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**Mysticism and ritual: A processual framework for Dance as  
social transformation**

**Hunt, Peggy Ann, Ed.D.**

**The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1991**

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MYSTICISM AND RITUAL: A PROCESSUAL  
FRAMEWORK FOR DANCE AS SOCIAL  
TRANSFORMATION

by

Peggy Ann Hunt

A Dissertation Submitted to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School at  
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of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education

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Approved by

  
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APPROVAL PAGE

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This dissertation was concerned with the role of dance in personal and social transformation. The analysis of traditional ritual and mystical forms and the elements of the creative process in the arts, were used as a conceptual framework for this study. The theoretical basis for this dissertation, came from Matthew Fox, who uses art and the creative process as an integral part of his vision of transformation for social change. Part One includes an analysis of the current global problems, as well as an analysis of how the creative process can effect transformation.

Part Two analyzes the structure of ritual in effecting transformation, with particular focus on the work of anthropologist Victor Turner. Descriptions of the structure and intent of current rituals from the Wiccan and Native American traditions provide instances of the transformative process and the role of ritual in effecting social change.

Part Three gives an overview of the possibilities and problems for Dance as a transformative activity.



While Dance has a long history of use as a transformational process, the ends to which people change can be destructive as well as liberating. An analysis of the work of three dancers, Deborah Hay, Peggy Hunt, and Jody Sutlive, is used to develop an educational model for increasing awareness and compassion.

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## INTRODUCTION

At this point in history the Rain Forests are being destroyed, the oceans, rivers and lakes polluted, top soil is eroding, and the earth's temperatures in the 1980's rose with the decline of the ozone layer. America has more people in prison than any other first world nation, minority males have a larger chance of being murdered than going to college, and this country is bombing the life out of an area of the world known historically as the fertile crescent. While churches proclaim Armageddon is neigh, my 14 year old son feels he needs to call each adult he sees an "Ass" because of the wretched world situation they have left to him. Globally we are in an ecological and social crisis, spearheaded by Western Civilization. The crisis discloses how interconnected each area of the globe is in the spread of pollution and the extinction of species. There is a viewpoint that claims the Cenezoic era is over, because that era was characterized by the explosion of the number of the species and the world is now experiencing an implosion; a rapid decline in species. The sky is falling or as Matthew Fox says, "Your mother is dying".

In the midst of this crisis, I question how my

profession in the arts can effect any change. I am a dancer who educates through dancing with people (dancers and others), making dances, and including people in the creative process of dance and its impact on education. How dance could promote a change in personal and societal awareness is of great interest to me. It is equally distressing to see that the vast majority of people, productions, and teaching in my profession mirrors the destructive elements in society. Western dance has basically divorced itself from the transformative spiritual potential which has been utilized by traditional cultures, and is without a vocabulary to express this possibility.

While the world crisis is overwhelming in its magnitude, equally problematic is the seeming ability of my profession to interface in any positive way for change. This dissertation is concerned with developing a framework with in which to discuss and understand the potential role dance could play in transformation for change at both the personal and societal levels.

That dance and the arts could have a positive role in moving away from the global crisis is an argument seldom found outside of dance circles. The predominant theoretical basis for this dissertation, however, comes from a Catholic priest who sees that creativity through

art is central to change. In his work, Matthew Fox, while being disturbed by the anguish and pain of the current global crisis has a vision for a more harmonious society that uses the creative process as a way of connecting with one's self, community and cosmology. His theory uses art as an integral part of the process of transformation for social change. He sees that creating through the arts can allow for a transformation of consciousness which generates new symbols for society. Fox's vision is multifaceted and includes mystical spirituality, science, the redevelopment of community, new social structures, and traditional rituals as well as art. His vision is broad, encompassing a transformation of the basic power over societal structure of most Western Civilizations.

Part one, of this dissertation, is an overview of the global crises and how creative activity and the creative process interfaces with Matthew Fox's vision of a new cosmology. The first chapter of Part one, is an analysis of the current problems facing the globe and Matthew Fox's theories on methods for changing the destructive course we are on. Fox's view includes a return to, or a reconstruction of, a mystical cosmology in which compassion and a sense of community in consort with Science and Art allow for personal and societal

transformation.

The second chapter delves more deeply into the creative process and how it can effect transformation. The writings of Huges Mearns, M.C. Richards, Jamake Highwater, and a variety of artists are integrated with Fox's image of "Art as Extrovert Meditation". The creative process is a transformative act of birthing and dying to old images and rebirthing which happens time and time again in the artistic process. When this process is connected to a spiritual cosmology it becomes extrovert meditation and affects both personal and psychic states.

Part two analyzes the structure and use of traditional rituals to effect transformation. Chapter III provides a description of the structure and intent of current rituals from the Wiccan and Native American traditions. In Chapter IV, the work of anthropologist Victor Turner gives a clear vocabulary for the transformative process and the role of ritual in effecting social change. With the demise of rituals in contemporary society Turner emphasizes the importance of the performing arts for filling this void. Turner's work is used to evaluate societies' need for transformation.

In Part three, Chapter V gives an overview of the possibilities and problems of Dance as a transformative

activity. While dance has a long history of use as a transformational process, the ends to which people change can be destructive as well as liberating. Dance can negate the uniqueness of the individual in order to emphasize the conformity to the group, and the majority of dance experiences don't utilize the creative process in order to achieve extrovert meditation. There are, however, some dancers utilizing the transformative aspects of dance towards the goal of increased awareness and compassion. Part three ends with a personal statement in the epilogue.

PART ONE

GLOBAL CRISIS AND A CREATIVE-BASED COSMOLOGY



## CHAPTER I

## MATTHEW FOX'S VISION: A COSMOLOGY OF HOPE

As a global community we find ourselves at a crossroads in societal consciousness. Technology is available to destroy all human life and many other species of life as we know it on this planet. Not only could this be accomplished by a nuclear war, but more importantly it can be accomplished by conducting "business as usual" and continuing life as we know it in 1990. The challenge then is to change the direction of our society in hopes of saving our species and the earth rather than continuing on with the current ecological policies, political/social structure and life styles that are slowly and clearly destroying the ecosystem of the planet.

Matthew Fox dramatically states this dilemma when he opens speeches with "Your mother is dying." Here he is speaking about "mother" as the planet itself and also the "mother" in each person, the nurturing, loving quality that is compassion. He then continues to speak not only about the pollution of the planet, but includes the global societal structures which allow us, even encourage us, to treat the earth and each other with out care or compassion. Our use of a hierarchical value

system allows us to value some people more than others, all people more than animals, and animals above plants and things of the earth. Fox feels this "Jacob's ladder" value system gives license to treating others as less than oneself.

The Jacob's ladder system that Fox uses as a metaphor for the current patriarchal value system permeates Western Civilization and supports climbing away from the Earth towards God. In this prevalent belief system of monotheism, there is one God who resides outside and above the Earth (i.e., in heaven) and who is a man. This image has led to a situation in which people must climb out and up from their earthly beginnings and pull themselves up, rung by rung, as it were, to God's kingdom of Heaven. The God portrayed here is above all earthly things, is not dirty or earthly or fertile or fecund but lives in the clean purity of spirit separated from body. Jamake Highwater has noted that in our culture "dirty" and "soiled" are bad words, when in fact being touched by dirt or soil could be seen as something sacred. As long as the Jacob's ladder mindset prevails, anything "of the earth" or of the body will be seen as lowly, and separate from the spiritual realm. Women, by their bleeding and giving birth, are a constant reminder of earthiness, fertility, and have

been relegated to lower rungs on the hierarchical ladder. Children, animals, and plants in descending order, are closer to the earth and less valued in this hierarchy. There is a very strong tradition that hierarchy be headed by a man and for males to be superior to women. From this patriarchy has come a social system which endorses violence by those on the top towards those below them.

Since the earth is at the bottom of this ladder, one of the goals of western man has been to gain power over "the earth and all its functions". That violence is present in our vocabulary such as "rape of the land", and that the earth is seen as feminine, "virgin soil or timber", reflects the principle of male power over female. The goal of patriarchal man to have power over the earth is also an attempt to separate from the sensual, fertile, mothering bosom of ones origin. For one to have power in Jacob's ladder hierarchy, one must climb away from the bosom of the earth and any interdependence.

From this vantage of looking "up" to God and down on earthly things, a form of sado/masochism can emerge. Fox cites Karen Horney, psychologist, for this insight: "for the masochist despises his own weakness and adores the strength of others feeding on them and all the time

resenting their strength and becoming more and more hostile. And from this masochism, sadism is born" (Fox, 1979, p. 43). Fox points out that if God is seen as a judge reigning on high (top of the ladder) and passing down stern judgments then the ones most distant from the top "suffer the most" (Fox, 1979, p. 43).

From the Jacob's ladder social structure of patriarchy has come a civilization that has dominated Europe and then spread to dominate the globe, destroying other myth systems and cosmologies. From this perspective, the planet Mother Earth is dying. The destruction is a constant ongoing way of life brought about by the power over ideology of Western Civilization. Agricultural practices routinely destroy topsoil, manufacturing residues are polluting all the waters, rivers, oceans and lakes, the worlds forests are disappearing, and with them hundreds of species of animals, the air is polluted by automobile and industrial fumes, and toxic dumps leak chemicals which poison sperm and produce children with birth defects. Add to this the spectacular environmental disasters like Bhopal, Chernoble, Love Canal or the Alaskan oil spill, and one can see the constant ongoing patterns on the globe today. The Jacob's ladder patriarchy allows people to look up to the next rung without looking back

to what consequences their actions have wrought. Occidental Chemical Corporation created Love Canal and moved into my town, where they quietly poisoned all the ground water and a large beautiful lake. When confronted the corporation left town, and local people cried not because of the pollution but because jobs were lost. People were so absorbed in seeing their own next rung on the ladder that they ignored the fact that all the groundwater, and underground aquifers and an entire lake were lost for themselves, their children, and their children's children.

Blatant misuse of the earth's gifts is not promoted by all belief systems or all people within monotheistic religions.

Fox quotes Hildegard of Bingen, a 4th century Catholic mystic:

The earth should not be injured. The earth must not be destroyed! As often as the elements of the world are violated by ill-treatment, so God will cleanse them through the sufferings and hardships of humankind. All of creation God gives to humankind to use. But if this privilege is misused then God's justice permits creation to punish humanity (Fox, 1988, p. 17).

Hildegard expresses the mystic's vision in which God is not separated from and superior to the earth but inseparable from his creation. Fox writes that Mother

Earth gives the blessings of "healthy soil, living forests, singing birds, clean waters and healthy DNA in our reproductive systems. Patriarchy cannot measure up to Mother Earth's immense blessings which we so easily take for granted" (Fox, 1988, p. 17).

"Your Mother is dying" speaks to the state of the planet and also to an element that is in the human spirit. What is dying here is the mystical knowledge of interconnection and interdependence. Also dying is the spirit of compassion which is a mother love, a womb and creative love for all other people and species of the planet. Fox feels our society has lost its cosmology, we have lost a picture or story for how we fit into the universal scheme. Webster defines cosmology as: "the branch of philosophy and science that deals with the study of the universe as a whole and of its form, nature, etc." (Webster, p. 341). Cosmology is a joining of the philosophical and scientific. Philosophical is "love of, or the search for wisdom or knowledge" (Webster, p.1069). In Sufi tradition it is said that wisdom comes only from the interaction of the intellect and the heart. Cosmology then contains love and heartfelt wisdom in consort with science which allows for the mystical and compassionate components Fox sees as missing in our current society.

Matthew Fox's answer to this void is a new cosmology which he defines as:

A scientific story about the origins of our universe; mysticism that is a psychic response to our being in a universe; and art which translates science and mysticism into images that awaken body and soul and society. A cosmology needs all three elements to come alive: it is our joyful response (mysticism) to the awesome fact of our being in the universe (science) and our expression of that response by the art of our lives and citizenship (art) (Fox, 1988, p. 1).

The lack of a cosmology that is mystical and compassionate kills creativity, wisdom, and the role of the church. Youth and native peoples are literally dying without a cosmology through substance abuse and suicide. Fox quotes the statistic that one in ten teenagers in America attempts suicide and one in ten Native American youths succeed. This kind of despair and helplessness can be seen in many native societies where Western invasion has destroyed their sense of cosmology, their way of knowing they belong in an ordered universe. Fox acknowledges the suffering of native peoples that exists today:

This suffering is due primarily to the fact that they have been robbed of their cosmology by a White society and a White religion that felt it had outgrown cosmology. I have come to think of alcohol as "liquid cosmology" because I find that cultures that were once thriving and in tune with

the cosmos, when conquered by an acosmic culture, succumb readily to alcohol (Fox, 1988, p. 26).

Matthew Fox feels that the loss of mysticism and compassion are central elements in the imbalance found in the current social structure. "Mysticism is not easily defined since it comes from the non-specific right brain, and definitions are the quest of the left brain which seeks to analyze and to separate" (Fox, 1988, p. 47). The curvilinear pattern of the right brain sees the larger picture; the forests and the connections between the trees. Mysticism is located in this unitive, non-dualistic right brain and sees the world as a whole. In the current left brain dominated culture the analogy of "can't see the forest for the trees" is more real than metaphoric. Huge tracts of forest are being clean cut in order to get trees which profit a few people, while the loss of the forest causes erosion, loss of habitat, and damages the ecosystem for all the inhabitants of the next generation. In contrast the mystical cosmology of Native Americans calls for each action to be weighed in terms of its effect for seven generations. "Not only is mysticism about experiencing unity and non-dualism, it is also about making connections where connections have been lost, forgotten or covered up" (Fox, 1988, p. 50). Many



groups such as the Native Americans are committed to actively trying to find, remember, and uncover the connections made by mystical cosmology in order to see the forests, save the trees, the ecosystems and their sense of being part of a whole.

Compassion is another word for a unitive experience that allows humans to feel their connection with each other and other parts of their environment. Compassion is another name for mysticism and "is the basic energy force and indeed the moral norm of this (creation centered) tradition" (Fox, 1988, p. 39). Compassion is the moral norm of creation centered mysticism and is synonymous with it; for one cannot experience mysticism without compassion, nor can compassion thrive outside the unitive awareness of the interdependence of all living things. "The Hebrew word for compassion is derived from the word for womb. Womb love, mother love, and creative love are all part of the power we know as compassion" (Fox, 1988, p. 31). Compassion is feeling connected with another person, animal, plant, or the earth itself and feeling their pain and joy as your own. It is not sympathy but empathy.

What is of most moment in compassion is not feelings of pity but feelings of togetherness. It is this awareness of togetherness that urges us to rejoice at another's joy (celebration) and to grieve at another's sorrow. Both dimensions,

celebration and sorrow, are integral to true compassion (Fox, 1979, p. 4).

Feelings of togetherness can be found in a community, a word which comes from the Latin word *communitas* meaning common. Communities are places or groups which have common possessions, activities, interests, or fellowships. Compassion is found in community as people reach out or reach over to lend a hand to their neighbor. This compassion as Fox sees it, is not found on Jacob's Ladder, for it is difficult and improbable to lend a hand while climbing a ladder, and even so it is a reaching down below to pull someone up ; not reaching across to another of equal value.

This loss of compassion is critical for humankind, many of whom have lost any sense of belonging to a community, either local or global, and are alienated, not only from other creatures on earth, but from other humans as well. The sense of alienation towards other humans is manifest in a multitude of "power over" behaviors which define one's value by how many people you are "above." Racism, Sexism, and Classism are direct outcomes of this hierarchical notion of worth, with alienation, abuse, crime, and hopelessness being secondary effects. Building a sense of community has the possibility of valuing each member's diversity and

worth and building power within and between rather than power over structures. A sense of one's wholeness and one's place in the community and cosmology has the hope, according to Matthew Fox, of bringing about change on a global and community level.

Visiting Native American reservations makes clear the plight of people on the bottom of the ladder; 90% unemployment, poverty, abuse of alcohol, drugs, women and children constitutes this depressed environment. In the midst of this situation Albert White Hat, a traditional Sioux in the Rosebud Reservation said "If our people adopt the traditional ways they make a good life. If they can get up out of the life 'on the dole', they are very powerful people." The Native Americans have a traditional cosmology that allows people hope and action for overcoming the Western structure which has insisted they belong on the bottom of a ladder and that a ladder is the only way to see the world. Albert White Hat sees that in his community trying to climb the patriarchal ladder doesn't lead to a good life, rather getting out of the Western system and living with a holistic cosmology can restore the people's power, their sense of belonging, compassion, and community.

The need for compassion, mysticism, community and cosmology that reflects these values is globally

demonstrated by the content of newscasts in the 90's. The need is personal as well and I feel troubled by the ecological crises our planet is in and the lack of a cosmology to help relieve the societal woes of hunger, anger, alienation, separateness, hopelessness, abuse and self destruction which seem omnipresent. I see few models which support or engender personal change, a sense of wholeness or mystical awareness in one's self, the feeling of community with peers or a sense of connection with a cosmology. Albert White Hat and a handful of Native Americans are struggling towards these goals through their traditional practices, to help resurrect a viable native community and cosmology. I am not a Native American, and as much as I would like to be, my attempts at draping their cosmology and traditions over my history and professional life feels more like a charade than an integration.

