarchies, takes form. Turner distinguishes his concept of *communitas* from that of Durkheimian transcendence, the collective effervescence of rite whereby the social or society comes into existence out of its individual elements.¹¹ *Communitas* for Turner is beneath the social (not reducible to the social) and its structures of life that can in their formation and process destroy the existential unity that *communitas* expresses. Therefore, with Turner, *communitas* is a continuing generative and regenerative force in human existence. It is captured in religion but is not confined to it. *Communitas* is not ecumenical but universal, a force that is general throughout humanity, both expressive of its undivided unity as it is an energy at the root of human being's process of cultural and self (re)creation and change.

While *communitas* is not structure, it is the basis from which structure, or a diversity of structures, emerges. This includes both egalitarian and hierarchical assemblages (see Keeler this volume) or formations that in our view are ideological (organizations of value) and closely linked and implicit in the other. Egalitarianism is defined in relation to hierarchy and vice versa, so neither can be comprehended independently of the other. *Communitas* may be understood as a key spirit of what is broadly understood as egalitarian, human being as an undivided unity outside structure whose potency is in this unity as such, and protected in the ritual or often ritualized suspension (*communitas* is given to ritual)¹² of structure, frequently at transitional spaces, moments or times. However, non-structure is continually vulnerable to being overcome by structure. This is the potential of *communitas* that is the ground and starting point for structural reformation: the reassertion of the orders that surround it and/or the emergence of structure and hierarchy from within the non-structure of *communitas* that is the ground of structure, whose strongest unity is in hierarchy in which inequality is the key principle. What might be grasped as the paradox of *communitas* (the emergence of structure from non-structure) is expressed in the final events of the *Chihamba* rite (which intends the rebirth of structure) that centres on the killing of *Kavula*, 'the grandfather of all the people' (Turner 1975: 75, 98–115), the Ndembu being of the totality, in the interpretation here, the unity of the fundamental contradiction within existence. *Kavula*, in Turner's exegesis,

is in actuality not killed by the ritual candidates in the *Chihamba* (the ‘killing’ is a terrible act in the candidates’ own transition, regeneration), and might be understood as the pushing back of the non-structural ground in the re-emergence of structure that *Kavula* effects.¹³

Some of the critique of Turner’s *The Ritual Process*, certainly among a few of his colleagues at Manchester at the time, was that he had abandoned the strengths of its methodological innovation in social anthropology and its socially egalitarian and liberating project. This was manifest in Turner’s concentration on ritual and religion, which in radical quarters was the engine of conservatism, tradition and – worse – hierarchy, Catholicism being an example. In other words, he betrayed his egalitarian orientation, and most notably his own erstwhile Marxist concerns. The argument here is that this was far from the case. Through ritual the limitations both of Durkheim and of Marxian perspectives were overcome and otherwise augmented and modified in continuation (e.g. Turner’s distinction between liminality and liminoid has shades of Durkheim’s mechanical and organic solidarity, but does not treat them as absolutely distinct). *The Ritual Process* is virtually a re-invention of social anthropology, an opening up of the discipline, to a great variety of perspectives from numerous fields of human enquiry, science and non-science, and most especially the understandings born of experience and its inventions through the perspectives and structures of practice. There is a refusal of anthropological relativism and an emphasis on continuities across difference and the contribution of humanity, both as a whole and in its specifics, as the source for its conceptual understanding. The concept of *communitas* insists on a common humanity in the face of its differentiation and differences.

If *The Ritual Process* is about ritual and finds its significance in the repositioning of ritual in anthropological thought, it is also a deeply egalitarian and liberating work. It inspires an approach to egalitarianism that breaks with some conventional approaches in anthropology, and especially in Western liberal philosophy, that, as we shall discuss, tend to conceive of egalitarian thought and practice as the invention of the modern (more specifically of the West), born of its fall into the inequities of hierarchy. With Turner, egalitarianism and hierarchy have been inseparably joined from the very beginning of human consciousness, and are virtually the force of its human histories.¹⁴ There are strong intimations of what we are saying in our interpretation of Jean Jacques Rousseau’s *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* ([1755] 1999), which begins with language and social formation reaching its hierarchical apex in the order of the state. It is with the formation of society (structure) that human inequality (which Rousseau distinguishes from what he calls natural inequality) grows. This echoes Turner’s discussion of *Chihamba*, and is pursued in what follows.

Beyond Eurocentrism: Egalitarianism and Hierarchy

Egalitarianism is approached here as a general abstract concept, multiple in expression meaning and existential manifestation. It refers to a dynamic, a process, that usually discovers its particular lived properties in concrete moments and situations of crisis. It is a concept that gathers around it or can include a great many other abstractions or pragmatic operators which may be relevant to its particular concrete realization. These include notions of democracy, freedom, human rights, and justice; or indicators, often for contemporary reasons of measurement and policy, such as economic equality and equality of opportunity.