This troubles me, and without a cosmology or a structure that reflects my beliefs I often feel powerless to effect change with the tools and skills I have. My professional skills involve dancing, moving with people, and teaching people how to dance with others. Dance seems an inappropriate occupation for addressing and overcoming the gigantic issues of the global crises, and yet I often experience a profound

sense of community and compassion while dancing with people. Although the activity of dancing feels insignificant in the face of massive social disintegration, the image of dance and people dancing together is both positive and powerful. Matthew Fox's vision for a new cosmology takes away the lineal perspective of "Climbing Jacob's Ladder" and replaces it with "Dancing Sarah's Circle". The image of a dancing circle is non-lineal and feminine, and has people dancing together rather than climbing over and on top of one another on a ladder. The image of dance is a strong one, time honored and universal in its symbolism. In her book, Patriarchy as a Conceptual Trap Elizabeth Gray's vision for a non-patriarchal society is of people and even all species in a circular dance which celebrates the diversity of each individual. Gray writes:

We must now re-myth our human situation. It is time for a new cosmic vision - a new understanding of human life in its setting on the earth. One way I have described our situation is to compare us to a group of four or five dancers, dancing round and round rapidly, holding one another's hands and leaning back. As we dance, in our movement all are holding one another in existence. This dancing circle is the circle of life we share with all the other species of the planet. It is "a symbiotic dance of cosmic energy and sensual beauty, throbbled by a rhythm that is greater than our own, which births us into being and decays us into dying, yet whose gifts of life are incredibly good, though mortal and fleeting

(Gray, p. 137).

As in Fox's vision for "Dancing Sarah's Circle" it is important that Gray, too, has chosen dance and a circle as the prime symbolic elements in her image for a new cosmic vision.

The circular form is important because its structure has everyone looking into each others eyes, with no clear leader, and a necessary cooperation and interdependence in order for the circle to work, be formed, or move. The circle has been an important symbol in many native religions and is central to mystical traditions, such as Native American and Wicca. These traditions see the circle as a symbol that acknowledges the on-goingness and interdependence of all living things. The circle resonates with the mystical perspective and so does dance. Dance is used to reinforce a sense of belonging and community, in rites of passage and seasonal rituals, in most mystical traditions. Since mysticism and compassion are central forces for Fox's vision it follows that dancing Sarah's circle rather than climbing Jacob's ladder is the symbol for the new cosmology. That dance, my art and passion, is central to this symbol for a new social vision, gives me hope that my profession and my work can have value in

changing the current global perspective.

In Fox's cosmology, art is one of three key components. The other components are science and mysticism. Using these three components leads to a holistic cosmology that is non-dualistic and does not reside in either the right or left brain but in each and both. Science can give a scientific story about the origins of our universe and awesome facts about our being in the universe. In current society science is "alive and well" and very well endowed, but without mysticism and art a science focused society is out of balance and trying to operate with a shriveled up right brain.

Mysticism, in the cosmology, is our joyful "psychic response to our being in a universe" (Fox, 1988, p. 1 ). Mysticism is basic to changing the way people perceive and operate on the earth. Fox writes "How will we move from crucifixion or matricide to healthy living? The link I believe lies in the human psyche's capacity for resurrection: for aliveness, wakefulness, awareness and rebirth - in short, mysticism" (Fox, 1988, p. 38).

Mysticism is hard to define linearly, as cited earlier, so Fox uses the curvilinear approach of using 21 definitions of mysticism. A summary of these 21 follows: Mysticism is based on experience; on tasting

and seeing in the now rather than reading about it; it is nondualistic, rather than either or; mystical experiences are unitive, non separating, as Meister Eckhart says, "Separate yourself from all twoness" (Fox, 1988, p. 50), which leads to seeing the world as a whole, being attuned to the whole of creation, and making connections and acknowledging the interdependencies that already exist. Mysticism is "radical amazement" at the "awe" of things. "Awe is our passion involved in yielding to the radical amazement that surrounds our lives" (Fox, 1988, p. 51), and mysticism trusts experiences of the heart, is alive with the senses, is feminist, pantheistic (seeing God in all things), is filled with birthing images, includes child-like playfulness as well as the nothingness, darkness, and silence in life. Mysticism contains a passion, sensuality celebration of the whole of life in the circling, spiraling connection between immediacy and longevity, the dark dying and lightness birthing.

Compassion and mysticism form the initial core of Fox's vision for how we can transform the current Jacob's ladder social structure into a dancing circle. Compassion is at once a part of mysticism and synonymous with it. It encompasses feelings of togetherness, the unitive experience that brings an awareness, which



Thomas Merton calls, "the interdependence of all living things which are part of one another and involved in one another" (Fox, 1988, p. 50). Mysticism with compassion (mystical compassion or compassionate mysticism) is the spiritual fuel for transformation in Fox's cosmology and works in consort with science and art. While science provides facts and stories about our universe, art provides an avenue of expression for our experiences.

"Art translates science and mysticism into images that awaken body, soul, and society" (Fox, 1988, p. 1). In this cosmology art is not a by product, frill, or hobby but a powerful tool to translate ideas and experiences into images and symbols that awaken the whole person and society. Fox's cosmology not only includes my personal and political belief in mysticism, but places my profession in an essential and active role in the changing from climbing Jacob's ladder to Dancing Sarah's Circle. Matthew Fox clearly states that creativity is essential to the change of consciousness necessary in order to relieve the pain in the world and save the planet.

We need a new way of living and working if the species homo sapiens is to survive. And maybe we need a new kind of homo sapiens. Not only science and technology needs to assist the human race with creative contributions to common problems but the situation demands, if survival is still possible at all, innovations in the fields of religion,

sociology, politics, psychology, ethics, art, literature, music, living styles. Without this creativity, as psychologist Carl Rogers has warned, "the lights will go out" (Fox, 1979, p. 105).

"Creativity, a power of expression, may be the richest source of answers ... for the returns are good (Fox, 1979, p. 105). "The returns of creativity are simplicity and satisfaction and shared awareness" (Fox, 1979, p. 106). Fox continues to show how sharing the act of creativity as a non-elitist activity could help people allow their inner voice to speak to them. He sees that creative activities, such as those in the arts, allow people to access a power that is close to divine power. "Art is a transformation of spirit that touches the very purpose of life itself (Fox, 1979, p. 110).

Matthew Fox understands that participating in the artistic process can inform and infuse humans with a dynamic sense of life and living that can be non-hierarchical. It is a way in which people can create a Sarah's circle using power between rather than a Jacob's ladder fueled by power over. The creative process is not without its challenges, however, and Fox sees that "creativity is about overcoming fears by entering into them and spiraling out of them" (Fox, 1979, p. 118). Creativity becomes a metaphor and a model for many of

the problems facing individuals and the society of this time. The process of creating allows humans to come in touch with a dynamic energy and methodology that involves solving problem after problem and through this process, facing fear, birth, rebirth, and death time and time again. The creation of art involves a continual spiral of creation and destruction in order to bring one's inner vision to form. It involves seeing connections between the physical reality of the medium and the form that is one's internal vision trying to become external. The process of creativity, making the connections, and "tasting the interconnections" is an excellent road to understanding the connections and interdependence of the global society. Fox speaks about art as meditation which gives birth to a new kind of power, a "power with" rather than a power over.

Art for Fox is not a sterile, clean activity that happens in a spiritual domain outside of the earthy domain of passion and body, it is going into the dark womb of the creative process and pulling out a new vision. It is fecund, fertile, earthy, often dirty and messy; a unitive process that is full of spiritual passion and ecstasy while embedded in the dirt of the earth. Creativity is everyone's birthright. It is an ecstatic state that is not limited to an elite few but

is inherent in all people. Matthew Fox writes this about creativity:

Art is not for art's sake but for ecstasy's sake, which means for the sakes of a fuller, more and more celebrative Sarah's circle dance. Art is for people's sake. Creativity is everybody's and affects all of us, whether demonically or divinely, whether by its intense presence or by its vacuous absence. It touches us much too intimately to be hoarded by a few. True creativity cannot be bought or sold - though those doing it have a right to their living. It is shared and shared back. It lies at the level of human participation, not economic or cultural dualism. Creativity is a verb and not a noun. It is an energy ever in motion. A passion that will produce commotion as much as emotion. It is political as well as deeply personal (Fox, 1979, p. 109).

Creativity is a verb, an energy with such power that it can transform at a deeply personal or a political level. It is a process that generates new symbols, new stories, new pictures for a new non-hierarchical vision for society. This creativity is extrovert meditation and Fox writes: "The importance of being able to play with symbols become symbols, give birth to symbols deserves the name of meditation for that is what it is - 'extrovert meditation'" (Fox, 1979, p. 99).

Art as extrovert meditation is much like art as a mystical experience, which can transform the maker, viewer, and society. Fox sees creativity as directly

effective on personal and social psychic states as he quotes Rollo May: "Creativity can help us to eliminate the excessive violence in our lives ... Art is an antidote for violence. It gives the ecstasy, the self transcendence that could otherwise take the form of drug addiction, or terrorism, or suicide, or warfare". Why is this possible? Because we are violent when we lose the sense of our own significance. Art restores that sense by reimmersing us in a living cosmology where we learn that we are part of a universal beauty" (Fox, 1988, pp. 204-205).

Art as extrovert meditation in consort with science and mysticism forms the structure of a cosmology that Fox sees leading away from destruction and towards rebirth and reconstruction. This cosmology resonates with me, my values, work, concerns and leads to further inquiry into the practical application of Art, Ritual and Dance to this theoretical model.

## CHAPTER II

## THE CREATIVE PROCESS AS EXTROVERT MEDITATION

Matthew Fox sees that art as extrovert meditation is much like a mystical experience, and that creativity can provide ecstasy and transform the maker and the viewer. The issues involved in creativity are crucial to understanding Fox's vision. Creativity and the creative process is a complex, multifaceted and deeply engaging process generally rejected by education and sometimes sidestepped by arts educators due to its provocative and transformative properties. To examine creativity and its transformative quality is to look at the feminine earthy principle of birthing a live creature or a living vivid work of art. It is also to see how the masculine and feminine, left and right brain, yang and yin come together for the intense presence of the revolution which is creation. When preparing for the birth of my child I threw the "I Ching". I got the hexagram Ko, Revolution (molting) which describes complete change, like the changing of the seasons, a revolution of oppositional forces which calls for social transformation: "A combat takes place between the forces of light and the forces of darkness, eventuating in the revolution of the seasons." (I Ching, p. 190).

It spoke of a total change or transformation from what one was before, a molting, shedding the old pelt for a new one, with no hope to return unchanged. The hexagram has proven true, the creation of a human child has made a revolution in my life as has the continually challenging act of mothering an ever changing person. The phenomena of creating, in whatever form it takes has some sense of revolution, of molting and finding new skin.

Webster's New World Dictionary defines create: "to cause to come into existence; bring into being; make; originate 2. to bring about; give rise to; cause 3. to invest with a new rank, function etc." (Webster, p.332). The definition is filled with change, transformation motion. In the most basic interpretation, if you have created something you have transformed something or someone and you have most likely transformed yourself.

When the creator becomes the created, there exists a state in which the artists and their medium merge. In the most eloquent of these images one can see the dancers becoming the dance, the musicians and their instrument becoming a single vessel for the outpouring of music, the artist's brush and painting not being separate pieces but a whole inspired by a single image.

A more mundane and messy picture would be the artist surrounded and covered and immersed in her medium. One could visualize the costume designer immersed in piles of fabric, pins, sketches, pictures, and half finished skirts; see the potter with wet clay up to his armpit, clay dust in his hair, hunks and smears of clay on his clothes, and everywhere cylinders and slabs and coils in varied states of dryness. The writer typing, buried amid piles of pages with her crumpled reflections on the floor, has become a familiar caricature.

There is a feeling in the creative act of being covered, coated, inebriated, swallowed, almost drowned and smothered by the medium. This physical transformation of engulfment can be a cause for celebration due to the loss of self or a time of terror.

When one considers the more eloquent as well as the more earthy examples of union and immersion between the creator and the created, there wells up the image of a union on multiple levels. While the observer can see the physical bonding or engulfment of creators in their work, an even more profound merger happens in the psyche of the artist at these times. (I will use artist as a term for all people involved in the creative process whether it be in the "arts", procreation, science or any field in which one creates.)



If one returns to the image of the dancer becoming the dance or even the sculptor covered with clay, it is possible to see the individual "I" or the "self" being lost in the process. Whether as an artist one is surrounded by material or penetrating the essence of ones media, there is the chance for a deep important transformation from the "I" manipulating the material as object, to a more "I-thou" relationship in which the dance and dancer, painting and painter, the character and the actor are indivisible. This is a twilight moment when time, space and reality as we usually know them are suspended. One enters into a place that is filled with wonder and has no guarantees. This is a place without self-judgement in which there is a sense of universality. A person can "work" for years to find a moment of this time. It is a "magic" state because the artist can not drive it, force it, or will it to happen. One must wait for the muse. Having excellent technique, surrounding oneself with good materials or proficiently performing a classical work is no guarantee.

There could be many well performed symphonies in which no transformation occurs. There are few famous soloists, however, who do not frequently "lose" themselves to the music. In fact a person seldom (in

music and dance) gets out of the corps, or steps from the orchestra unless they can achieve this union with the material which takes it beyond its structured parts. There is a tension here in losing oneself to the music and still remembering the notes. There is still a direction or an idea whether broad or specific that fuels and pushes the state of harmonic convergence with the material. A jazz musician may have the key of C major with the melody of "Take the A Train" for his form, while a painter may be directed by a passion for sap-green trees. Classical musicians and dancers can have a highly structured form with which to mesh and to transcend.

Creativity is neither just losing oneself in the spontaneous original act nor merely going through the form. It is neither the left brain of science or the right of mysticism, but a moving in and out and back and forth in a unitive experience. The creative act "takes cognition as well as insight, and form as well as ideas. To be creative is to make demands on oneself and one's possibilities. But creativity is very gratifying and as Jesus observed one does not count the pain when the ecstasy of birthing is as total as it is." (Fox, 1979, p. 111,)

The ecstasy and absorption of the creative act coupled with the need for structure is central to creative work for any age. Hughes Mearns explains that creating or making things is a process that arouses and stimulates children. He states that "the whole child pours into the effort. He surrenders completely to the task before him." This kind of sustained interest and cooperation is rare in education but the real reward comes, he continues, "from the gradual transformation of childlike and even childish behavior into something finer, the control of thoughtless impulses and the quiet persistence that works steadily towards a well conceived goal." (Mearns, p. 250-51)

In Leonard Bernstein's reflections on composing he tells us how he experienced the play of the principles of control and surrender:

I sit for long nights all by myself and don't have a thought in my head. I'm dry. I'm blocked, or so it seems. I sit at the piano and just improvise - strum some chords or try a sequence of notes. And then, suddenly, I find one that hits, that suggests something else. The whole point of composing, you see, is not to find one chord or one note you love. It is only when they progress to another chord or note that you have meaning. (Fox, 1979, p. 129)

Bernstein in this case uses the structure in chords or a sequence of notes to find that moment when he can

fly. He describes this further as he writes about this moment, when something clicks in the circuitry of the brain, which sets off an idea:

This is the most exciting moment that can happen in an artist's life. And every time it happens...I say "Gratias agimus tibi." I am grateful for that gift, for those moments, just as I can be terribly depressed by the moments in between when nothing happens. But...eventually those two strands will come together, a spark will fly, and I'll be off, sailing, my ego gone. I won't know my name. I won't know what time it is. Then, I'm a composer. (Fox, 1979, p.129).

This description makes the word "composer" an active state of composing, not a title for someone who once wrote music. Bernstein acknowledges this when he says "Then, I'm a composer." It is as though that state of total artistic involvement and union is something one strives for and is in fact a small portion of ones time. Much time is spent waiting; strumming chords, making sketches, playing with movement phrases. Not empty waiting but attentive "playing around", messing around with the material until "one chord leads to another or a whole phrase measure or movement." It is this state that the real artistry takes place. This creative power that is inherent in all persons comes close to something experienced as divine power. A person at this moment knows who she/he really is as dancer, composer, painter, or mother.

A former soloist with the Martha Graham Company, having experienced the total, ecstatic, all-absorbing, egoless state of dancer, found his present life as a college dance teacher void of that ecstatic dimension, and called himself retired. He had retired from that vivid experience and once a person experiences that ecstatic creative state, he will accept no substitutes. I have seen women who have given birth lean forward in conspiratorial tones to confess there is no "high" like the ecstasy after childbirth. There is also a state doctors call "postpartum blues" when the creative act of pregnancy and birth is over, about 3-5 days after birth; in dance this same state occurs in the days following the performance. The divinity of the creative moment is so potent that its absence leaves one feeling blue, retired, less than whole.

The creative moment is limited in time, the ecstatic state of creating is an action, an interaction, and as Matthew Fox writes,

Creativity is a verb and not a noun. It is an energy ever in motion. A passion that will produce commotion as much as emotion. It is political as well as deeply personal (Fox, 1979, p. 109).

The word creativity and the nouns composer and dancer and artist are concerned with passionate action and

authentically are verbs more than nouns. Birthing, as the I Ching told me, is a revolution and overturning of ones prior concepts. "True art," says Joe Arguelles, "is the art of transformation." He, like Mearns and Fox, "considers art to be born neither from the right side of the brain (psyche) or the left side (techne) but the marriage of the two." (Fox, 1979, p.110) In this marriage, this passionate action, this birth of creativity the person must be open, receptive to transformation. Matthew Fox uses the image of the empty tomb from which Jesus Christ was reborn declaring "I shall make all things new" to talk about creativity and resurrection. To have resurrection implies a state of "letting go and of being let go of." (Fox, 1979, p.115). Fox quotes Arguelles as saying:

True art demands transformation in which both the artist and scientist must die and be reborn. It is this death and dying and suffering that true art involves and also that distinguish it from entertainment and titillation. (Fox, 1979, p. 110)

In the creative act there must be a "letting go and being let go of" of preconceived ideas, of societal norms. The birthing woman does not sit quietly with hands folded and legs together as she has been socialized to do. She is transformed to a sweating,

oozing, panting, squealing, groaning, animal-sounding organic creature with legs flung open. She and the people attending the act of birth are never quite the same. The creative act is a sacred affair and something that is often not easily shared. It often feels unsafe to venture into one's dark unknown unconscious and then share images that simultaneously seem foreign and familiar. Hughes Mearns speaks about the danger of admitting to the creative act:

Art at its best is always something in the nature of a confession; it admits one instantly into the privacy of personal thinking and feeling. Most good art is confessional, I suspect; therefore it fails when it imitates or poses or attempts concealment. (Mearns, 80)

When anyone "lets go" they are open to creative voices that are not usually heard, and that are entirely their own. Mearns suggests mothers of young children gather the poetic verses of their babes " just before they go to sleep." In this hour between day and night, real and dream, conscious and unconscious, poetry is born. One adolescent girl described her process in writing a poem this way:

It was written in the night after I had awakened suddenly; it was written rapidly and without consideration; then I went swiftly to sleep. There was little change to be made in the

morning. I cannot get over the strangeness of it  
(Mearns, p. 82)

Mearns explains this phenomenon as follows: "the spirit is communicating without the trammels of everyday living, I suspect. Perhaps that is why the effect is so striking; it is the self speaking and revealing itself." He concludes with: "the mysterious voices of the spirit are often beyond the full comprehension of even the artist who expresses them." (Mearns, p. 84)

It is in the twilight, in the "letting go of and being let go" from the normal, the reality of daylight that one accepts the unknown, the unconscious, the dark, the death. This too is the time of the mystical experience. Martin Luther King, Jr. said that "the fear of death is overcome by loving something else more. Then and only then is one free" (Fox, 1979, p.118). Creativity opens to the unconscious, the unknown, the death of the normal in order to create, to birth, to live.

The divinity of the creative moment is so potent that its absence leaves one feeling blue, retired, less than whole. For the artist it is acknowledgement of the death of that act of creation. The object once created no longer has the significance for its creator, it is no longer an action verb, a passionate consuming



activity...it is a noun. It is often difficult to face the death of the creative process. The artist must rise again to look into the unknown, the void of creativity, to pull from it another birth. This is particularly difficult if one has felt successful about the previous creation. The challenge to equal or surpass what has already been done often seems insurmountable. Otto Rank says it is the "fear of life that aims at avoidance or postponement of death."(Fox, 1979 p.119) The creative person then depends wholeheartedly on living in order to break through this fear of life. Many artists have said the hardest moments are "getting the canvas stretched", "getting to the dance studio", "having the slabs of clay ready"...in other words, making a commitment to facing the death of the blank canvas, empty studio, unformed clay and affirming life through the act of creation.

Matthew Fox states:

The creative person then is one who has challenged the fear of death, life, suffering, pleasure, androgyny, and guilt. No wonder the creative person has something to say after such a journey as this. (Fox, 1979, p.126)

Art and creativity then must be a transformative experience. If artists fail to challenge these basic fears then the art becomes "lifeless" and flat.

Film maker Ingmar Bergman says:

It is my opinion that art lost its basic creative drive the moment it was separated from worship. It severed an umbilical cord and now lives its own sterile life generating and degenerating itself. (Fox, 1979, p.126)

This description of art without worship is art without the birth and rebirth found in confronting the life and death issues of active creativity. It is going through the steps and without the deep involvement of birth and rebirth.

Physical transformations in the creative process manifest themselves while the simultaneous internal transformation of the creative act may be less clearly visible. Internally, the creator moves from the "Aha" moment to his critical function and then back again to a new "Aha." This allows a birth, a sorting and ordering, and a rebirth. It takes incredible courage and will to venture into this act of creative passion and activity which has no promises and provokes a flock of fears. The creative act is also an act of life and vitality; when it is over each artist faces the emptiness of death. These are all inner transformative struggles that may or may not produce a product. If there is a product it may be kept in a closet, lost in a studio, or

shared just with close friends. The inner process often has a transformative affect on the person which may manifest at a later time. Sometimes there is a ripple effect in which the individuals process has a transforming affect on others.

The multiple effect of the creative process is seen in the story Hughes Mearns tells about a student who created her own dance for the high school play. The first transformation was in the dance itself: "Her previously subdued figure loosened and extended itself. I had thought she was so small. Before me as the music rippled, she seemed to grow in height." The second transformation, the ripple effect, came some weeks later:

I saw her, erect and confident, amid a group of admiring youngsters I spoke quietly to a leader among the older boys. "Anna is beautiful, isn't she?" He agreed. "I had hardly noticed her before," I said, "she was so obviously shy and withdrawn. How do you account for it?" I asked. "The dance did it," he replied quickly. "She became somebody after that play." (Mearns, p.95)

In this case the creative act allowed the girl to transform into self-assured maturity. Mearns tells many stories in which self-acceptance in the creative sphere allows for a new persona to develop in other areas.

This concept may have social implications as Maxine

Green suggests when she quotes Albert Camus:

"Rebellion, in man, is the refusal to be treated as an object and to be reduced to simple historical terms. It is the affirmation of a nature common to all men, which eludes the world of power." And then he said that rebellion in its purest form can be found in the activity of art, because artistic creation "rejects the world on account of what it lacks and in the name of what it sometimes is." (Green, 1978, p. 169).

Ms. Green goes on to say that "the uniqueness of the aesthetic experience is a challenge to many kinds of linear, positive thinking, as well as to the taken for grantedness of much of what is taught." (Green, 1978, p. 171) Jean Paul Sarte also talks about the changing nature of reality and about the dangers of frailty: "It is the artist who must break the already crystallized habits which make us see in the 'present' tense those institutions which are already out of date." (Green, 1978, p. 172)

Matthew Fox enlarges this with the concept of extrovert meditation, that is centering by way of creating. By creating works the artist embodies or gives body to our sense of life, he takes the beauty of internal meditation and gives it external form:

The Extrovert Meditator listens to the inner self and utters the new images from within outward. This giving birth to new images is the work of all

creative persons. It is a prophetic work. And a dangerous one (Fox, 1979, p. 134).

Henry Miller takes the concept further:

The task which the artist implicitly sets himself is to overthrow existing values to make of the chaos about him an order which is his own, to sow strife and ferment so that by the emotional release those who are dead may be restored to life. Extrovert Meditators know this. The best and fullest insights come in the act of creating. Extrovert meditation gives birth to a new kind of power... a power to imagine with others and to be changed by this imagining (Fox, 1979, pp. 135-6).

Creativity in its deepest, fullest self not only changes the creator irreversibly but all who are touched by their struggle and their vision, their vision of new imagining and the potency to create new images and ways of seeing the world.

Jamaka Highwater once spoke about the importance of dancers continuing to create. He affirmed that dancers saw the world in a different way than other people. To see a dancer walk is to feel the earth and sidewalk in a new way. In this culture in which the craft of the dance, the language of the body, is undervalued and underheard, it is imperative to keep creating dances and keep giving an outside form to the dancer's internal vision and reality. Without this tradition of dance as communication, this way of seeing and knowing will be lost. Without dancers to embody the dance image, others

will not be able to see these images. There is a need for humans to see their own internal landscape confirmed. Dancers and artists can do this. Highwater clearly sees the artists' job as transformers of the society.

The creative act can be transformative to the individual artist, to an individual experiencing the process or the product, or to the whole society. The transformation can be as commonplace as pregnancy or as exotic as the effect of Ingmar Bergman films. The act of creation can touch anyone at anytime, and may come easily or with prolonged labor and pain. It is a birth and a death that allows one to be reborn in a new skin. To create is, as the I Ching said, to experience a revolution, a total change and a transformation.

PART TWO  
THE ROLE OF RITUAL IN CULTURAL AND PERSONAL  
TRANSFORMATION

CHAPTER III  
TWO MODELS OF CONTEMPORARY RITUAL:  
WICCA AND NATIVE AMERICAN

In examining the role of mysticism and cosmology in changing social consciousness it is instructive to see how they are used in traditional cultures. In these cultures rituals are used to reaffirm and stimulate the mystical connection for the individual and the community to their cosmology. This chapter will examine the use and structure of ritual from two broad cultural perspectives; Wicca, or Witchcraft, and Native Americans. My rationale in choosing these perspectives is my great interest and active participation in Wicca and Native American rituals, the literature available written by practitioners and their contemporary use in the United States. These two traditions are also represented by Matthew Fox on his teaching faculty for Creation Spirituality.

For the examination of Wicca and Native American ritual traditions, information will be drawn from literature written by practitioners, i.e., witches and medicine men. Having original source material available on these two ritual traditions, along with my own field work, allows a deeper examination of the texture and



personal impact of the ritual on its' participants. Each of these cultures has a ritual tradition of long standing, and while they are currently struggling to survive, they are reconstructing lost heritage and they are practicing rituals as a central aspect in their cultural fabric.

Although there are many reasons to study rituals, the focus here will be on the transformational aspect of the ritual process. Rituals nearly always "accompany transitions from one situation to another and from one cosmic social world to another" (van Gennep, in Turner 1982, p. 80) as in puberty, marriage, death, and vision quest. In these there is personal transformation which occurs inside the cultural context because ritual is an active and reflexive component of its cultural fabric. Since ritual is tacitly held to communicate the deepest values of the group regularly performing it, it has a paradigmatic function at two levels. First as a "model for", ritual can anticipate, even generate change, while as a "model of", it may inscribe order in the minds, hearts, and wills of participants" (Turner, 1982, p. 82). It is important to realize that the use of the word participants includes all present at the ritual not only the central figures or initiads. The power of ritual for personal transformation and cultural

transformation is evident in literature from many cultures. From the Wicca tradition, Starhawk writes about ritual as an important source for bonding:

Rituals are part of every culture. They are the events that bind a culture together, that create a heart, a center, for a people. It is ritual that evokes the Deep Self of a group. In ritual (a patterned movement of energy to accomplish a purpose) we become familiar with power-from-within, learn to recognize its feel, learn how to call it up and let it go. Rituals create a strong group bond. They help build community, creating a meeting ground where people can share deep feelings, positive and negative - a place where they can sing or scream, howl ecstatically or furiously, play, or keep a solemn silence (Starhawk, 1982, p. 158).

To the Native Americans, performing their rituals is essential for survival of the earth.

The participants in the Sun Dance believe that if Indian people come together again in this sacred circle, civilization will endure. If they fulfill this commitment made by their ancestors to Wakan Tanka, the Great Spirit then the earth will survive (Hammerschlag, p. 149).

Ritual is understood by these two cultures as being transformative at the personal, cultural and universal or cosmological level, and it is in this context that ritual, in its variety of symbols and structures, will be viewed here. Whenever ritual is seen as a central aspect of the cultural framework it takes a variety of

forms and functions. This is seen in the rites of passage: birth, adulthood, marriage, sickness, death, and the rites that acknowledge the cycles of the year: the seasons, solstice and equinox, planting and harvesting. Rituals also acknowledge a deeper [non verbal] level of consciousness concerning the movements of the seasons and the rhythms of the natural cycles. Rituals celebrate and acknowledge the interconnectedness of humans with the natural world and its processes.

Whether these rituals are seen as instrumental in producing these occurrences, as in "model for", or whether they are seen as facilitating the human connection with the preordained natural cycles, as in "model of", can vary from culture to culture. Participation in some rituals can help avert sickness, floods, drought, death, or bad luck. Other rituals may be found to help a couple and the community deeply understand the bonds of marriage and facilitate the transformation necessary for moving from the single state to the married or mated state. The debutante ball or coming out ritual in the United States is thought to facilitate the transformation of a girl to a woman eligible for marriage. Her maturation is not thought to rely on this ritual; rather, it is to align the person's spiritual/emotional/mental state with her new social

physical status.

Whatever the specific intended outcome of the ceremony the general goal is to alter or change some aspect of the participant's perception, i.e., to change the form or appearance of the person's world. The change can be in the way the participant sees their world, or how they see themselves in their world; some rituals may change both perspectives. The initiates gain an altered perspective on their world, their reality, and what they know as truth. While change is the desired outcome, the forms and process for the transformational rituals vary among traditions. Through analyzing the ritual process used in these three traditions, some insight will be gained about the framework necessary for transformation.

#### WICCA

The process used in rituals in the Wicca tradition or Witchcraft has often had to be revived or re-created. The ritual process was often lost and destroyed during the Inquisition in which nine million witches were executed during the 15th through the 19th centuries. Although some contemporary covens feel they are in a direct line with original witchcraft rituals, there are

many ambiguities, discrepancies, and misconceptions concerning these rituals, and even the definition of Witchcraft.

Witchcraft is part of Paganism, and most current Pagans are trying to revive or recreate their definition of themselves to include feminist goddess-worshippers, ancient European religions [Norse, Greek, Roman, Celtic], along with aspects of the surviving tribal religions. In her book, Drawing Down the Moon, Adler adds the following:

Most Neo-Pagans sense an aliveness and 'presence' in nature. They are usually polytheists or animists or pantheists, or two or three of these things at once. They share the goal of living in harmony with nature and they tend to view humanity's 'advancement' and separation from nature as the prime source of alienation. They see ritual as a tool to end that alienation (Adler, p. 4).

This religious movement of people who often call themselves Pagans, Neo-Pagans, and Witches is only partly an 'occult' phenomenon. Often it is interwoven with the visionary and artistic tradition, the ecology movement, the feminist movement, and the libertarian tradition (Adler, p. 6).

Although these terms can be used somewhat interchangeably, Paganism covers a larger scope of religious activities of which witchcraft is one. The word witch however, is often intertwined with many

misconceptions that link it with Satanism and black magic, while Witches are in fact part of a mystical earth centered tradition that predates Satanism. Due to this misuse of the word Witch, this paper will use Wicca and define what it is, rather than defend what it isn't.

According to Adler:

Followers of Wicca seek their inspiration in pre-Christian sources, European folklore, and mythology. They consider themselves priests and priestesses of an ancient European shamanistic nature religion that worships a goddess who is related to the ancient Mother Goddess and her three aspects of Maiden, Mother and Crone (Adler, p. 10).

Starhawk's definition while slightly different underscores Adler's statement on Wicca.

Its roots go back to the pre-Judeo-Christian tribal religions of the West, and is akin in spirit, form, and practice to Native American and African religions. Its myths and symbols draw from the woman-valuing, Goddess-centered cultures that underlie the beginnings of civilization. It is not a religion with a dogma, a doctrine, or a sacred book; it is a religion of experience, of ritual, of practices that change consciousness and awaken "power-from-within" (Starhawk, 1982, p. xii).

Wicca is a mystical, earth centered tradition that is a religion of experience and of power within. Throughout the beliefs and values of Wicca are language and concepts that resonate with Matthew Fox's vision for

a mystical spirituality. This is in part due to Wicca being pre-patriarchal. When Patriarchy became the ruling force in Western culture these nature religions were banished in favor of monotheism where God resides outside of nature. This change from cultures based on immanence, having transformative power embodied in the natural world, to Patriarchy in which power is outside the natural world, was an element in the estrangement Fox characterized as Jacob's Ladder hierarchy. The estrangement of humans from nature found in patriarchal religions in Western culture has been a major factor in the revival of Wicca and the use of ritual.

The motivation for rituals may be multifaceted or as simple as "the idea that ritual may be seen as a way human beings have found to end, at least for some few moments their experience of alienation from nature and from one another" (Adler, p. 197). Most likely it is both, for rituals are multi-sensory events that affect participants on many levels of their being.

While a great variety of Wicca rituals exists, there seems to be a great deal of continuity and consistency in the structure or process used in Wicca rituals. The structure is important as a model for the process of transformation, and its characteristics.