Egalitarianism is a word that was first used in pre-revolutionary France, a term that expressed Enlightenment visions, an awakening to new understanding expressed in rational and secularist intellectual thought carried into social and political movements of liberal opening and of revolution. The French revolutionary cry '*Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*' established egalitarianism as an abstraction that awaits its spatial (contextual) and temporal (historical) specificities, whose force in potential continues to echo around the globe. *Égalité*, equality, is the middle conjunctive transitive word, a 'between' and 'between', liminal term that links emancipation, freedom, to the realization of the undivided unity, *fraternité*, of humankind – or, in Victor Turner's more inclusive sense of *communitas* in which human beings are a collective unity on the basis of their shared human beingness, their raw humanity alone. *Égalité*, as the central term in the revolutionary cry, is an active word bearing the meaning of the whole towards an ever-changing world. It is highly performative. The human being, the individual in the condition of *égalité*, is stripped of all that may differentiate, distinguish, separate it from others, and revealed in its simple, human beingness, as at one with others. The French revolutionary cry is a dynamic, motional cry, filled with the energy of emergence.

Conventionally, often in discourse centred on the European and North American Enlightenment, egalitarianism is associated with modernity, especially political and economic modernity, ushered in during the circumstances of what Eric Hobsbawm labelled as *The Age of Revolution* (1962). Frequently, the American, French and Russian revolutions, not to mention the English and most notably the Haitian (the tragedy of the Haitian revolution of Toussaint L'Ouverture is significantly under-considered – see Buck-Morss 2005), are seen as marking the beginning of contemporary global realities, their rupture from the past, from the worlds of tradition. In other words, Europe and the Americas present themselves as the site of the apotheosis to full conscious awareness of the emancipatory desire of human

beings to burst the shackles of their oppression and the realization of their potential undivided equality with their fellow human beings.

Notwithstanding the great influence the Euro-American revolutionary period has upon the understanding of egalitarianism (see Wolin 2001), and certainly of many major, but by no means all philosophical and theoretical positions, the concept of egalitarianism as developed here aims to separate it from the dangers of Eurocentrism and a sense of Euro-American ownership. This is apparent in political ideological usage when notions of egalitarianism are presented simultaneously to be Euro-American and to legitimate claims to dominance and accompanying moral authority. In such use what may be called the egalitarian paradox arises in which the egalitarian idea is joined to its contradiction. This is George Orwell's observation in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The paradox is strongly apparent in tradition/modern dualisms where civilizational superiority claimed in an egalitarian modernity (associated with democracy, technological advancement) has been used to extraordinary colonialist, imperialist, nationalist, not to say racist, inequalitarian ends.

The egalitarian concept, as developed in this discussion, is an open and opening one, relative to space or context and to time. While the word itself arises and is given particular changing, transitional, transformational force at a momentous period in European and American history, this is an acute expression (or cultural objectification) of aspects of existential, social and political processes that in the orientation here are immanent (and achieving different cultural and social expression) in the lifeworlds, consciously and unconsciously, of human beings everywhere. The word egalitarianism names diverse and varying dimensions of a processive (rather than necessarily progressive) dynamic that is integral to life and social realities, and is accordingly an enduring force of history, an understanding that is evident in most perspectives.

Egalitarianism, in usages relevant to the discussion here, is typically defined in dialectical relation to hierarchy. These are abstractions, egalitarianism and hierarchy being in mutual contradiction and negation. They stand, in the perspective developed in this discussion, by and large, for general formational principles that at their extreme are thoroughly contradictory or negating of the other, manifesting as their absolute positivity (their highest value) the negation or overcoming of that to which they are opposed. In this sense, as already indicated, the concept of egalitarian is inclusive of far more than simply the notion of equality (and, too often, economic equality); it also eclipses, often in a revolutionary sense, that formation or order it negates. The positivity of the egalitarian includes the negation of that, and its values, that it overcomes. Likewise with the concept of hierarchy, which includes far more than rank or status order, for example, but potentially a

whole array of other relational qualities which separate and may have hierarchizing effect, often arising from dynamics of differentiation, that may have deeper qualitative dimensions other than those associated with status or power integral to most conceptions of hierarchy. Gender and sex differentiation may be examples.

The concepts of egalitarianism and hierarchy, as approached here, are not strict opposites but dynamically intertwined, the one emergent and immanent in and through the other. They are inseparably joined so that the negative of the one becomes the positivity of the other, relative to both time and space (history, moment, context and situation). The range of meaning, quality, and sense of what they may include, is always changing or variable.

Obviously, the concepts of egalitarianism and hierarchy are ideologically loaded, especially in the context of the history of European and American philosophical and political discourse. As abstractions, they are each conceived to be the inverse of the other. They are frozen, as it were, in such abstraction, lifted out of their dynamic. Thus, the egalitarian, nebulously understood as equality, potentially across any human practice, is positively valued in distinct contrast to the negative value accorded to hierarchy, nebulously asserted to be inequality across any human practice. They are presented as mutually antagonistic and exclusive absolutes, with the egalitarian as the ideal, *vis-à-vis* the real, hierarchy.¹⁵

The orientation here sustains the notion of the egalitarian as an ideal, something that is asystemic, even aside from the systemic as currently lived, an ever-receding utopic imaginary at the edge of reach, which motivates human being towards it. The egalitarian is a moving potential, open to constantly diverse and changing definition and realization. As an ideal in practice defined in dynamic relation to the hierarchical (and vice versa), both, therefore, being highly relative, egalitarianism is conceived as a major force in history. Egalitarianism and hierarchy are in mutually encompassing struggle. But egalitarianizing forces or imaginaries (whether consciously named as such or not), especially as ideals or a potential future, are enduringly encompassing or perhaps overcoming in relation to the hierarchical. Thus the egalitarian or egalitarianizing dynamic in hierarchical relation is the principal generative, often creative, changing, transitive, transformational energy in the structuring and restructuring of relations integral to human life.

The stress that this discussion lays on the dynamic intertwining of the egalitarian with the hierarchical – that they are intermeshed, which effectively conditions their process, their historical force – also means that they are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, the perspective moves away from Hegel's dialectic, of opposites in absolute contradiction, and extends Hegel's understanding of their mutual immanence that is an implication of his dialectic (see Žižek 2004).

Thus egalitarian or egalitarianizing moments and processes can and do occur in dominant or overarching hierarchical orders. Buddhist practice, for instance, is egalitarian relative to Brahmanical Hinduism. The *dalit* liberation movement in India recommended Buddhism to be a movement aside from the dehumanizing force of caste discrimination legitimated by Brahmanism (see Jayaseelan 2022). Similarly, certain egalitarian ideological movements, those of Australian nationalism (see Kapferer 2011) for example, have exclusionary, virtually racist, hierarchizing effect. There are many other obvious examples. The concept of the state is synonymous with the notion of hierarchy as antithetical to an egalitarian ideal, yet is often touted as a necessary condition for social existence, as Thomas Hobbes famously contended contra Jean Jacques Rousseau. Yet the monarchical order that Hobbes defended, as hierarchical systems ancient and modern, depend on egalitarian spaces. This is a feature of the hierarchical class and status system of the United Kingdom. This was excellently demonstrated in the ceremonial surrounding the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II. The body of the Queen became the space of the *demos*, as the crowds that massed to her funeral expressed for a moment a unity, a kind of public *communitas*, in which the socially separating hierarchizing differences of class, status, ethnicity and power seemed all but suspended. The ideological expressions surrounding the Queen's funeral demonstrated that an egalitarian ethos is necessary for the perpetuation of the monarch-headed hierarchy of the British social and political order (Rio, Kapferer and Bertelsen 2022). For Marx and Engels ([1848] 1971), the state, while the contradiction of an egalitarian society was nonetheless considered necessary to its formation, would ultimately be dissolved with the realization of the egalitarian ideal and the end of the dialectic. Ideologists of capitalism assert various kinds of legitimating egalitarian ethos with intense hierarchical consequence, which is certainly more than apparent in the contemporary historical moment (see Kapferer and Kapferer this volume).

Overall, the approach essayed here conceives egalitarianism and hierarchy as being in dynamic interconnection (rather than in an absolutist oppositional dialectic) in a virtually never-ending becoming of human being in which what is defined as egalitarian and hierarchy is relative (to context and history) and emergent. The former may be conceived as a destructuring force in hierarchy, whereas the hierarchical is structuring. It is this dynamic that is at the heart of Turner's approach to *liminality*, and which he presents as the crisis of anti-structure/structure. Accordingly, the anthropology of the small-scale and the so-called traditional achieved a relevance for the study of human being in general, and opened one way in which anthropology itself could break free from both some of its own self-imposed conceptual constraints and contribute to the understanding of human being as a whole in its theorizations.

Exploring the Liminal: The Essays

The following chapters extend on Turner's approach to the *liminal* and the *liminoid*, and the direction for anthropology that he initiated. They present diverse concretizations of the largely abstract terms in which the foregoing discussion has been set, re-insisting Turner's strong ethnographic commitment, so much part of Gluckman's Manchester methodological situational analytical tradition, whose specific ethnographic, evidence-based perspective was intended to extend the field-based distinction of anthropology (established so strongly by Malinowski) and its general scientific contribution to the understanding of human being. The orientation was to the construction and generation of concepts that were from the ground-up (founded in the observation and understandings of practice and their practitioners), and which were applicable to human being in general. That is, the concepts were to be founded in practices that were pursued, if differentially, by all human beings (a significance of anthropological comparison embracing all humanity, past and present; see Kapferer and Theodossopoulos 2019) and which, furthermore, were not necessarily confined to particular cultural, ideological, or historical contexts or frames. Turner's radical approach to ritual, his liberation of it from an evolutionist vision together with a conception of ritual and the processes of ritualization as endemic to human beings *per se*, realized ritual (given his particular recognition of the conditions and formation of ritual and its dynamic) as a general ground for concept construction. Marx saw the political and the economic (especially class exploitation or, more generally, inequality) as the basis for his general conceptual and theoretical approach to capitalism and proto- or pre-capitalism. Turner was influenced in this direction (as was Gluckman and others in his tradition, e.g. in concepts such as arena, social field), thus, arguably, the approach in *Schism. The Ritual Process* as presented here does not abandon that perspective, which is apparent in the strong egalitarian ethos that underscores Turner's approach to ritual. The concepts of liminality and *communitas* are about more than change and process; they have a politics about them that continues a Marxist influence as well as an openness to a broader range of conceptual possibilities that extend beyond Durkheimian sociological constraints.

The chapters presented here offer critical extensions as well as qualifications on Turner's key concepts, which is only to be expected given the passage of time and the very different mood of contemporary global realities. The Turners wrote at a time of reformation and hope, Edith maintaining such spirit to the last. Perhaps the current historical moment is less positive although no less a critical transitional moment in history, despite the negative dimensions of what may have been positive seeming to be more apparent. Liminality as a moment of intense uncertainty and frequently of

suffering has almost become a permanent, institutionalized condition for many (e.g. see the chapters by Gold and Iteanu). Ritual and dimensions of its aesthetic practice often associated with the dynamic of *communitas* are manifest in hierarchical structuring, where the individualizing separation of human beings, rather than an undifferentiated unity, is the effect as in the destruction of war, in torture and oppressive dehumanization (e.g. Friedson and Keeler this volume).