The first step in the process is finding, setting, and defining sacred space. In the Wicca tradition this comes as "casting the circle" which defines the physical space for the ceremony as "different" from its ordinary function (as a living room, back yard, park or woods) and acknowledges that within the circle it is safe and expected for unusual events and changes in consciousness to occur. "A witches circle generally serves as a reservoir to hold group energy, which is then directed ... psychic barriers do fall, energy is felt and exchanged" (Adler, p. 159).

According to Starhawk:

The circle is also an energy pattern that contains whatever power we raise so that power can be focused & concentrated. It protects us from intrusion, forming a barrier to any unwanted forces (Starhawk, 1982, p. 57).

In Witchcraft we define a new space and new time whenever we cast a circle and begin a ritual. The circle exists on the boundaries of ordinary space & time; it is 'between the worlds' of the seen and unseen of flashlight and starlight consciousness, a space in which alternate realities meet in which the past & future are open to us (Starhawk, 1979, p. 57).

Casting the circle is an enacted meditation. Each gesture we make, each tool we use, each power we invoke, resonates through layers of meaning to awaken an aspect of ourselves. The outer forms are a cloak for inner visualizations, so that the circle becomes a living mandala, in which we are



centered. When we cast a circle, we create an energy form, a boundary that limits and contains the movements of subtle forces. In Witchcraft, the function of the circle is not so much to keep out negative energies as to keep in power so that it can rise to a peak. You cannot boil water without putting it in a pot, and you can't raise power effectively unless it is also contained (Starhawk, 1979, p. 58).

Through casting a circle, the Pagan tradition transforms the participant's attitude towards the physical space in which the ritual will occur. This is an important step in the ritual process and may be reinforced by the placement of special mandalas, altars, and sacred objects throughout the space or making borders or entry to the space. Similarly, Native American sweat lodges have an altar at the entrance to the lodge and often people are "cleansed" with the smoke of sage or the brush of an Eagle feather before entering the sacred space of the lodge. The second step in the Wicca/Pagan tradition is invoking the Goddess/God. The invocation channels power through a visualized image of Divinity, it awakens the Goddess or Godliness within each participant. This often includes acknowledging the directions (East, South, West, North, Sky and Earth) and the four elements water, earth, air and fire that balance our universe. These elements are acknowledged in "casting the circle" in order to establish sacred

space at the beginning of the ceremony or during the invocation or power.

After this, the goal or direction upon which the energy will focus is declared and energy is raised for this purpose. Bonnewits, in Adler, summarizes it like this: "emotion is aroused, increased, built to a peak. A target is imagined and a goal made clear. The emotional energy is focused, aimed and fired at this goal" (Adler, p. 161). The goal can take innumerable forms and often has to do with giving up or "dying to" ones old reality or truth in order to be born anew.

In these cases, by renouncing or giving up the old way, whether through ritual activity or verbal expression, the participants give up or die to their former reality. Significant objects may be thrown in the fire or buried in the earth and participants may break bonds or recite what will die in them. This section takes infinite forms around the activity of shedding ones former view, attitude, or roles in life. These activities are followed by a rebirthing in order to accept a new reality or truth. Participants sometime enact a journey through the birth canal, gain new attire or step forth from a mythical journey or encounter, with a new countenance. In the process of directing energy at any target goal, whether it be death and rebirth or

harmony with nature, a "cone of power" is raised. This Wicca term means that power or energy is raised by drumming, breathing, dancing, chanting, or meditating which allows the participants to increase their energy and focus it on the goal of the ritual. Starhawk describes it in Spiral Dance as follows:

In coven rituals, energy raised is most often molded into the form of a cone, the Cone of Power. The base of the cone is the circle of conveners; its apex can focus on an individual, an object, or a collectively visualized image. At times, the cone is allowed to rise and fall naturally.... It may also be sent off in a burst of force, directed by one person, who may be part of the circle, or may stand at its center (Starhawk, 1979, p. 133).

The following is a description, and directions by Starhawk, for one way to raise the Cone of Power:

Begin with a Group Breath, and gradually build a wordless Power Chant. As the energy builds, visualize it swirling clockwise around the circle. See it as a blue-white light. It spirals up into a cone form - an upright shell, a cornucopia. Hold the visualization until it glows. The High Priestess (or whoever directs the cone) senses the movement of energy. She holds the visualized image, the object of the working, clearly in mind. When the power reaches its peak, she cries out, "Now!", Conveners let the energy go, fall to the ground, and relax completely, seeing the cone fly off to its objective. They breathe deeply and let the residue of power drain into the earth. Generally, a trance state follows (Starhawk, 1979, p. 133).

After the energy, or cone of power is raised it is

important to ground it, which often may take the form of simply placing one's hands, face or body on the ground, be it earth or floor. Bonnewitt writes about the need for grounding in ritual "There is a follow through; this encourages any lingering energy to flow away and provides a safe let down" (Adler, p. 161). After the grounding of the energy, celebration may ensue after which the circle is opened allowing the participants to return to normal life and reality with a changed perspective or a renewed feeling of interconnection.

The specific activities associated with each step of a Wicca ritual can vary greatly as do the symbols and methods used in the ritual ... Chants, spells, dancing around a fire, burning candles, the smoke and smell of incense, are all means to awaken the 'deep mind' --- to arouse high emotions, enforce concentration, and facilitate entry into an altered state (Adler, p. 157).

Again Bonnewitt has said some of the most sensible words on this subject, observing that mandalas, sigils, pentacles, and yantras are all pictures to stimulate the sense of sight; mudras or gestures, stimulate the kinesthetic sense; mantras or incantations stimulate the sense of hearing. The use of props, costumes, and scenery can also be seen as a method of stimulating the senses. In addition, drugs, alcohol, breathing exercises, and sexual techniques can serve to alter ones

state of consciousness.

This multiplicity of stimulants serves to involve the total person, at both the unconscious and conscious levels, through all their senses and their intellect. Many of these techniques function the same way in many different cultures whether for a Native American Shaman or a Catholic Priest. In recreating ceremonies Wicca participants are often searching for their own roots and origins. They are looking for a vibrant rich culture like the cultures of tribal peoples and ancient Pantheist civilizations, they are attempting to rebuild a new culture from old and new fragments.

The "old fragments" used to make current Wicca ritual have many elements in common with ancient sacred dance rituals set forth by Maria Gabriel Wosien in her book Sacred Dance. Here she documents the use of dance in ancient rituals in which a pattern of; preparation, ritual death and rebirth while raising energy by dancing is used as the framework for these ceremonies. These are pre-Christian ritual forms, which have many parallels to the current Pagan rites, and are documented through Wosien's academic historical research in many cultures.

## NATIVE AMERICAN

The Wicca desire to re-create a vibrant and rich religion based upon their cultural roots is similar to Native Americans who are adopting and rediscovering traditionalist values. By integrating their traditional value and belief system within the current American culture, Native Americans express the same feelings held by many people who are trying to find or reconstruct their roots. The following article expresses the sentiment of many in Wicca as well as Native Americans, and appeared in a Native American paper Ok Wesasne

Notes:

Our entire existence is of reverence. Our rituals renew the sacred harmony within us. Our every act --- eating, sleeping, breathing, making love --- is a ceremony reaffirming our dependence on Mother Earth and our kinship with her every child. Unlike Christians, who dichotomize the spiritual and the physical, put religion in its compartment, and call the physical world evil and a mere preparation for a world to come, we recognize the "spiritual" and the "physical" as one --- without Westerners' dichotomies between God and humankind, God and nature, nature and humankind, we are close and intimate and warm with Mother Earth and the Great Spirit. Unlike Christian belief, which claims that our species is both inherently evil and the divinely ordained ruler of Earth, we know that, being of our sacred Mother Earth, we are sacred (Adler, p. 381).

The Native Americans beliefs have many parallels

with those of Wicca and Neo-Pagan. This is in part due to the borrowing of Indian traditions by the Neo-Pagans in a search for their roots and in part due to similarities in these ancient ritual traditions. Similarities among Shamanic traditions, of which Wicca and Native American religions are included, have been found in all parts of the world by anthropologist Michael Harner, and documented in The Way of the Shaman. Although Native American and Wicca share a similar base of Shamanic, mystical traditions and beliefs and face many of the same challenges, there are significant differences. While people following Wicca traditions may need to re-create ceremonies, many of the Native American ceremonies and rites have been preserved. Most of these ceremonies, specifically the Sun Dance, were outlawed for many years and thought by white Americans to be extinguished. However, current literature and information substantiates these ceremonies' continuous practice without detection in secret locations and with a severely limited number of participants. Although Native Americans were massacred, their religion outlawed and are still persecuted because of their belief system, they have persisted in maintaining their religious rituals through practice and oral traditions. Some of the rites have been written down as well by

anthropologists and Natives in order to preserve the "old ways."

The Sweat Lodge, the Sun Dance, and Vision Quest are significant rituals, rich with processual structure and symbolic tradition. These Native American rituals have persisted despite government's attempt to outlaw them, and in fact their practice is increasing.

The Sweat Lodge ceremony is for the purification and alignment of the participants with the elements. It also serves as a preparation and purification for other rituals such as Sun Dance and Vision Quest.

The Sweat Lodge is a structure erected specifically for this ceremony and in accordance with traditional sacred practices. The lodge is very clearly a sacred space and each object used in its construction in the ceremony has significance and reminds participants of traditional cosmology. The well known Sioux Medicine Man, Black Elk said,

The rite of the onikare (Sweat Lodge) utilizes all the powers of the universe; earth, and things which grow from the earth, water, fire and air. The water represents the Thunder - beings who come fearfully but bring goodness, for the steam which comes from the rocks within which is the fire, is frightening but it purifies us so we may love as Wakan Tanka wills, and He may even send us a vision if we become very pure (Black Elk, p. 31).



(Note: Wakan Tanka is generally equivalent to God).

The lodge is built by bending willows to make a round frame over which skins, blankets, and tarps are fastened to make an air tight and light free structure. A central hole is dug into the earth forming the central altar where heated stones are placed. A sacred fireplace where the rocks are heated is ten paces to the East of the Lodge. All of this is done in a specified manner with prayers and offerings of sacred tobacco, sweetgrass and sage. A reverence for the order of all elements on the earth is integral to this and all Native American Ceremonies. The construction of the lodge may be a prelude to the ritual; the actual ceremony begins with the leader entering the lodge purifying the space and himself with smoke; "everything is made sacred, and if there is anything in the lodge that is not good it is driven away by the Power of the smoke" (Black Elk, p. 34). The leader invokes the powers of the directions and the elements by offering tobacco to each and placing it in his pipe. This done, everything made "Wakan", the leader leaves the lodge and the other participants enter. From these activities it is clear that the Sweat Lodge is sacred space and while a lodge may remain erected between ceremonies it is always sacred space and not used for recreational purposes. When all

participants have entered, the helper picks up the hot rocks from the fire and places the first rock at the center of the round altar. Black Elk tells:

This first rock is for Wakan-Tanka, who is always at the center of everything. The man seated at the west touches the foot of the pipe to the rock, and each time that a rock is placed on the altar he touches the pipe to it, and all the men cry: "Hi ye! Pila miya! [Thanks]!" The second rock to be handed into the lodge is placed at the west of the altar, the next at the north, then one for the east, one for the south, one for earth, and finally the hole is filled up with the rest of the rocks, and all these together represent everything that there is in the universe (Black Elk, p. 36).

Native American ceremonies generally conclude by paying homage to and invoking the power of the directions and the many elements that make up the ecosystem of the earth. In the Sweat Lodge the rocks, the wingeds, the tree people, the fire, the water are all blessed and honored, sweet grass is burned as an offering in hopes that the four leggeds, the wingeds, the star peoples of the heaven and all things will live as relatives. After the rocks are placed in the central altar the pipe is passed and the door to the lodge is closed, "making it completely dark inside, and this darkness represents the darkness of our soul, our ignorance from which we must now purify ourselves so that we may have the light" (Black Elk, p. 36).

Water is poured on the rock making the temperature in the lodge rise as high as 140. Prayers are made and songs and chants given, the leader says, "O Wakan-Tanka, behold me! I am the people. In offering myself to You, I offer 'all the people as one, that they may live'" (Black Elk, p. 38). After the leader has prayed the participants pray in turn. The door to the lodge is opened four times to remind the participants of the four ages in which the Natives received light from "Wakan-Tanka." The heat and chanting increases, purifying the body and spirit of the participants.

As the door to the lodge is opened for the last time there is a feeling of celebration; the participants are happy because they have come forth from the darkness into the light. A live coal from the sacred fire is placed on the path outside the lodge and sweet grass is placed upon it. The leader purifies his hands and feet over this smoke, gives thanks and says "with great happiness I walk upon the sacred Earth, our Mother" (Black Elk, p. 39). The rest of the participants file out of the lodge, repeat this activity and pray.

The framework for the Sweat Lodge ceremony has many similarities to the structure of the Wicca rituals:

Making sacred space - Smoking the lodge

Invoking the Power - Calling in the directions and elements and inhabitants of Earth

Focusing the Image or Goal - Purification for walking in harmony

Raising Power - The heat, chanting, praying

Transformation (energy change) - Embodying the light and Wakan energy as emerging from lodge

Grounding energy - Smoking feet and hands to walk on sacred Earth

Opening Circle - Leaving the lodge and sacred area.

The Sweat Lodge is the preparatory ceremony for "Hanblecheyape," Crying for a Vision or Vision Quest, and for the Sun Dance. Often participants in the Sun Dance prepare themselves through Sweat Lodge and Vision Quest. The goal of Sweat Lodge, in preparation for the Vision Quest, is to ask Wakan-Tanka to be merciful to the quester, and invoke the other powers to help during the days of the Quest. The lodge is used to purify the individual before seeking his vision, which Black Elk calls "the lament", in which the seeker cries in his humbleness before God. "O Great Spirit, be merciful to me that my people may live" (Black Elk, p. 57). At the close of the Sweat Lodge the "lamerter" goes to the chosen mountain where his helpers prepare his vision quest area with sage and five sacred poles. The lamenter strips himself of all clothing, "for if we really wish to 'lament' we must be poor in the things of this world" (Black Elk, p. 57), and walks alone to the sacred place. Here the lamenter invokes the power and

pity of the four directions and continually prays for a vision and direction for his life. During the days that he seeks a vision the quest may not eat, or drink and moves only to pray to the four directions. The vision quest lasts from one to four days at which time the helpers return to the mountain to carry the lamenter back to the camp and a final sweat lodge. In the final sweat lodge the "lamenter" tells what he saw and heard in his quest; what visions and animals appeared to him and the meaning of his vision is interpreted by an elder. The water is then poured over the rocks which allows the heat, with the praying and chanting to raise the energy and confirm the lamenter's vision from "Wankan-Tanka."

The Vision Quest or Lament falls into a common ritual framework: preparing sacred space, invoking the powers, the transformation of the participant through the activities of abandoning normal clothing, food, drink, shelter, companionship while praying and being open to visions from "Wankan-Tanka" and the conclusion with the Sweat Lodge which affirms the vision and the lamenter's relationship to "Wankan-Tanka". In giving up their clothing, the accoutrements of normal life, and facing pain and fear, the lamenters indicate their willingness to change, to find a new vision.

The Sun Dance is considered "one of our greatest rites" (Black Elk, p. 67), and "undoubtedly the highest form of worship for the Plains Indians" (Mails, p. 2). People wishing to participate in the Sun Dance make vows to the Great Spirit that in return for his help they will seek a vision, undergo solemn purification ceremonies and do the Sun Dance. Many of the Contemporary vows have to do with the devastating substance abuse problem, ill health or poverty which plague Native Americans. The importance of the Sun Dance is in the pledgers triumph over the adversity in their personal ceremonial and communal life. In Sundance at Rosebud and Pine Ridge, Thomas E. Mails reflects on the vows and courage of the Sun Dancers.

Once you get to know them, you realize that the men and women who pledge each year have triumphed, with God's help, over situations so grim and yet so common as to stagger anyone not acquainted with the daily way of life on the Rosebud and Pine Ridge reservations.... When all of its details are known, the agony and ecstasy of the Sun Dance become a monumental experience. We see the pain of ordinary living for a beleaguered people countered and triumphed over by the pain endured in the Mystery Hoop and at the Sacred Tree. Moreover, the benefits of the dance reach out to encompass all of the Sioux, all the Indians, and pass beyond them to the rest of mankind. It is a brave and noble thing they do (Mails, pp. 43-44).

Part of the purification of the pledger for fulfillment of the Sun Dance vow is Vision Questing. Vision seeking is expected to take place before the four day Sun Dance. Further visions may be sought through prayers and suffering during the Sun Dance itself as well, but the initial quest takes place much as we have previously described it. The Sweat Lodge, the rite of purification is used on the first day of the Sun Dance in order to focus the participants spiritual quest, invoke the powers, appeal to "Wankan-Tanka" and ensure the purification of all participants and objects used in the ceremony. "The Sweat Lodge is our purification ceremony which makes us fit to Sun Dance for the nation, and inside the Sweat Lodge it is very, very warm" (Mails, p. 93).