A reading of *The Ritual Process* should make it evident that Victor Turner was alive to the negative in the positive. The liberating movements of 1960s USA exemplify dimensions of his arguments, but he makes clear their negative possibility, an aspect that Sheldon Wolin (2017) has demonstrated in his discussion of the connection of the 1960s to contemporary corporatism and expanding inequalities. Such cycles of history are implicit in Turner's analyses (there is a Nietzschean twist in Turner,¹⁶ see Kapferer 2005, as there is in van Gennep, see Thomassen this volume).¹⁷

The volume opens with Bjorn Thomassen's rich statement on van Gennep (see too Thomassen 2014; Szakolezai and Thomassen 2019). He makes thoroughly evident why Turner (and Gluckman) were attracted to van Gennep's work. Turner recognized the parallel, although, as discussed above, more as a performative (in the sense of J.L. Austin 1962). Despite the similarities in project, as Thomassen excellently demonstrates, Turner's approach converges with or shares much with that indicated by van Gennep without in-depth consideration. Ultimately, in later statements, the debt, if any, to van Gennep slips from view.

The volume closes with Robert Turner's extension of Victor Turner's ideas on liminality as relevant to research on the brain, and supported by it. His chapter takes off from what his father described as his most difficult essay 'Body, Brain, and Culture' (published after his death, 1983, republished in *On the Edge of the Bush*, 1985), in which Victor Turner sees ritual to be more than a process within a cultural system but also relates to the neurobiology of the brain. The chapter moves towards a reconciliation of ethological orientations with his hitherto sociological/phenomenological perspective, but an approach, I hasten to add, that avoids essentialism and its stasis. It is consistent with Victor Turner's opening up of anthropological thought beyond its social anthropological, social constructionist, social determinist insistence, and its extension and inclusion of other fields of understanding. Robert Turner extends a hypothesis (testable through technological advances in MRI brain imaging) that the ritual process both acts on cultural competences captured in the brain and also can transform the organization of the brain. This is so because of the plasticity of the brain in all creatures, from the simplest to the most complex human brain. Neurons, Turner develops, have the feature that they can record and conserve experience, which

can also generate new connections between more distant neurons, changing the structure of the brain and creating new possibilities for behaviour and action. Turner argues that ritual as an intense aesthetic and communicational experiential process acts on what is recorded; and, critically, in ritual's liminal dynamic, it can disrupt, interrupt and suspend what is stored in the brain, facilitating its organizational modification. He focuses on situations of temporal and affective entrainment, behavioural and social synchrony. Turner considers these forms of entrainment to be particularly apparent in the liminal stages of rites producing reconfigurational effect on the brain, with consequence for a further understanding of the power of ritual as an instituted dynamic of reorientation and change.

Don Handelman's Afterword concludes the volume. His reflection on liminality takes the concept beyond the human: a truly betwixt and between phenomenon as he says 'a human yet not quite human formation', which is virtually cosmic in principle. Handelman realizes the strong implication of Turner's direction for anthropology. That is, if anthropology is to comprehend human being it must be a radically open discipline (far away from the sociological closure of a Durkheimian perspective), alive to the multiplicity of forces in which human existence is constituted and in which it also continually creates itself. Handelman conceives of liminality to be such a concept, virtually nomadic in a Deleuzian sense, and one that can break out of closed circles of anthropological sociological understanding concerning human action and its comprehension.

The bulk of the chapters set within the frame between Thomassen and Robert Turner/Handelman follow. They move from those that are primarily conceptual and methodological through to those that engage the concepts of the liminal and *communitas* to comprehend the transitions and transformations of contemporary sociopolitical processes.

The structure of this book follows the potentialities of Turner's argument, reflecting the multiple tensions within his work. This Introduction has attempted to identify an underlying thread that cuts across all contributions, while contextualizing Turner's work historically. In Part I, 'Liminality and Ethnography', the focus is on the critical role of liminality for anthropological work. This part emphasises the methodological contributions of the concept of liminality, not only in thinking about the human in abstract forms, but also in engaging with humanity in multiple contexts. Thus both Paul Stoller and Chris Taylor highlight liminality as critical to anthropological work. The anthropologist is presented as a marginal figure 'betwixt and between' different formations of thought and practice, decentring in agency and entering into new horizons of human potential. Stoller stresses the radical indeed egalitarian aspect of anthropological practice, without compromise, so that the potencies of difference realize their capacity in addressing common ex-

istential issues, despite distinct frames or pathways of understanding. The universal is in difference rather than in homogenization into the same. Both Stoller and Taylor highlight the importance of Turner's stress on embodied knowledge and, like Turner, achieve their understanding through close association with healers and sorcerers, often marginals in their own realities. Taylor addresses the hierarchy (the shade of imperialism) that clouds and is a barrier to anthropological knowledge but that is opened when bridged, which is the point of Stoller's chapter as well.

The chapters that follow expand on Turner's approach. Dan Sherer and Martin Holbraad take up Turner's dramatological perspective in relation to liminality, looking closely at theatrical techniques. They take some issue with a common interpretation of Turner's liminal concept as being a condition of ambiguity rather than as a dynamic of transition. Their examination of contemporary theatre work stresses the rigour of the process attendant on the construction of realities and entrance within their experiential domain. This is certainly a feature of ritual processes whose transitional potency routinely depends on attention to the details and techniques of practice that are crucial in the passage from one condition or circumstance to another.

In the final chapter of Part I, Rohan Bastin pursues the dynamics of transition, and identifies a relation between Turner's notion of liminality and that of sacrifice. They share what Hubert and Mauss (1964) understand as the core process of sacrifice; regeneration through destruction, a dimension of the anti-structure/structure transitional process that Turner discusses, especially in relation to rites of initiation (see Turner 1967), or what van Gennep grasped as the 'pivoting of the sacred' in rites of passage. In this process, what may have been conceived as external to the sacred, the profane in Durkheimian terms, becomes sacralized – Princess Diana being one example that Bastin engages.

Part II, 'Multiple Meanings of *Communitas*', addresses the relationship between the liminal and *communitas* as a space of recreation of relations and subversion of hierarchy. These chapters deal with the tensions, contradictions and connections between the liminal space, often dangerous and ambiguous, and the space of *communitas* as a constructive moment. The liminal and the concept of *communitas* achieve different consequence and meaning contextually and situationally, as the chapters of Rory Turner, Ward Keeler and Steven Friedson exemplify. The emphasis has largely been on the positive, often in terms of markedly Western value, where the egalitarian aspect is asserted over and against the hierarchical (although Victor Turner indicates their mutual interconnection and implication). Such is qualified in these chapters.

Rory Turner presents the anti-divisive, experiential sense of *communitas* in a Baltimore music festival, but with a strong consciousness of a reality in

which the spirit of the occasion is open to the support of the hierarchical and inequalitarian status quo. The intention of the organizers is to resist aspects of the structure in which they must act. His chapter expresses the tragic of the anti-structural against the overcoming force of the divisions of structure that was intimated in *The Ritual Process*, despite the hope of the time in which it was written.

Ward Keeler, concentrating on Buddhist practice in Myanmar, underlines the close connection between the Buddhist liberation of adepts from the determination of the self and the larger affirmation of the hierarchical order. Keeler sees an individualism in the practice in which he participated, but, if so, it is distinct from that of Western individualist value. Thus the practice corresponds with Turner's notion of *communitas* as a stripping down of the social person or self to create an existential unity of human being, prior to or outside the structures of the quotidian.

Steven Friedson's chapter addresses the potential for the positive of *communitas*, or the aesthetic that is frequently associated with it, the bonding power of music, for example, to be also destructive and humanly fragmenting. The apparent *communitas* in contemporary popular music concerts is not so much a being in time together as it may be an individualizing, an autonomy or individuating separation in the midst of others and apart from them. This is the direction also of Keeler's foregoing discussion, *communitas* achieving different effects relative to situation and ideology in its structuring in practice. What is liberating and unifying can be quite the reverse (see too Iteanu, this volume). Friedson discusses the life-affirming being-with-others of Vodun sacrifice as a contrast with the anti-ritual ritual of detention cells in Thailand and Guantanamo.

The chapters in Part III, 'Liminoid Spaces and the Politics of Liminality', take Turner's concepts and apply them to contemporary political crises, where liminality becomes a space of annihilation, from which there is no sense of *communitas*, or at least not for those who are forced into liminality. Indeed, notably, it is the liminality of 'the other' that generates a *communitas* among the perpetrators, as is the case of migration regimes. This part explores the liminal spaces in neoliberal regimes, as well as in state structures. The chapters expand on the changing circumstance and relevance of Turner's approach to liminality in large-scale 'liminoid' settings of contemporary realities where the situation of the liminal is institutionalized into a relatively never-ending domain within an encompassing systemic process. Thus the liminal or marginal operates in the interest of the reproduction of the order that it may otherwise threaten, as in the initiation rites that provided the inspiration for Victor Turner's (1967) understanding of liminal processes. This is an aspect of the shrine to Lord Ayyappan at Sabarimala in Kerala discussed by Dinesan Vadakkiniyil. Ayyappan is a liminal god and his shrine is

a liminal domain at the edge of the hierarchies of the everyday world, a relative egalitarian space integral to a changing hierarchical order. Vadakkiniyil addresses a situation in which Ayyappan's shrine became the intense focus of contest over women's ritual rights, and this had major political significance for gender equality.

Istanbul's famous Grand Bazaar is an institutionalized liminal space at a major crossroads of history. Patricia Scalco describes it as a veritable 'hermeneutic chamber' for the contest and conversion of value. It is a centre for tourism, whose exotic attraction is in the skilful play of its bargaining that contrasts with controlled and relatively set values governing trade outside its walls, one of order and structure. The world of the bazaar is one of contest, of narrative skill and knowledge manipulation. Scalco concentrates on the trade in carpets, where the deal and value is woven in the creation of a social relation and the establishment of a meaning in the value of the deal struck.

John MacAloon's chapter, as Scalco's, focuses on the performativity of the liminal through which meaning and value are created. His discussion is grounded in the study of the Olympic Movement as born in the era of nationalism and the nation-state, but aimed at encouraging the values of common and universal humanity through the celebration of individual ability in competition, where difference and individual excellence generates an overall spirit of unity rather than war. MacAloon pursues critically Turner's distinction between the liminal and the liminoid, and the tendency for the concepts, especially that of liminoid, to lump very different symbolic formations together. He stresses the structural nesting of genres, and how structure can effectively derail the potential of the liminal. Thus he shows how the aim of the Olympic Movement in the increasing focus on spectacle is being lost, an effect of increasing corporate involvement (a political dimension of globalizing capital expansion, perhaps a passage from nation-states into corporate states; see Gold this volume).