Black Elk gives this condensed description of the Sun Dance:

We hold it during the Moon of Making Fat, because this is the time when the sun is at its highest and the growing power of the world is strongest. We select the sacred tree. The people come to it singing, with flowers all over them. A brave warrior strikes the living tree, counting coup on it [from the practice in warfare of hitting a fallen enemy with a stick, which then counted him as a casualty], because the spirit of the sun loves everything that bears fruit. Then maidens chop it down. We carry it home, stopping four times, once for each season and direction, to give thanks for this gift of life. Then the sacred tree is set down at a place in the center. We plant it in the earth; we make a vow to the Great Spirit

"Wankan-Tanka." This tree is the center of the living universe. It holds the power of the world. It is the centerpiece of the four directions. The East brings peace and light; the South, warmth; the West brings rain; and the North, strength and endurance. The sky is the great circle that surrounds us. The earth is the circle that supports us. The sun comes and goes in a great circle just like our lives. Everything in life is a great circle; the tips are round like the nests of birds - they hold the children who are the guardians of our immortality. And we are, in turn, embraced by the Earth Mother who in her roundness provides us with the fruitfulness of life. On the morning before the Sun Dance, nursing mothers bring their little ones to be blessed at the base of the tree of life, here at the center of the universe. Grow up and be brave; make your people proud. Holy men will pierce their ears. The dancers paint their bodies; they lay beneath the tree and the holy men cut places in their backs or chest so they can fulfill their oaths. Each man thus fastened to the tree gets up and dances until his flesh tears loose. (Hammerschlag, pp. 149-150).

Hammerschlag continues the description:

The dancers dance not for themselves alone, but for their families, their tribes, and for all of humankind. As a gesture of surrender to the Creator, warriors pierce their flesh with sticks. They believe their flesh is the only thing they can offer to the Creator that is truly their own (Hammerschlag, p. 149).

The Sun Dance is a four day ritual in which the dancers do not eat or drink, enter the Sweat Lodges twice daily and dance in the heat of the "Western Plains." Hammerschlag as a doctor observing the ceremony noted that in medical school he was taught that



the body could not survive more than three days without water, let alone with dancing in the sun, and yet Sun Dancers accomplish this for four days. This is a ceremony of great magic in which the pledgers give flesh and sweat offerings for the spiritual good of their nation, beyond what is "humanly" possible. Because of this, the circular area in which the Sun Dance is held is called the "Mystery Circle" or "Mystery Hoop."

Great and wondrous things happen in it, [Mystery Circle], yet because these are supernatural achievements the natural man can never know exactly how they are done. It is a mystery. The proof lies in the happening; in the deliverance from ignorance, in the visions seen, in the healings, and in the sense of well-being when it is over (Mails, p. 101).

The space is carefully prepared, as is the alter, the body paint and costumes of the participants for this important ceremony. The process for the Sun Dance begins each morning with pledgers participating in the Sweat Lodge, after which they dress and process into the Mystery Circle. There is praying to prepare the circle; dancing and singing, and then some pledgers are pierced and dance until they break their bonds; all return for the Sweat Lodge and then rest. This is repeated for four days with different pledgers being pierced each day. The Sun Dance in its profound sacrifice of flesh

and physical energy raises power towards the pledgers' goal from the dancers and all who observe this commitment.

In each Native American ceremony analyzed here there is purification in a sacred place, invoking the four directions, the powers, and all the beings that inhabit the earth, the use of chanting, prayer and sometimes dancing to raise the energy and to achieve the goal of transformation. Physical hardship and sacrifice are often a central part of these rituals and in the three studied here, facing ones fear of physical death is a common element. The Sweat Lodge is often so hot, participants wonder if they will "live through it", and in the darkness they face their fears and their death to be reborn in the light as a purified and changed individual. The Vision Quest and Sundance, use the sweat lodge and also pose painful and life threatening situations which the participants must conquer in order to achieve their goals and pledges.

The Wicca and Native American rituals contain many similarities to each other and can be seen as models for the theoretical vision provided by Matthew Fox. These rituals are based in Mystical, earth centered spirituality which supports and allows participants to die to an old idea and rebirth in a new mindset. Which

is, to be transformed and resurrected in the way of Fox's Creation Spirituality. Further more, these ritual traditions operate from a sense of valuing community and not only the human community but the global community, as Fox calls it, in which all things are valued. The Native American prayer "for all my relations" encompasses the values Fox holds and visions for a new society. It is no wonder that Fox includes on his staff Starhawk, from the Wicca tradition and Buck Ghosthorse from the Rosebud Reservation Lakota Sioux tradition, teaching their traditional rituals to participants in his workshops. By studying and participating in these rituals one can begin to see the possibilities for new or renewed forms of spirituality that could facilitate the transformation to a nondestructive paradigm.

Studying the methodology and language of these rituals gives important insights for understanding how the creative process in the arts, and specifically dance, can merge with and facilitate mystical transformation. These ritual traditions utilize many art forms and media in providing images, icons and activities for transformation. The centrality of dance in some ritual forms provides insight on dance as transformation, and is useful in understanding traditional rituals and contemporary cultural genres that may serve ritual functions.

## CHAPTER IV

### CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The language used to describe the Wicca and Native American rituals embodies the rich organic images of these earth centered traditions as spoken by practitioners. In analyzing the functions and form of rituals it is also useful to see this process through the lens of a social researcher. Anthropologist Victor Turner provides a life's work in the study of ritual and how it functions in society, as well as a specific vocabulary for delineating the stages and characteristics in the transformative process. Turner's anthropological field work provides structural insights and an analysis of ritual form that is useful in understanding ritual structure.

Victor Turner in his field work among the Ndembu people of Africa found that ritual activity constituted a large part of these peoples lives, and that it was central to any valid anthropological study. He also found that a mere listing of ritual activities didn't allow insight about the internal process of change or how it was accomplished. Turner began to analyze the structure of these rituals by using a model which defines their characteristic stages. By using the

multiple and diverse ritual forms of the Ndembu, he was able to form definitions and a conceptual framework with which to carry out comparative analysis for many "ritual type" events. Turner writes of ritual as a means for transformation or moving from one state of being to another, and he identifies three phases of a ritual based on the work of van Gennep.

The first phase is that of separation, preparing the initiate to enter the state of non-ordinary reality. The second phase is the stage in which the experience of transformation occurs. The last phase is identified as incorporation, during which the participant interweaves the new realizations with the old, or integrates the experience of non-ordinary reality with ordinary reality. The ritual process is entered into for purposes of personal or cultural transformation and facilitates the people involved in passing from one social state to another.

The first phase of this passage, separation, sets out to detach the participant from his normal environment. It clearly demarcates and differentiates sacred space from ordinary or secular space. Turner makes the point that this separation must be more than just a matter of entering a temple, it must be entering into another reality. Separation also means leaving

ordinary time. It allows the people to be "out of time", beyond the normal time that measures routines. The separation includes symbols which represent detachment of the participants from their previous social status or reality. Reversals in the symbols that constitute normal reality are also utilized. This phase is necessary to set the stage or clean the slate for any transformation, whether it is leaving a state of peacefulness to go to war, or moving from childhood to man/womanhood. This phase includes entering the sacred space, where specific clothing, specific music, foods, scents, or any number of sensory cues allow the participants to understand that they are leaving reality as they have known it.

The second phase is transition, also called limin (meaning "threshold" in Latin) which Turner refers to as the liminal phase, in which the ritual participants enter into a state of social limbo. This is a state of social ambiguity in which the participants have left one status, but have not yet reached the next. The most profound aspects of transformation take place in this liminal state. This reality state is not like what they have left nor what they will go to. It is a time of suspended time, space, values and behavior in which transformation, or transition takes place.

The third phase, re-incorporation, includes symbols and activities which verify the reentry into their culture and represents the return of the participants to their new relatively stable situation in society. For life cycle rituals (marriage, coming of age, etc.) it represents a step forward on life's road. For a seasonal ritual, it prepares people for a change in nature and the cultural activities to be undertaken in that time. This incorporation phase takes place in a different location than either the first or second phases. The passage from one social state to another is usually accompanied by passage in space, whether it's crossing the threshold of a distinct space, or the opening of a door, there is a clear delineation of the participants' pre- and post-ritual physical space.

The three phases can be seen as 1) an exit from normal social functions, 2) a transformation and 3) a re-entry into society with a transformed perspective. It is easy to see how this parallels the stages in Native American and Wicca rituals; and although they do not match exactly, the process and order of events is almost identical.

Turner's investigation delves deeply into the transformative liminal state, and although the separation and incorporation stages are consistently

considered essential when defining ritual, the transitional or liminal state found in the second phase is of most interest because the transformation of consciousness occurs here.

### LIMINALITY

The separation stage prepares the individual to relinquish any physical reminders of his old life, and prepare him/her to move into the unknown reality of liminality. Liminality takes place in a time and space outside of ordinary reality, in which the old rules of ones former persona are not applicable. Turner describes the liminal phase as

...quintessentially, a time and place lodged between all times and spaces defined and governed in any specific biocultural ecosystem by the rules of law, politics, religion and by economic necessity. Here the cognitive schemata that give sense and order to everyday life no longer apply but are suspended (Turner, 1982, p. 84).

That societies allow and even insist on supporting participants to venture into the liminal state demonstrates societal endorsement of transformation. The rules of ordinary reality are suspended for participants in the liminal state, and behavior that



would usually be taboo or a threat to the social structure are not punished.

There is a great cultural diversity in methodologies, symbols, and activities that lead to the state of liminality. There are, however, certain elements that occur with regularity and can be generalized as components of the liminal state. Participants in the liminal state are betwixt and between, their social standing is ambiguous and indeterminate, and Turner writes "liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness and to an eclipse of the lunar moon" (Turner, 1969, p. 95). Liminality is a time out of time, with people out of society, in a space apart from the norm.

Turner names ritual participants involved in the liminal phase "liminal entities." "Liminal entities" are often described as initiates to an order, such as adolescents going through puberty rites, but can be found in any transformative rite of passage. The liminal entities frequently give up their previous mode of dress, occasionally being stripped of clothing, dressed in identical minimal coverings, or masked and painted in order to blur their individual identity. This strips from them the signs of kinship, status,

property, position and creates in all of the participants a commonness. They are unidentifiable, humble, have nothing, and are submissive to their leaders. "It is as though they are being reduced, or ground down to a uniform condition to be fashioned anew and endowed with additional powers to enable them to cope with their new station in life" (Turner, 1982, p. 95). Contemporary examples of liminal entities include monastic orders, military boot camp, and fraternity hazing which demonstrate this traditional step towards liminality, with varying degrees of physical ordeal.

Role reversal is often used with liminal entities. Participants who are rich may experience poverty, while the disenfranchised may be given power. While in the liminal phase participants have experiences which are out of their world for a "moment out of time." The sharing of these experiences can lead to a recognition of generalized social bonds which, however fleetingly, transcends the fragmented multiplicity of societally structured bonds. It is a feeling of oneness without alienation. This is an unstructured undifferentiated experience of community which gives "recognition to the essential and generic human bond" (Turner, 1982, p. 97). Turner calls this state which occurs during liminality "communitas" and finds it essential to the concept of

society. It is a bonding which is necessary in order for any aggregate of people to move as a group, to feel a wholeness and to experience each other as undifferentiated rather than separate. We find examples among "buddies" in the military, "brothers" of a fraternity, or members of a monastic or religious sect. *Communitas* can be generalized further and can occur in non-liminal states but is a very probable outcome of liminal experience. Whether for a group or a single person, the same attributes are found in liminal entities. Life crisis ceremonies for one or two people, as in the Isoma ritual for a barren couple have these same traits. Near nakedness, humbleness, and passivity are found as the couple crawls through an underground tunnel that represents both the grave and the womb, holding symbols for both birth and death.

Transformation is imbedded in ritual. The non-ordinary reality in the transitional phase is crucial to the structure of the ritual. The stripping off of preliminal and postliminal attributes are recurrent methods of exterior transformation which support the profound transition in the liminal state. The attributes of sexlessness, anonymity, poverty, lowliness, and role reversal are highly characteristic of liminality along with the attributes of great

sacredness given to the participants and their activities. The liminal state is in contrast to the usual social system of ordinary reality allowing the participants to have a non-ordinary experience which precipitates their permanent transformation. Liminality needs to occur in non-ordinary reality in contrast to the usual social system. The element of contrast is essential in describing the liminal state versus ordinary reality, and to that end Turner has charted many of the oppositions found in rituals:

<u>Phenomena in Liminality</u>	<u>Phenomena in Normal Societal</u>
	<u>Structure</u>
transition	state
communitas	social structure
equality	inequality
anonymity	systems of nomenclature
absence of property	property
absence of status	status
nakedness or uniform clothing	distinctions of clothing
sexual continence	sexuality
minimization of sex distinction	maximization of sex distinction
absence of rank	distinctions of rank
humility	just pride of position

disregard for personal appearance	care for personal appearance
no distinctions of wealth	distinctions of wealth
unselfish	selfish
total obedience	obedience only to superior rank
sacredness	secularity
sacred instruction	technical knowledge
silence	speech
suspension of kinship rights and obligations	kinship rights and and obligations
continuous reference to to mystical powers	intermittent reference mystical powers
foolishness	sagacity
simplicity	complexity
acceptance of pain and suffering	avoidance of pain and suffering
heteronomy	degrees of autonomy

(Turner, 1969, p. 106).

This list portrays how properties of the liminal state are in clear contrast to the ordinary reality of the social status and serves as a guide and a clear standard for comparative analysis. Using this guide Turner has examined social-political movements in history that displayed the characteristics of liminality in their activities and life styles, and thus gained insights on their place in the societal structure.

Liminality is in contrast to the usual societal structure and has been termed anti-structural by Turner. This is demonstrated in the symbol chart above which poses liminal reality against the normal socially structured reality. In the liminal phase the vast majority of symbols and activities are anti-structural but interwoven are traditional symbols that serve as a reminder of the normative social system. That is, icons or fetish symbols representing values or roles in society are used in liminal ceremonies in which the initiates are participating in roles opposite those values. In a pre-bridal rite, elaborate ceremony surrounds the creation of clay figures representing the proper roles of wife and mother. These are presented with specific traditional songs and offerings only to be torn apart shortly after their presentations. This is an example of how structural and anti-structural elements can be simultaneously present in the liminal state. The dialectic of these two elements and their role in ritual is explored extensively by Turner and is a constant in most tribal rites. Although the liminal phases of tribal rites invert social roles, rank, sexual mores, kinship rites, sacredness, equality, and many other aspects of structural form of society they do not usually subvert the status quo. In these rituals role

reversal underlines the difference between order and chaos, demonstrating that chaos is the alternative to the cultural structure and norms.

While liminality serves as a way to underscore the importance of the societal structure, it also functions as a social release from the pressures of keeping societal norms and roles. Turner has used the term anti-structure, found in the liminality not just for structural reversal nor for mirror imaging of ordinary reality but for a time when

... the liberation of human capacities of cognition affect, violation, creativity, etc., from the normative constraints incumbent upon occupying a sequence of social statuses, enacting a multiplicity of social roles, and being acutely conscious of membership in some corporate group such as a family, lineage, clan, tribe, nation, etc., or of affiliation with some pervasive social category such as a class, caste, sex or age-division. Sociocultural systems drive so steadily towards consistency that human individuals only get off these normative hooks in rare situations in small-scale societies, and not too frequently in large-scale ones (Turner, 1982, p. 44).

This release of human capacities from the mundane, workday, normative society is as important for current Western Civilization as it has been for tribal-agrarian societies. In looking at Western culture defined as: "generatively triangulated by the thinking of Jerusalem,

Athens and Rome and continued in the philosophical, literary and socioscientific traditions of Europe, North America and their cultural offshoots" (Turner, 1982, p. 65), there has been a paucity of traditional rituals to be found. This paucity has led Turner and others to examine the specific aspects found in traditional liminal rituals in order to see how these are utilized in contemporary society.

Communitas, flow and the liminoid state are aspects that have meaning in traditional rituals and in current society. While each of these states can exist simultaneously, i.e., while in the liminal state one may experience communitas & flow, they can also exist independently. In looking at the characteristics and potential of each of these states, it is possible realize their historical and current significance.

#### COMMUNITAS

"Communitas is an unmeditated relationship between historical idiosyncratic, concrete individuals:" (Turner, 1969, p. 45). In this state a feeling of community or shared interests, values, aspirations, fears, and dreams is experienced within a group of people without regard to their status, background, age,



gender, race, or other social definitions. In peoples usual social structural relationships, they are conditioned to play specific cultural roles, to keep within the norms that control the complex model which is the social structure of the society. Playing these roles, however limits the full human capacity for quality relationships that might include bizarre, non-normative, spontaneous interaction with other people. Liminality in tribal societies provides a setting for breaking out of roles and establishing *communitas* through the development of direct, immediate, and total confrontations and interactions with others outside of non-normative roles and social structure. Liminality is an ambiguous state which includes the breakdown of normative, well defined social ties, bonds, structures and may also induce chaos from the dissolving of these norms. This allows individuals to form the immediate relationships of *communitas* with other participants. These bonds can serve as an anchor in the often traumatic liminal state in which all norms of time, space, status, clothing, food, shelter, and role are absent, and in the normative state as well. In complex societies liminality may be produced by extreme situations, murder, war, torture, natural disasters, etc. Liminality is more destructive and creative than

the societal structural norm and presents fertile ground for *communitas*. In *communitas*, people experience unity, a meeting of the minds and hearts and if even for just a fleeting moment, they experience all of human kind as one. *Communitas* is the flash of mutual knowing between two or more people much like Buber's notion of the "I and Thou" relationship. By definition it cannot be sustained, even though many have tried.