The final chapters in Part III extend on the political within the dynamics of the liminal and the liminoid, the intimacy of the liminal with structure, and particularly its inegalitarian even oppressive potential arising in the changes in orientation that is facilitated in liminal dynamics.

Andre Iteanu examines French immigration policy, one which is broadly assimilationist in effect. The context upon which he concentrates is that of the *banlieue* largely occupied by immigrants from the Maghreb and West Africa. The ritual to which they are subjected has similarities with initiation rites (such as those discussed by Turner among the Ndembu) but in the complex realities of urban France, what may be regarded as the egalitarian reduction (that attacks their assumed communitarian 'holism') is intended to effect a transition into a French citizen of individualist value. The process is oppressive – an instance, paradoxically, of what might be seen as the hier-

archical within a 'liberating' transitional dynamic. A new *communitas* is not achieved, rather an anti-*communitas communitas*.

Marina Gold in her chapter on refugees in Switzerland elaborates further on a similar line to Iteanu. She adds that in the contemporary context the situation of asylum seekers specifically is one of an almost permanent condition of liminality. Gold affirms Turner's argument that in the liminoid contexts of contemporary realities, the liminal is not so much a moment in transition but one that has been institutionalized, an almost continuing marginal condition. Here Gold argues for a reconfiguration of Turner's approach in contemporary and changing state orders in which, with regard to refugees, the liminal subversion of structure reinforces the values of dominant orders, even if redefined, and the potential of liminality is also realized as a mechanism for exclusion rather than incorporation and transformation. Moreover, the dynamic of structure/anti-structure that Turner emphasizes (but to which he indicates ambivalence in the contexts of the liminoid) is vital to the reproduction of the status quo.

Kirsten Bell examines open access academic publishing in the neoliberal context of the contemporary university. She describes a reality in which digitalization is a key factor in both expanding academic publishing and increasing the profit margins of publishers. The effect is that the rising price of books and journals reduces academic readership critical to academic careers. The open access movement is driven in such a situation, and was aimed at breaking through the wall of profit that blocked readership. Bell, developing on Turner's insights (the capacity of liberating movements of liberation to become totalitarian) discusses the virtually millenarian quality of some open access experiments, and their vulnerability to following in the path of that to which they are opposed: becoming dictatorial, captured to corporate and neoliberal interest. The chapter concludes with Turner's ambiguity, which is an openness. That is the dynamic of liminality, its destructuring/restructuring dynamic has multiple orientational potential that may or may not be liberating, and is often the inverse of intention.

The last empirically grounded chapters in the volume engage directly with what may be described as the crisis of contemporary state sociopolitical orders in situations of intensifying inequalities, to a large extent influenced by and reflecting global hegemonic shifts. Caroline Ifeka discusses growing class inequality in postcolonial Nigeria, the expanding underclasses in the process of the growing command of elites enmeshed in global capitalism, and what can be described as the corporatizing of nation-state orders (see e.g. Kapferer and Gold 2017). Ifeka concentrates on anti-state violence (specifically the Islamist Boko Haram), which is no less confronted by state violence. The situation is one of liminality in which traditionally liminal beings associated with sorcery and witchcraft exacerbate and refract the in-

creasingly 'bare life' situation of Nigerian underclasses caught betwixt and between contending forces of power.

In the final chapter, Bruce and Roland Kapferer discuss the political phenomenon of Donald Trump and the violence at the Capitol that contested Trump's electoral defeat and attempted to subvert the transition to Biden's presidency. It was a critical moment in 'the pivoting of the sacred' of US democracy, a populist egalitarianizing event that exploited social divisions of class, ethnicity and race, and that flew in the face of liberal values, stoking the fears of a trend towards fascism. Trump, himself a marginal, though wealthy – an outsider/insider as it were – attacked ruling elites, while claiming to represent American underclasses (largely white) who felt short-changed by dominant liberal values in the sociopolitical system. Trump's rise to power, as well as his fall, destabilized the orders of power leading to an extended period of liminality that is still continuing. The chapter suggests that the Trump phenomenon (including those who resisted him) is part of a larger sociopolitical transition (differentially apparent worldwide) towards stronger executive and authoritarian control, facilitated by digitalization, the Covid pandemic, expanding corporate intervention in government, and growing divisions between rich and poor. The United States in its history and contemporary dynamic indicates what might be regarded as a 'plane of immanence' in which there is a particular intensity of the liminal and the marginal, integral to its creative and destructive processes, perhaps its state of exception and a dimension of what de Tocqueville describes in *Democracy in America* (discussed in Sheldon Wolin's *Tocqueville between Two Worlds* [2001]). We note that it is in the context of the USA and at the height of its imperial power that Victor Turner pursued his concept of the liminal and the liminoid. It is its particular democratic and egalitarian individualist ethos contributing to the continuing diversity of possibilities, creative and destructive, that exemplifies what might be described as its 'plane of immanence' (see Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* [1987]) and that is indicated in de Tocqueville's accounts of *Democracy in America*.

The Ritual Process opened new horizons of thought and understanding in anthropology. Not only was ritual re-centered in anthropology as a generative and ongoing dynamic in human practice but also, and more significantly, the concept of liminality carried major implications for a re-envisioned anthropology. In Turner's development the concept carries an egalitarian or egalitarianizing energy that creates a basis, a path or a transitional or refoundational, perhaps creative, moment which is redirectional (revolutionary or reactive) for human lives as for the histories of their life worlds. The concept of liminality in the direction that Turner pointed opens well beyond anthropology as a narrow Durkheimian social science in which all domains of human practice extend towards the understanding of human being as a whole.

Some sense of this is apparent in the final essays of this volume included in the section Liminality and an Expanded Anthropology.

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NOTES

1. Various other important books' reorientation of the subject were published in the postwar period (see Kapferer 2019); these include Edmund Leach's *Rethinking Anthropology* (1966), Levi-Strauss's *The Savage Mind* (1966), Mary Douglas's *Purity and Danger* (2002), and Pierre Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977).
2. We use the term 'equalitarian' to distinguish it from 'egalitarian'. As we develop the concept, egalitarian is a cultural or ideological concept concerning the order of human sociopolitical relations. We use equalitarian in a pre-ideological sense, an undifferentiated unity of human being that is non-relational. In our usage it is equivalent to what we present as Turner's concept of *communitas* as the essence or spirit of absolute universal equality, which continues through into egalitarian ideologies of human association.
3. Gluckman (1962) writes an important critical appreciation of van Gennep in which he recognizes the importance of van Gennep in the understanding of the ritual process while somewhat backhandedly commenting that he makes relatively dull reading. Gluckman suggests that van Gennep could have gone further into the dynamics of the ritual process, indicating that this is achieved by Turner (1962) who is also a contributor to Gluckman's edited volume. In his Introduction chapter, Gluckman accommodates van Gennep to Durkheim, which underplays van Gennep's marginality that Turner was later to realize far more.
4. A general stress in Gluckman's analytical perspective is to see all extant structures or systems of social life as both conditioned and changing in the circumstances of historical global forces. They are conceived as differentially located within such forces influencing their institutional order accordingly. In Gluckman's situational approach, different forms of life are situationally relative, an idea developed from Evans-Pritchard's Nuer studies. Thus, in Zambia, ethnic or tribal identity assumed distinct significance in rural village orders from that expressed in the mining towns. In rural villages tribal identity is not significant in everyday social action, rather kinship. However, in the towns, ethnic or tribal identity assumed everyday social significance, but not in a way reducible to its meaning or usage in rural areas. As Clyde Mitchell (1956) was to expand Gluckman's approach (see Gluckman 1960), tribal identity in the towns took its shape and significance in the situations of urban life.

Thus, people who in rural areas would recognize distinct tribal memberships, in the urban context they would assume a common identity on the basis of similarities in language and custom that refused the differentiations of village situations. Furthermore, such urban-formed identity (that Mitchell described as categorical relations or tribalism, innovations of industrial society and urbanization) functioned in the formation of everyday social relations of inclusion and exclusion. Tribal identity in the towns had kin-like effects that they did not possess in rural areas – although, of course, urban-created values were to become increasingly important in the rural areas, especially in the political arena.

5. Crises (like conflict for Gluckman) are moments of new differentiation or spaces for creation and innovation for Turner, similar to that understood in Gregory Bateson's (1936) concept of schismogenesis, also recognized by Gluckman (1958: 64) as similar to his own perspective on conflict as differentiating.
6. Edith Turner (1985: 4–5) gives a vibrant account of Victor Turner's decision to adopt a dramaturgical approach to his analytical presentation of the events of crisis in the Ndembu village of his study. She gives a wonderful sense of the excitement of the Manchester research seminars at that time (a spirit that continued well into the early 1970s). Thus Edith Turner tells of the first occasion of Victor Turner's dramatological presentation and Gluckman's enthusiastic response: 'With controlled excitement he read the story of Sandombu: and he analysed its stages – breach, crisis, redress, reintegration – the social drama as the window into Ndembu social organization and values. Now you see the living heart. Max sat, his hands folded on top of his bowed bald head. When it was over, he raised his head, his eyes burning, "You've got it! That's it". There was a feeling of collegial unity in shared discovery in such seminars. Furthermore, they had an egalitarian sensibility (in which hierarchies of academic status were of little moment) compared with elsewhere in the United Kingdom at the time (see Epstein's comparison of his experience at the LSE prior to his move to Gluckman's department).
7. Clyde Mitchell once described (personal communication) Gluckman's own dramatic presentation of the bridge-opening in Gluckman's (1940 [1958]) path-breaking situational analysis paper as more of a gimmick than anything else. Mitchell's own work (1956, 1983) and Victor Turner's realized far more the analytical possibilities.
8. The Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 was a major event that influenced Turner's shift away from a doctrinaire Marxism represented by the Communist Party in England, which supported the invasion.
9. The concept of minor discourse is borrowed from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1986), whose work on Kafka sets the tone for the understanding of the concept. Broadly it relates to literature that cannot be confined or subordinated to commanding or dominant modes of comprehending or interpreting literature. Minor discourse is at the borderlands of the dominant, resistant to its programmes, and in Deleuze and Guattari's notions nomadic, rhizomic, deterritorializing. Kafka's writing, for instance, overturns accepted conventions, and refuses well-worn categorizations and structures of interpretation conventional in dominant discourse. It opens to understandings that reveal possibilities that are outside, in Deleuze and Guattari's terms, the 'machine' that routinely defines 'great literature'. The idea of minor discourse has considerable relevance for the project of anthropology.
10. Max Gluckman initially took some offence at Turner's suggestion in *The Ritual Process* that he had somehow stood in the way of the exploration of ritual when in fact

he had, with Turner, pursued an interest in ritual (see Gluckman 1962, Werbner 2020). Certainly some members of the Manchester group were critical at the time of what they regarded to be Turner's anti-materialist and mystical turn (see Frankenberg 2006). However, Turner's point is not that ritual was neglected but rather that the possibilities to which it opened were obscured or suppressed in the materialist, functionalist and structuralist interpretational conventions of analysis.