As Turner points out:

The great difficulty is to keep this intuition alive - regular drugging won't do it, repeated sexual union won't do it, constant immersion in great literature won't do it, initiation seclusion must sooner or later come to an end. We thus encounter the paradox that the experience of *communitas* becomes the memory of *communitas*, with the result that *communitas* itself in striving to replicate itself historically develops a social structure in which initially free and innovative relationships between individuals are converted into norm-governed relationships between social personae (Turner, 1982, p. 47).

*Communitas*, the feeling of union with others in your group and perhaps even all of humanity and the universe, is a state or momentary feeling that humans continually seek and try to replicate.

Although Turner feels that people in *communitas* have feeling of inclusion and connection with all other humans, this still seems subject to limitations. Even

at the peak moment of *communitas* felt among the Nazis it probably only extended to Aryans not to all humans, however they may have limited the human definition to include only Aryans. *Communitas* founded ideologically seems to extend only as far as the "brethern" and potential converts of the specific movement. Turner defines three forms of *communitas*: Spontaneous, Ideological, and Normative:

(1) Spontaneous *communitas* is a direct, immediate and total confrontation of human identities, a deep rather than intense style of personal interaction. It has something "magical" about it. Subjectively there is in it a feeling of endless power. Is there any of us who has not known this moment when compatible people - friends, conjoiners - obtain a flash of lucid mutual understanding on the existential level, when they feel that all problems, not just their problems, could be resolved, whether emotional or cognitive, if only the group which is felt (in the first person) as "essentially us" could sustain its intersubjective illumination ... when the mood, style, or "fit" of spontaneous *communitas* is upon us, we place a high value on personal honesty, openness, and lack of pretensions or pretentiousness. We feel that it is important to relate directly to another person as he presents himself in the here-and-now, to understand him in a sympathetic (not an emphatic - which implies some withholding, some non-giving of the self) way, free from culturally defined encumbrances of his role, status, reputation, class, caste, sex or other structural niche (Turner, 1982, pp. 47-48).

(2) Ideological *Communitas* is a set of theoretical concepts which attempts to describe what events happened to allow spontaneous *communitas*. It is an attempt to reconstruct the elements that have engendered *communitas* in ritual,

art, games and sport in order to form a model for making it happen. People put in words a model that tries to replicate a concrete experience of spontaneous communitas.

(When Starhawk & Black Elk wrote models for rituals they were hoping to guide people in rituals of deep meaning not just to duplicate spontaneous communitas.)

(3) "Normative" Communitas is a subculture or group which attempts to foster and maintain relationships or spontaneous communitas on a more or less permanent basis (Turner, 1982, p. 49).

Although communitas is more a matter of grace or luck than structure, in that it really can't be regulated or expected, still groups established on communitas are distinguished from groups arising from some normative social structure. "Something of freedom, liberation, or love adheres to normative communitas" (Turner, 1982, p. 49).

When this has been the motivation for the groups formation and its primary social direction; what began as a spontaneous and charismatic, transforms into an institutionalized social system. Spontaneous communitas is much like the general definition of communitas but without needing the extremes of destruction, or being in time out of time liminality, that often accompanies communitas in a traditional ritual setting. The spontaneous variety of communitas appears "out of no where and has to do with grace and magic" (Turner, 1982, p. 49).

Since it is a state which humans desire and would like to control or replicate, the development of ideological *communitas* out of an experience of spontaneous *communitas* is a logical progression.

#### LIMINOID

*Communitas* grows from the liminal experience in tribal societies, in industrial societies *communitas* may appear spontaneously or in liminal-like situations which Turner terms liminoid. Liminal and liminoid experiences are a difference in degree rather than kind, both are transformative and bring about personal change. While liminal phenomena occur in the closely regulated, collective rituals based on calendrical, biological, or social-structural rhythms of a village, liminoid phenomena often occur in leisure time. In so called complex society the liminoid is removed from the ritual "rite of passage" context and is individualized so that a solitary artist has the freedom to create a liminoid phenomenon. Participation in the liminoid is freely chosen and often happens in the leisure genres of art, sport, games, and other pastimes.

Liminal experiences are most often obligatory or mandatory and are found in modern societies in the

activities of churches, sects and the initiation rites of clubs, fraternities, and secret societies. Liminal activities are not a matter of choice, they are an obligation and are connected to a rite of passage within the specific social structure. The feeling of *communitas* could come from either liminal or liminoid situations although the liminoid is freely chosen and can be achieved by the individual as well as through a group.

#### FLOW

The third aspect that acts and interacts with the liminal or liminoid and *communitas* in the transitional phase of ritual or cultural performance, is flow. As defined by Csikszentmihalyi and Mac Aloon

Flow denotes the holistic sensation present when we act with total involvement; a state in which action follows action according to an internal logic, which seems to need no conscious intervention on our part ... we experience it as a unified flowing from one moment to the next, in which we feel in control of our actions, and in which there is little distinction between self and environment; between stimulus and response; or between past, present, and future (Turner, 1982, p. 56).

The research in the area of flow has primarily focused on sport and play but extends to the creative process in the arts and to coreligious experiences. In Csikszentmihalyi's research (cited in Turner, 1982), he distinguishes six qualities of flow:

(1) The experience of merging action and awareness: there is no dualism in "flow"; while an actor may be aware of what he is doing, he cannot be aware that he is aware - if he does, there is a rhythmic behavioral or cognitive break.

(2) This merging of action and awareness is made possible by a centering of attention on a limited stimulus field. Consciousness must be narrowed, intensified, beamed in on a limited focus of attention, past and future must be given up - only now matters. This is done by simplifying conditions, in games through rules and competition, or simply the will to participate being a motivation to center ones attention, which encourages flow.

(3) Loss of ego is another flow attribute. The self, which is normally the 'broker' between one person's actions and another's; simply becomes irrelevant - the actor is immersed in the flow, he accepts the rules as binding which are also binding on the other actors - no self is needed to bargain about what should or should not be done. The rules ensure the reduction of deviance or eccentricity in much of manifest behavior. Reality tends to be simplified to the point that is understandable, definable, and manageable. Flow reaches out to nature and to other men in what Csikszentmihalyi calls intuitions of unity, solidarity, repletion and acceptance. All men, even all things, are felt to be one, subjectively, in the flow experience.

(4) A person in "flow" finds himself in control of his actions and of the environment. He may not know this at the time of flow, but reflecting on it he may realize that his skills were matched to the demands made on him by the ritual, art, or sport...

(5) Flow usually contains coherent, non-contradictory demands for action, and provides clear, unambiguous feedback to a person's actions.

This is entailed by the limiting of awareness to a restricted field of possibilities. ... You can 'throw yourself' into the cultural design of the game or art, and know whether you have done well or not when you have finished the round of culturally predetermined acts - in the extreme case, if you survive, you have performed adequately.

(6) Finally 'flow' is autolectic, i.e., it seems to need no goals or rewards outside itself. To flow is to be as happy as a human can be - the particular rules or stimuli that triggered the flow, whether chess or a prayer meeting, do not matter (Turner, 1982, p. 57-58).

Flow seems particularly well suited to areas of activity and action rather than contemplation, and it is defined as happening within a clearly structured sphere. Flow is experienced in an individual and can expand to a feeling of *communitas*, but doesn't always lead to *communitas*. Although *communitas* is almost by definition anti-structural, seeming to disappear when it is required to appear, and flow thrives in a structured situation, the state of flow has the ability to precipitate or engender *communitas*. Flow may be one of the ways that structure can be transformed, softened, dissolved or transcended. That is, although a structured activity allows for the clarity of purpose and action needed for flow, in the peak moments of flow the experience transcends the activity itself. As stated in #6, "the particular rules or stimuli that triggered the flow do not matter." In the times that flow goes beyond its structure, people are prime for the



feeling of *communitas*.

The analysis of flow provides another descriptive system for phenomena experienced by people in a wide variety of activities from art to sport to traditional rituals. Using the descriptive systems of: flow, *communitas*, liminal and liminoid, it is possible to evaluate or analyze cultural performance genres in terms of these qualities. A traditional ritual will have all of these qualities in liminal time, while sports may contain non of them or just flow. Between the religious ritual and the sporting event are a host of cultural performances which will stretch along a theoretical spectrum between these two extremes. Some events will have all of the elements of flow and *communitas*, and will happen in a time and space that is more liminal than liminoid; other events may just have flow with a fleeting vision of *communitas*. These descriptive systems for the internal transformation found in ritual will be used later in this chapter in conjunction with Turner's analysis of contemporary performance.

Turner asserts that religious rituals have provided the main cultural flow mechanisms in other societies. The contraction of the religious and ritual sphere in current Western culture has born a multiplicity of genres (art, play, sport, etc.) to take

over the flow functions of the culture. This is not to say, that "taking over the flow function" is concomitant with ritual, for while art, play & sport may allow for flow, they do not fill all the functions and qualities contained in religious rituals. Art, play and sport happen in the liminoid state, in contrast to the liminal state of ritual, which imparts a qualitative difference in the experience of flow. The spiritual context found in liminal rituals imparts the goals, direction and meanings of the cultural cosmology to the activities. This allows the participant to immediately begin to transcend the activity itself. Flow in sports, games, and often arts is lacking a cosmological or spiritual context and often never transcends, or only transcends for a brief time the focus on the activity itself. Transcending the limits of activity in order to transform is an integral part of most rituals, "and performing well implies the co-involvement of the majority of its performers in a self-transcending flow of ritual events" (Turner, 1982, p. 80).

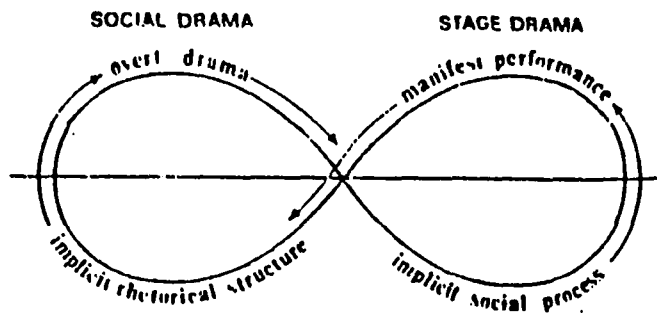
Flow in the ritual performance convinces the performers that the ritual is informed with powers, flow in the other cultural genres does not set out to do this nor does it happen. This difference in flow function from liminal to liminoid is often misunderstood, and, in

cultures where both exist misinterpretations often occur. Spectators attending the liminal Sun Dance ritual in South Dakota thought they were attending a liminoid sporting event, festival, or pow wow and behaved accordingly; munching hotdogs, guzzling beer and hawking t-shirts as they observed the deeply sacred, liminal religious ritual. This behavior was inappropriate for a sacred liminal event and caused anger and a breach between those who understood it as liminal and those who didn't. The Sun Dance story illustrates that in looking at ritual and other genres of cultural performance it is necessary to understand their societal function; how they fit into the social structure of a culture and what role they play in that society.

Turner theorizes ritual plays a central role in the processing of social drama and that conflict is the central factor around which social drama evolves. Social drama can include stories and events found in a culture's mythology, its national news, or its local gossip. Much of anthropological work is based on stories that are told in the culture. Whether it is folk tales, histories, myths, stories from informants, or gossip; the stories reflect the human impulse to talk about each other.

Through forming stories (in a variety of media) about the history and social dramas of the culture, the value systems, traditions and expected behaviors are developed. Through the lens of the cultural value system, the stories and histories merge to support the social structure. That is to say that life imitates art and art imitates life : they are reflexive. Just as a story can illustrate important points about family relationships and the stresses of growing up so it can also inform the social process providing it with a rhetoric, a mode of employment and a meaning. Turner states that performance genres can serve as paradigms which inform the action of leaders and society, sometimes compelling them to follow a certain course of action. The importance of cultural genres and images on the shaping of social action is reminiscent of Matthew Fox's theory that artistic and cultural images have a profound effect on society. Turner specifies that the interactive relationship between art and life is seen in how social drama and stage drama, whether in the form of stories, dances, or art, comment on each other continuously, both implicitly and explicitly. This is shown in Richard Schechner's figure eight below; in which the loops below the horizontal line represent the hidden social infra-structures and the hidden aesthetic

model, while the loops above represent what is manifest and overt. This model demonstrates the interaction and on-goingness of social drama to stage drama, which at times in television news are almost indistinguishable.



(Turner, 1982, p. 73).

Social dramas have three parts: 1. the "breach" in which the problem begins, 2. the "crisis" in which the problem started in the breach swells in intensity to a point of action or a juncture in which a turning point is reached, 3. the "redressive phase" in which the situation is resolved through re-integration or exile. Societies attempt to limit the spread of the breach through adjustive and redressive mechanisms which, as Turner states:

range from personal advice and informal arbitration to formal juridical and legal machinery - to the performance of ritual.... Social drama is a well-nigh universal processual form, and represents a perpetual challenge to all aspirations to

perfection in social & political organization  
(Turner, 1982, p. 70).

It is the third phase of social drama, redress, that involves ritual and cultural genres. In rituals concerning reconciliation the verbal and non-verbal symbolism serve to reassert and reanimate the values mutually held by everyone in the community. This function of reasserting social values through ritual or performance reassures the culture of its solidarity, commonality, its history and assured future. This is an important societal function against the background of breach and crisis which reveals that social reality is fluid, indeterminate and filled with ambiguity. In the redress phase the culture is faced with the ambiguity of social crisis and finds that fixing the breach is a process, not a permanent state or a given, and that it can be done by assigning meaning to events and relationships in narratives symbolism and performance. Sally Falk Moore writes, "Ritual is a declaration of form against indeterminacy, therefore indeterminacy is always present in the background of any analysis of ritual" (Turner, 1982, p. 77).

Social drama is the background from which genres of cultural performance starting with ritual and extending to oral, literary, and stage drama, have been generated.

Turner writes of ritual:

essentially as performance, enactment, in which the rules frame the ritual process but the ritual process transcends its frame, the flow of action and interaction within that frame may conduce to hitherto unprecedented insights and even generate new symbols and meanings which may be incorporated into subsequent performances (Turner, 1982, p. 79).

Rituals that are vital and alive are in process. Participants are involved in a procedure in which they experience all their senses engaged, and have available the kinesthetic forms of dance and gesture. Ritual, in its full performative flow, is capable of having a pragmatic function; as a "model for", ritual can anticipate, even generate change; as a "model of", it may inscribe order in the minds, hearts, and wills of participants. Ritual liminality contains the potential for cultural innovation in symbols and meanings, and personal transformation within a social system.

Play is an important element of ritual or any performance genre used to process social crisis. Ritual incorporates play, humor, and satire from role reversal to clowns which help people laugh at themselves and their social dramas. Play is found in symbols and vehicles such as bizarre masks and costumes, and there is play of "meanings" such as role reversals, and

reversals of social values and status. There is also the play of "words" in which secret languages and puns are involved; with some rituals being more comic than tragic. Joking, riddles and the oft present clown in rituals and during the liminal period is widespread in many archaic cultures. In Native American rituals, the coyote character is often present as the trickster, who allows the serious participant to laugh at themselves. Liminality is conducive to play which allows laughing at ones self and generating new forms of symbolic action. Turner feels that our contemporary rituals have decreased in true liminality, with the loss of play, and have stressed the solemn at the expense of the festive.

While the rituals have gotten more serious, they have lost their powerful "gestalt" which integrated the diverse ends of the human spectrum into total cosmology. Meanwhile many leisure performance genres such as theater, dance, major sports events, art exhibits, rock or classical music, carnivals, novels, poetry and many more have been born from what was once the realm of religious ritual. The arts and other genres have moved into the cultural transformative modes that were once the territory of religion. There is in current industrial society, a dismembering of ritual from religion which leaves religion without its profound



performance component. Performance allowed religion to live, relive and be re-born to current societal issues. Turner writes:

If you wish to spay or geld religion, first remove its rituals, its generative and re-generative processes. For religion is not a cognitive system, a set of dogmas, alone, it is meaningful experience and experienced meaning. In ritual one lives through events, or through the alchemy of its framings and symbols, relives semiogentic events, the deeds and words of prophets and saints, or if these are absent, myths and sacredepial paradigms (Turner, 1982, p. 86).