11. In Durkheim's orientation, the individual is prior to the social that transcends the individual. With Turner's concept of *communitas*, the individual is submerg'd, more a value that is emergent in structure rather than prior to it. Effectively, the individual loses all identity and is merely an individual among all others.
12. What is suggested here is that *communitas* is coincidentally generative of ritual or ritualization that constitutes a protective membrane, a moment outside quotidian space/time, enabling its actualization.
13. Werbner 2020 presents a reanalysis of the *Chihamba* rite in the spirit of Gluckman's argument for reanalysis, arguing that Turner's understanding would have been improved if he had proceeded more in line with van Gennep's perspective. I beg to differ. The comedy and humour that is a feature of the rite, upon which Werbner focuses, corresponds with the complex contradictory nature of *Kavula* and the ultimate tragic and sacrificial restitutive character of such a ritual that restores in a process that must fail, whose reconstitutive force is doomed to be momentary. *Kavula* is, perhaps, the 'joke' in the beginning or reconstitution of structure.
14. Edmund Leach in *Political Systems of Highland Burma* (2021) famously demonstrates the intimate relation of hierarchy with egalitarian processes. Louis Dumont argues more generally in *Homo Hierarchicus* (1981) that hierarchy is virtually primary in the formation of socio-moral value (as the encompassment of the contrary). He contends that egalitarian value is secondary to hierarchy, and has the hierarchical immanent within it. The intimation of hierarchy in the egalitarian is apparent in Pierre Clastres' *Society Against the State*.
15. There is a certain similarity between Turner's approach and that of Louis Dumont (see 1981, 1986), who argues for a conjunction between what he discusses as hierarchy and egalitarianism. Dumont distinguishes between two notions of the individual: the individual as a unit of and for analysis, a taken-for-granted element of existence, a human being outside any particular value; and the individual as a being of value in cultural and ideological systems. This has some link to Turner's concept of *communitas* – that is as a collectivity of individuals who are associated on the basis of their commonality as human beings before the differentiations and values of culture and structure. Hierarchy, for Dumont, is structure/culture, the coming of the individual as a creature of value, which has diverse realizations in what Dumont addresses as the 'encompassing of the contrary'. Effectively, in Dumont, hierarchy is the prior form to egalitarian value that he conceives as being constituted in processes of secularization and the rise to dominance of the material and the economic, which are connected to modernity. This involves their separation out from their embeddedness within an arrangement of a complexity of values such as is apparent in many so-called traditional societies. Dumont approvingly refers to Karl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation* (2002) in this regard. In a way, both Dumont and Turner begin with the religious or ritual as the ground for their understanding. However,

Turner tends to see egalitarianism in a much broader value and deconstructive sense than does Dumont (who limits it to contemporary egoistic individualism, or the individual as value) and as such vital as a transitional and transformational force across societies in a far more dynamic approach.

16. Turner never discusses Nietzsche in any detail. It is likely that he does not give mention to Nietzsche in *The Ritual Process* because of the opprobrium to which Nietzsche was subject as a result of his ideological use by Hitler and the Nazis. Considerable ambiguity continues to attach to Nietzsche (an aspect that is thematic in Stanley Kubrick's famous film '2001 Space Odyssey', which opens and closes with Richard Strauss's fanfare *Thus Sprach Zarathustra*; see Kapferer 2014). However, Nietzsche's highly acclaimed early essay, *The Birth of Tragedy*, and the contrast between the Apollonian and the Dionysian, bears relation to Turner's conjunction of the egalitarian and hierarchial with a similar tragic sense. Such a Nietzschean dynamic is apparent in Richard Schechner's staging and film 'Dionysius 69'. This was presented at a Burg-Wartenstein Conference 'Cultural Frames and Reflections: Ritual, Drama and Spectacle', organized by Barbara Babcock, Barbara Myerhoff and Victor Turner in August 1977. I was an invitee to the conference. Much discussion centred on the negative capacity of ritual and spectacle, with particular attention being given to the Nuremberg rallies.
17. An application of the concept of liminality that methodologically accords with the perspective essayed in this Introduction is that developed by Orlando Patterson in *Slavery and Social Death* (see especially 2018: 45–51). Patterson acknowledges the influence of Victor Turner on his work (see Scott and Patterson 2023). Like Turner, Patterson is concerned to overcome what might be called the bloodless abstractionism of much abstract sociological theory and indeed is concerned with the existential dimensions of grounded existence/experience. Patterson's novels fill out the existential ground in which his abstractions (concerning slavery) discover their life. Furthermore, he finds a directional or redirection force that is virtually institutionalized in the liminal or in the liminal becoming effectively a liminoid condition of the once enslaved particularly relevant to those in the Americas. The 'social death' that Patterson develops is a liminal stripping process that has ritualistic properties that creates a particular institutionalised circumstance and situation.

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