As religion has lost its rituals and much of its power, society has lost this avenue for processing the redress phase of social drama. This dismembering process may act as a prelude to the coming together or re-membering of ritual performance and religion into a cosmology for contemporary life. Societies have a need for the redressive phase of social drama to make sense of the events and meaning in any social breach or crisis. If neither the jural, religious, or historical paradigms of a society can articulate opposing values and goals in a manner which makes cultural sense, other areas may be looked to for clarity.

Turner sees that cultural performance genres and re-membered rituals have the potential for making senses of social crisis. The performance of rituals and or

cultural dramas has potential for re-membering a society, for setting the current schisms and crisis in a living relationship to the past, and with goals and processes for the future. Rituals have a long history of being a process in which issues of a social concern have been acted and reenacted, generating new cultural symbols and language. In the current Western civilization, Turner is implying that since the traditional religions have given up ritual forms, the genres of performing arts may be carrying the power to make sense or re-member the society in ways that had previously been the realm of religious ritual.

While there are many similarities between performance and religious rituals, there are at least as many differences which raise questions of how a leisure form, with liminoid experiences, that is optional and freely chosen and exists outside of the "main stream", of culture can evoke the power and social significance of a necessary and duty-filled, liminal phenomena, that exists as an integral part of the cultural fabric. Genres of cultural performance, which may be labeled art, entertainment, sport, games, play, recreation, theater, and light or serious reading, may be collective or private, amateur or professional, slight or serious. Not all of them have universal reference, for many are

limited to specific constituencies, but some seem more effective than others in giving birth to self-regulatory or self-critical works.

Theater as a performance genre often plays the role in society of a mirror which reflects societies' problems, frailties and social dramas. The performance genres that take on the reflexive role, although they occur in leisure time for the audience, are work for the performers. Stage behavior has been practiced or relearned, rehearsed, or previously known and brought to consciousness or generated by rules that govern the outcomes of improvisatory performance or sport. Performance is always doubled or reworked, rehearsed, and it is this "doubleness" that makes it inextricably linked with reflection and reflexivity. "The proximity of theater to life, while remaining at a mirror distance from it, makes it the form best fitted to comment or 'meta comment' on conflict..." (Turner, 1982, p. 105).

One of the major difference between ritual and performance is that in theater there is an audience separate from performance while in ritual all present are participants. Although this point could be argued, in that some of the participants in rituals are audience, and some audiences in theater are asked to participate, it is an important generalization. If the

audience is only expected to arrive at the place of the performance, with no more involvement (risk) than being present, their engagement and involvement will probably be minimal. If, however, the audience sees their participation as vital to the working of the performance, they experience the drama with greater engagement. The amount of audience involvement expected is directly linked to the intent of the theatrical experience. The intent of the drama is also linked to the expectation and preparation of the performers. The expectations of the audience and the performers meet in the performance.

There are dangers in taking performance genres to the liminal level, as illustrated in the work of Grotowski and others who sought a new type of performance experience for audience and performers. In his "Poor Theater", he sought to strip all excess accessories (costume, script, lights, props, set) from the drama in order to reveal the actor and his/her process. He later tried to let his theater move from entertainment to a situation in which the actors could meet

out of their roles by the undertaking of certain physical acts (dancing and touching) or attaining certain psychological states, in such a way that healthy human emotions could release themselves again" (Turner, 1982, p. 118).

In his work Grotowski was moving away from entertainment and towards liminality. He along with Richard Schechner and other directors used processes in rehearsal aimed at generating communitas. Grotowski's rehearsals were physically exhausting in order that actors could "break through" old boundaries and find new material or a new persona, in other words to be transformed. Andre Gregory took a workshop with Grotowski and described the process as:

(it) means reaching to the inner recesses of the actor and back into his past... an attempt to reach him - as a human being - in his under soil and roots... It is not important whether one creates art, which one gives to people, but it is important that men - in beings not indifferent to one another in life and work - are included in the creative process... I needed Grotowski's theater not as someone connected with theater, or even as I needed it as a human being (Turner, 1982, p. 119).

The language used by Gregory and by Grotowski is close to that of self discovery and communitas, and is closer to the religious ritual sphere than that of artistic performance. Although Turner is interested in the possibility of cultural performance genres filling in the holes left by the shrinking of religious rituals, he cautions the use of liminal experience for finding ritual in the theater. From his anthropological experience Turner sees,

that there are grave dangers in the initiatory process, the initiate is usually being initiated into something, he or she may be released from one set of status roles but only to in order to be more firmly imprinted with another (Turner, 1982, p. 120).

The danger in liminality is that participants are vulnerable and dependant on their leaders, guides or gurus, for direction. In the case of ritual in the theater, the director is put in the role of a spiritual leader which they are not equipped to handle, nor is there usually any clear direction for the process. Conversely traditional ritual is directed towards very clear socially sanctioned goals and led by spiritual leaders chosen for their ritual skills. Turner feels that theater should remain in the realm of entertainment. "Entertainment is liminoid rather than liminal, it is suffused with freedom. It involves profoundly the power of play and play democratizes" (Turner, 1982, p. 120).

Turner's conclusions are that through the ritual process great transformations are possible both on the personal level and on the societal level. These changes occur in the ritual process which includes three phases: separation, liminality and reintegration, in which the liminal state contains the transformative action of the ritual. The liminal phase is infused with multiple

symbols and activities which are in direct contrast to the initiates' normal reality, in the usual societal structure. After the liminal phase the participant is reintegrated into the culture, often in a new status role or with a transformed vision of reality. Turner sees the ritual process as important for personal change, compromise, reflection, and the integration of new ideas, symbols, and cultural stories or myths. Ritual plays an important role in the cultural phenomenon of social drama, which begins with a breach, moves to crisis and ends in the redressive phase. Integrating the breached factions may evolve new symbols and stories which allow the social structure to transform and have flexibility while remaining stable. Specific characteristics of the liminal ritual can be found in liminoid or leisure time activities in contemporary Western society. While religion has currently given up most of its rituals, other cultural performance genres have performed some of the ritual functions. Communitas, flow, and the liminoid state can all be found in rituals, and to some degree in many contemporary activities. While flow is found sports, games and the arts, communitas may appear almost anywhere and at times is generated from flow.

The liminoid state is the contemporary version of ritual liminality, but with freedom to choose in every aspect and without the power, both personal and cosmic, associated with the liminal acts. Turner feels cultural performance genres, especially theater, can serve an important reflexive function in contemporary social drama but warns that it is important to keep contemporary performance experiences firmly in the liminoid, leisure time arena.

Victor Turner died shortly after he published From Ritual To Theater, and although two more books were published posthumously, they are collections of papers and do not have the power of his other work, nor answer the questions he posed about how contemporary culture will fill the gap left by the power of liminal ritual.



PART THREE  
DANCE EDUCATION IN AN AGE OF CRISIS

CHAPTER V  
DANCE, AS A TRANSFORMATIVE ACTIVITY;  
PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES

The problems facing society are huge and multifaceted, as Chapter I detailed, including crises in the ecological, financial, spiritual and humanitarian dimensions. The earth is steadily becoming polluted, its ecosystem raped, financial resources are unequally distributed, people are lost without a moral framework or a cosmology. Compassion is missing in a power-over society in which crime, cruelty and an underclass have become institutionalized. These problems have gigantic proportions that affect the leading first world countries and due to the interdependence of the global community also have devastating effects on the struggling countries of the third world. The Hopi word "Koyaanis" means a world gone mad, and seems to sum up the cultural problems that point to destruction. The need for social transformation on a societal and personal level is necessary in order to change this catastrophic path.

Although the challenges facing society are gigantic, Matthew Fox's vision for a new societal structure and new paradigms for living brings a renewed

sense of hope to the sense of despair surrounding the current global situation. Fox's vision for living is one that is based on a mystical relationship with the universe and compassion for all elements on the planet. This cosmology uses the arts and creativity as a method for creating new symbols to reflect the non-hierarchical circular nature of the new paradigm. Fox believes that the creative process as extrovert meditation can serve as a way to empower and transform individuals and groups while generating new symbols which can effect change at a personal and societal level.

Personal and societal transformation has long been the domain of ritual. The writings of Turner, Starhawk and others described in Part II have been used to describe how the use of symbols and symbolic activities in ritual has played a major role in clarifying and reaffirming the role of the individual, community and society in the cosmology of a culture. Ritual, as Turner has pointed out, has been a major force in the social cultural process of crisis and redress, in which participants through the liminal state and in transformative activities are given a new or altered perspective on the social cultural structure. Turner sees that since significant ritual is not practiced by the church in Western society, the arts can perform many

of the ritual functions for social change.

The writings of Fox and Turner substantiate the power that the arts have for generating new symbols which can alter the myth system and the way in which the cosmology is understood, and can lead to social transformation. Experiencing the process of ritual and art which unearths, births, and creates symbols has profound personal transformative effect on the participants. Both the process of generating symbols and the use of symbols are seen as powerful transformative tools by Fox and Turner.

Fox and Turner describe the power of art in the web of social transformation, but I often have difficulty understanding how my field of dance can effect change. While I seldom have illusions that dance by itself can "change the world", I do feel it has possibilities for transformation in the light of the work by Fox and Turner. My professional work in dance with and for people, has often appeared to reflect ritual forms and engender transformative potential. These moments of bonding, flow, communitas and being a part in the creative process are profound but seem isolated in the world of dance and insignificant in effecting social change. While I trust the significance of my personal experience, this chapter seeks to analyze the challenges

to using dance in this way and its potential for change.

Dancing together has many possibilities for serving as a method for social transformation but dance as it is practiced has many problems as well. Dance is a very broad field with ancient roots in every culture's history, in rituals and ceremonies, as well as current dances for socialization, entertainment, religion and artistic expression. Its diversity stretches from a highly skilled profession open to a small number of elite performers to being the birthright of every three year old who bounces and sways to music. This expanse of dance which includes a wide variety of folk, social, erotic, ritual, entertainment, educational and art forms has a wide variety of intentions as well. Dance can serve as a translator or transformer on both the personal and societal level, and generate and embody symbols that help engender social change. However, most dance today focuses on entertainment and recreation with no interest in the potential of dance to build community or to be a transformative agent. Not only does most dance ignore its spiritual potential, it is also used to isolate, intimidate, humiliate, and dictate in many professional and social settings. Most dance is seen as totally divorced from any positive social or spiritual significance and is often used as a "power

over" tool by dominant social or cultural groups. Dance often tends to isolate, and isolate itself from social issues. Among dance professionals there is little interest or discussion about dance as an interactive agent in the social structure.

Much as dance is currently not viewed as a vehicle for social interaction or transformation it is still a strong symbolic force for the images of non-hierarchical interactions. Matthew Fox in choosing "Dancing Sarah's Circle" explains its contrast with climbing the patriarchal ladder:

In contrast circle dancing is not about competition at all but about sharing ecstasies. There is always room for another person in a circle ... There are no winners or losers in such a schema - only dancers with the dance in common (Fox, 1979, p. 48).

The symbol of people dancing together in a circle holds the powerful archetypal image of community, harmony, non-hierarchy, celebration, joy and belonging. Although these attributes have been mostly lost in dance as it is experienced today, it is a profound image that speaks to the potential power of the form.

The power of the image of dance for social transformation is beset with problems. Dance and the dancer have been used as commodities, objects to be

bought and sold for the pleasure of their viewers. The Broadway show "A Chorus Line", based on interviews with dancers in the commercial entertainment world, paints a vivid picture of this dance world as deeply enmeshed in the power over market economy. In one song "Tits and Ass" the female singer intones that her success as a dancer is directly related to her ability to transform - but not in any spiritual way, rather through cosmetic surgery to give her the physical attributes the buyers what to hire. The show further details how injury, age or appearance is the basis for devaluing people in this "dog eat dog" competitive world. The content, style, roles and dance vocabulary in Broadway musicals are directed toward selling the entertainment product. The dancers become objects and usually sex objects. This is the most visible form of dance, being used in all commercial and entertainment venues. It promotes uniformity to an idealized commercial image, which has an extremely narrow range of age and physical appearance. Commercial dancing from striptease to MTV has little to do with spiritual transformation, compassion, or social change; rather it mirrors the most crass and debased aspects of a power over, spiritually devoid, throw away society that does not value diversity or compassion.

Dance, as it is taught in studios across the country and performed in annual recitals, is a slightly gentler reflection of patriarchy than the commercial dance entertainment world. Here children (mostly little girls) are enrolled in order to gain grace, poise, pretty bodies and a sense of style. Costumes and the physical looks of these children play a primary role in the hierarchal structure in choosing first row and second row dancers. Dance studios generally strive to present dance as the parents expect to view it, so that they will continue to pay tuition. For the young dancer this is often a mixture of ballet with the glitter of commercial jazz. As students advance they choose studios that either reflect the Broadway entertainment style or a more balletic form. In these situations the spiritual realm of dance is not touched upon nor is there much interest in compassion, celebrating diversity, or transformation beyond the costume.

Most of dance is seen as entertainment or recreation divorced from meditation or the realm of spirit. Social dance has historically been separated from sacred dance and has been, as it is today, primarily for meeting and evaluating prospective mates. Folk dance, especially in America, has lost much of its ceremonial meaning and has become a recreational form



reminiscent of an earlier age of communities and traditions. Folk dance because of its roots in ceremonial and communal rites and its non-hierarchical forms has great potential for spiritual growth and engendering a sense of *communitas* and flow. However it is seldom used for these ends and even the Sufis who helped evolve the "Dances of Universal Peace", a collage of international dances mated with spiritual folk songs from all the major religions, have difficulty bringing the performance of these folk dances to a liminal or liminoid experience. While the expressed purpose for doing the Sufi dances is to engender the sense of peace, harmony, acceptance, and belonging (or *communitas* and flow in the liminoid state, to use Turner's definitions), the experience of the dance is often more recreational than spiritual.

Dancers in the conservatory are aware of the transformative possibilities in dance, and they seek the experience. In a casual survey of dance educators and dancers in conservatories 100% of the respondents became animated when I mentioned the subject of transformation in dance. This was an experience they knew, this was an aspect of dance they had experienced. The response from non-dancers was polite smiles or puzzled looks, this was an experience they knew nothing about. These reactions

increased my feeling that what happens in the dance studio or on the stage for dancers trained as artists is a liminal or liminoid experience that occurs, like rituals in sacred space. This is not to say that every dance experience is a liminal experience but that it is common for dancers to feel transformed in a way which happens in liminal/liminoid time.

That the dance studio in a conservatory is sacred space, is an important factor in the experience of transformation. Turner states that a sacred space is one which is clearly consecrated for the duration of the transformative ceremony. Martha Graham insists that dancers must prepare themselves spiritually before stepping into her studio and Eric Hawkin's studio emanates a religious calm. In these cases the sacredness of the studio supports the students becoming vessels for their master's vision.

The realm of sacred space is an active ingredient in dance transformation for whatever ends. I found the same quality of sacred space in an inner city school in the devastated remains of downtown Detroit. The school although fairly new was covered with graffiti and scars of vandalism. As I tentatively made my way into the dance studio, I was pulled back by two large students who told me "You don't go into the studio with shoes

on." Here in the depths of a city of hopelessness and non-caring was a sacred dance space which allowed the students to transform from devalued underclass black women to skilled, beautiful, valued, talented dancers. This transformation gave them hope. Not wearing shoes into the dance studio was the preliminary rite of their transformation and was a prerequisite to entering the sacred space of the studio. As with other transformative experiences the sacred space for dance isn't limited by the shape, size or location of the space rather it is defined by the intent and the respect given its use. Sacred dance space could be a living room, stage, studio, classroom or, as in the Sun Dance, a field or a fairground. The dance studio as sacred space is a common occurrence in dance conservatories, and although these specific words are not used, the acknowledgement that life changes when one enters the dance studio is commonly accepted.

That dance studio space is in contrast to normal space fits in with the oppositional element Turner sees as necessary for liminality. Liminality is characterized by contrasts in appearance and behavior which blur social and class distinctions and allow people to transform and indulge in non-normative behavior.

Dance behavior and attire in the conservatory studio are in contrast to societal norms, specific clothing, specific hair styles, and the movement performed individually and in partnership that would not be performed outside of that space. It happens in a time out of time in which music and movement fill the reality. Dance has many elements conducive to liminality which are exploited in the conservatory where dance is taught as a highly specialized technical skill following classical models. The training is extremely physically rigorous, competitive, and the studio behavior attire and thought patterns are the most conducive to transformation.

In talking to Spider Kadelski, a teacher in numerous conservatories and other settings, and a scholar in ritual dance, he felt that the conservatory student was most susceptible to transformation. He said,

students live highly ritualized lives, and are much more open for suggestibility because their whole life is structured for that, their intellect, their physical being, the way their autonomic nervous system functions. Here the transformation act is a lot easier.

He continued with the premise that this state of receptivity raises other problems because:

When students are so willing, focused, capable and chemically attuned for transforming to the teachers will, the question of what is taught becomes very important. The students are ready with every system and chemical response in their body to "snap to" which puts them in a position of great vulnerability, having left whatever their situation was before they entered into this event process (Kadelski, 1989).

Mr. Kadelski's concern about to what end these students are transformed brings to light the concern Turner had about transformation that is more liminal than liminoid, and for using liminal states in the theater. In commenting on Grotowski's use of theater without roles he asked the essential question "The role stripped self is to be remolded by what? ... Into what?" (Turner, 1982, p. 118). Turner, like Kadelski, emphasizes that traditionally the initiad is being initiated into something, not out of familiar roles in order to be molded by the artistic director.

It is the experience of the anthropologists that there are grave dangers in the initiatory process. "One can see how a totalistic or totalitarian policy or regime might find new secularized rites of passage, guided by certificated ideologists who understand ritual process, very much to its taste" (Turner, 1982, p. 118). Turner concludes with a revealing directive: "Entertainment is liminoid rather than liminal, it is

suffused with freedom. It involves profoundly the power of play, and play democratizes" (Turner, 1982, p. 120).

The concerns voiced by Turner and Kadelski are most clearly reflected in the classical dance conservatories. Here the hierarchy is a structure which is headed by a ballet "master" not a spiritual leader selected by the community. These situations are a clear reflection of the dance patriarchy established under the feudal system. The motivation of the director is for transformation to their standards of aesthetic not for spiritual, personal or societal growth. Many books by emotionally traumatized ballerinas attest to the pitfalls of transformational liminal phases, (i.e. Gesley Kirkland's Dancing on my Grave and Competing with the Sylph) without a spiritual direction or cosmology.

In the classical dance conservatories transformation is possible, perhaps even common but without a spiritual or cosmological framework and leadership, the liminal state can be very dangerous. It is dangerous in part because no one in control seems to be asking the question "transformation to what ends?" Danger is also inherent in the vulnerable, passive, receptive role of the liminal initiate. The dance students are not questioning their "Dance Masters" nor are they having emotional reactions unless specifically

"called for" by the master. It is the wonder of the conservatory dance class that there are no emotional eruptions, no laughter or tears; not even a ripple of emotional interaction with music or movement is tolerated.

Although much mental clarity is called for in these situations no critical thinking or questioning of the structure or the procedure is allowed. This makes for a very smooth running system which is one-pointed in its goal of producing dancers to climb the Jacob's Ladder in the professional dance world, or at least until they are injured, gain weight, or reach 30. This is not to diminish the transformative powers of the conservatory, for the experience within these confines is similar to the profound liminal experiences in which all else and other social norms pale compared to the intensity of the experience. The goal, however, is not for the dancers to have a personal social transformation but rather to keep refining their ability to be an increasingly perfect instrument through which the master can express himself (I will use himself here because the majority of all choreographers and directors are male, and the majority (90%) of dancers, female). It is reflective of the patriarchy that few ballerinas (less than 10%) become artistic directors and choreographers where they

could climb higher on the ladder. The dance of the conservatory while fulfilling Turner's criteria for liminal transformative experiences is missing the spiritual component of ritual and the creative and integrative components of art as meditation. The conservatory approach to dance has taken dance out of the realm of joy and celebration and made it a puppet of the Jacob's ladder power over system. Dance in the conservatory so clearly reflects this system and is so clearly entrenched and supported by it that to change its direction towards a Sarah's circle of creative meditation seems nearly impossible. By utilizing the powerful archetypal tools of dance and music, and at times liminality, the conservatory has provided transformative experiences which give further credence to the social structure.

The academic dance experience emphasizes the philosophical and historical context of dance as well as the pure physical technique. This involvement of the intellectual dimensions of dancers in relation to their skill as physical instruments helps to democratize the dance experience and take it from liminal to liminoid. This, Turner feels, is a more appropriate and less risk filled position for performance genre functioning outside of the traditional ritual safeguards. The time



out of time experience of liminal dance becomes muted or grounded when the participant has the historical perspective of their personal experience. So too the philosophical or phenomenological study of dance opens students to questioning their experiences - bringing them to the liminoid and away from the unquestioning liminal. However some teachers in academic settings regret that students are not as malleable, sensitive, and highly skilled as those in the conservatories and strive to bring their departments "up to conservatory" standards. Here Turner's distinctions between liminal and liminoid become central to the differences in conservatory and academics. In the liminal conservatory the participants, cut off from normal reality, blindly trust their master to transform them to his ends, despite any pain, stress or trauma this causes. The academy is liminoid in that it is always a matter of choice and includes elements of temporal, historical relevance and position as well as philosophical questioning of the instructors. The liminoid experience, Turner states, includes play, and play democratizes. Play is often found in academy classes in improvisation and choreography. Improvisation by nature involves the artistic "messing around" so essential in the creative process and in Fox's

definition of extrovert meditation. The elements of historical and philosophical perspective along with play are important in producing and insuring the liminoid atmosphere found in the academy dance program.

While avoiding the pitfalls of liminality found in the conservatory, dance in the academy often reflects the conservative and repressive university goals and directions. These goals equate business with education and ignore any transformative, moral or spiritual mission that education could embrace. The arts in universities are under-endowed and under-valued while dance is often trivialized into an activity of some skill without utilizing its potential for emotional, conceptual and political understanding. Dance classes may not be taken seriously by the teacher, students and other members of the academic community. They can be reduced to "fun" devoid of the serious passion, flow or *communitas* found in the conservatory, the professional world or in dance ritual.

In an attempt to gain more credibility in academia, dance scholarship is often divorced from actual dance experience. Dance scholars are generally not involved in the creative process of dance but in writing about dancers or the dance experience. It is possible to find published dance scholars who are actively involved in

dancing and the process of creating dances, but they are the exception. Many universities grant promotion on either artistic or academic work and professors must choose. The faculty in dance departments are divided into scholars, educators and artists. While this is reflective of the dualistic thinking of the social system at large, little is done to discourage the artificial lines between creative work, teaching and writing about these experiences. This tends to limit the mystical, creative, transformative experience to those who experience it without much time for reflection and will not write or speak of it beyond their small community. Dance scholars with a wider audience are often cut off from the mystical experience of dancing, while at worst, dance educators drown in pedagogy without joy.

Another problematic area of dance in the academy is the constant hierarchical struggle for funds and recognition within the community. This struggle is not based on departments aptitude in the process of transformation or even education but on their ability to generate revenue and visibility. This is reflective of education as the business model mentioned earlier. In dance the fastest route to money and visibility is through dance as entertainment. This leads some

academic departments to gear their programs to producing "trade shows" in the commercial entertainment genre which generates large revenue for their programs. While most of academic dance doesn't totally lean toward commercialism there is always pressure for "people pleasing" concerts which leave audiences and administrators smiling, and the coffers full. Performance in academia not only utilizes commercialism in which people become objects or sex objects, it often avoids any controversial or political messages. Dance as an expression of commercial values, is vapid and base while dance without a passionate mission is often sterile. It is easy to see that performance in the university is very serious business, and jobs or even the existence of the dance department may ride on criteria, such as : revenue, attendance, audience satisfaction or favorable reviews. Dance performance in the university must step lightly, sweetly and very conservatively in order to stay within mainstream societal boundaries and the business mission of academia.

Many of the problems found in dance in academia are reflected in dance in schools K-12. In schools dance is often not given academic or developmental merit. It is considered a frill, an extra, an unnecessary part of a

child's basic education. This is attested to by the small number of dance educators employed by the schools.

Most states employ between ten and thirty dancers in their school systems. Presently North Carolina has the only statewide funded program, but only four years from the programs inception it is facing reduction and extinction. The small number of dance educators in the schools underlines the public and educational opinion that dance is not an important vehicle for education or transformation. In schools as in universities, the elements of flow, *communitas* and play can serve an important function in social redress, or in personal and social transformation. These experiences are often not recognized and, in all fairness, the achievement of liminoid transformational experiences in dance are rare in schools, although possible.

While the divisions between educator, artist and scholar are not as problematic in K-12 schools (most dance teachers call themselves dance educators and accept that role) as in the academy, presenting performances often lures the school teacher to produce dance entertainment which has little educational or transformative merit. With the demand for performance, the dance educator often abandons the integrative merits of process in favor of the divisive stress of

performance as they know it.

Although dance is beset with problems, it has traditionally served and can currently serve as a translator and a transformer both personally and societal. Dance can generate symbols that engender social change and provide experiences for personal transformation. Dance has attributes that provide possibilities for social transformation as described by Fox and Turner. While it is often difficult to implement these possibilities in the current societal structure, there are clearly areas in which dance can serve as a means of communicative, symbolic generative activity and social transformation.

One of the unique attributes of dance is to serve as a translator or a language for communicating physical body or kinesthetic knowledge. Kinesthetic knowledge often exposes emotions which can be elicited and communicated by dance and movement experiences. The kinesthetic sense operates through receptors in the skeletal and muscle tissue and through tactual sensitivity to pressure and texture. Kinesthesia allows people to know when they are moving, their orientation in space and when they have pain. It is part of the larger sense proprioception. People carry a kinesthetic memory about movement in their muscles and perhaps even

the bones. Humans are constantly receiving information from their kinesthetic memories and senses, and can choose to be aware of this information or to ignore it.

The activity of dancing, of moving the body through space, has a kinesthetic component that can stimulate or cause emotional shifts for people. Simple actions such as opening ones arms can stimulate feelings of openness, generosity, and well-being or even joy. Closing ones arms can engender caution, protectiveness, distrust, and fear. The range of emotions from simple open or closing gestures is usually not too extreme, but in special populations (i.e., physically, mentally, or emotionally handicapped) I have seen the act of opening the arms bring forth smiles, laughter and joy, while closing in brought on a more protective and less generous emotional response which could include tears. When peoples' bodies have habitually been closed in their chest area, opening their arms (which in turn opens the chest) can cause a wide range of emotional reactions.

Irene Dowd, a pioneer in body therapies, found that the activity of opening her chest and arching it forward with her arms thrown back allowed her to be free of her severe back pain. She experimented with dancing that included these open chest shapes and movements and found that this position allowed her to feel strong, confident

and powerful. As she continued these open chest dances, her emotions got more passionate until she was having emotional outbursts throughout her life and had to stop her open dances. By changing her open chest movement pattern she was able to cease her emotional outbursts; however, her feeling of power and strength also subsided and her back pain returned. Dancing in open forms had actually induced a personality change in Irene Dowd.

Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen has also seen the dramatic results that movement patterns can have on the behavior of people of many ages. She has found that missing key movement patterns as a young child can distort a person's emotional development. In response to these insights, she has developed a system which allows adults to simulate these early childhood movement patterns and stimulate areas that are underdeveloped. Her movement patterns can elicit strong emotional feelings and effect change in her clients' emotional constitution.

The writings of Dowd and Cohen indicate a connection between dance, movement and a change of people's emotional state or outlook. This could be interpreted as dance being transformative or effecting a change in consciousness, but the language to discuss and define these changes has been unclear, even though dancers feel that dance and movement can effect change



or transformation. The concept of the integrated body addresses this interrelationship between the mind, emotions and body (kinesthetic), or the interdependence of all the human systems, found by Cohen and Dowd. Since one of the structural mainstays of the current social paradigm is non-integrative dualistic fragmentation especially in the area of spirit and body or mind and bod,; it is important to explore the rationale for an integrated body and how dance addresses it.

The concept of the integrated body and the interdependence of humans within themselves, on each other and the planet has always been a central principal in mystical traditions as shown in the work in Chapter III. New research in science is confirming the interdependence in the ecology of the planet and in the working of the human body as a whole system. Medical research is now providing a language and a rationale for a non-dualistic model of the integrated body. This medical model of integration supports mystical knowledge and information gained through the mind body work in the dance world.

Medical research has proven that thoughts stimulate chemicals in the brain which activate hormones and affect every function in the body. How a person feels

or thinks they feel can have a profound physical effect which substantiates the interdependent nature of emotions, thoughts and body.

Conscious thought can also accelerate or decelerate ones heart rate. The thoughts and feelings associated with "horror" films or highly-charged sporting events often increase the heart rate. Conversely, slowed breathing and calming visualization lowers the heart rate and induces a feeling of peace and tranquility. From the physical perspective the simple act of dancing can produce a myriad of emotions; and running and hugging are well documented for their release of endorphins in the brain. The human body is clearly an integrated and mutually reactive system based on the physiological medical model as well as the mystical and artistic traditions.

Jamake Highwater, a dancer who writes from the vantage of the Native American traditions sees dance as a effective tool in demonstrating the integrated body. He writes that the interdependence of spirit and flesh is confirmed by the fact that every emotional state expresses itself in movement:

The relationship between sentience and movement affects everything from the expression in our eyes to the flow of the adrenaline in our bodies. In its most fundamental form this spontaneous link between mentality, feeling, and movement is called

dance - a direct non-verbal unreasoned assertion of sentience (the merging of thought and feeling) in universal forms of pure physical assertion (Highwater, 1978, p. 25).

This relationship between sentience as thought, feeling and kinesthetic knowledge is a very compelling connection that gives voice to the image of the integrated body. The knowledge and use of the body as a non-dualistic integrated unit is central to mysticism, ritual and to many dancers' experience. It is the basis for transformative experiences in dance from Irene Dowd's "arm dances" to a handicapped person's exposing and unfolding, or a dance artist's performance. Contemporary dancers can utilize the integrated body in their creative process to engender personal transformation and generate new symbols that can speak to a non-dualistic knowledge. This creative process allows a flow of information from kinesthetic to sentient or from sentient to kinesthetic and allows the dancer to sense how each way of knowing informs the other. This process can assist the artist in transcending, or going above what either sense alone would provide. If the mind-body split is dominant, much of the information from the kinesthetic intuitive domain would never come to consciousness. The dancer needs techniques for allowing the split to be dissolved, and allowing their consciousness to enter a state of

openness. Masks have played a role in transformation from the Greeks to Shamanic cultures. The mask helps the wearer drop his/her human condition and become a neutral vessel in which the unconscious informs the conscious (or the kinesthetic informs the sentient). As a neutral vessel the performer is also able to "take on", or transform into, another character and generate new images or ways of perceiving.

Although most dancers and performers do not wear masks there can be a sense of "maskedness" in which performers project the sense of their characters. For either maskedness or the wearing of a mask to be effective, the performer must find that neutral or open consciousness in which transformation can occur.

Matthew Fox comments on the need to:

shut off senses as a kind of purification ... The purification is not so much of the senses as of the sensory input to which they have been subjected. Psychologist Arthur Deikman calls this process "deautomization". The senses can be so bombarded by the onslaught of day to day input that true beauty is lost or forgotten" (Fox, 1988, p. 39).

Fox says that he uses awakening and cleansing exercises as a means of purification to renew the senses. These exercises are not an end, but a means to the end of awakening the senses.

Bob Ernst, an actor/dancer in California works toward the same goal and teaches performance technique by using the phrase "getting to neutral." Getting to this state means the performers have to outwit their usual thinking patterns. This can be done by 1) tuning into the breathing (as in yoga), 2) exercising vigorously until exhausted (Grotowski technique), 3) meditating (Zen), 4) chanting and drumming (shamanic), 5) or moving the body while singing as a group (Meredith Monk). The challenge is to go into a state of no separation between the mind and body or "no mind" as it is called in Tai Chi. Deborah Hay describes the state as cellular consciousness, in which the mover tunes in to the movements and messages of their cells. Ping Chong asks the performers to forget their day, and to become a vessel in an old house that has been there forever. The performers get up slowly and lie down again, get up slowly and lie down with the image of a vessel in an old house that has been there forever.

All of these methods use physical kinesthetic input in order to neutralize the mind or at least to let it give up its domineering role in the consciousness. When one has gotten to neutral, or being a vessel, the unconscious content can reveal itself.

Getting to neutral is a transformation that owes a great deal to the kinesthetic or integrated body. The communication of information from this state is ideally suited to movement and sound because they are direct forms of expression. Images and information can well up from the Jungian collective unconscious, kinesthetic memory, neurotransmitters or any proprioceptors, and then be channeled out into movement and sound without hesitation. Louise Steinman writes:

As much new performance is more physically based than naturalistic, therefore transformation is a more expected outcome. Dance and other movement forms are in their essence metamorphic fluid (Steinman, 1986, p. 30).

It seems that movement, from a space of neutral, is an ideal method to access the vast richness of the unconscious. Steinman speaks again:

Performance offers one of those planes of "unique reality" where memory and dream, past and present, the every day and the once in a life time are reconciled and woven together in a single loom of time (Steinman, 1986, p. 72).

It often happens that information from the unconscious will float to the surface or express itself while the person is moving. At these times the full

realization of the unconscious dream image is brought into ones body/mind. Ruth Zaporah was trained in dance; her performance is kinetic, verbal and possessed. She describes her work and gives a glimpse of how the integrated body functions:

It's as if I hypnotize myself. I work myself into a mental state that transcends the state I usually operate in. The material that comes through me then never ceases to surprise me. I become characters that I didn't know were in me; I use vocabulary that I didn't know I knew. I enter an internal space which is kinetic. Gradually ideas appear which I dip into. I develop situations, characters, and as I move back and forth between them I see connections (Steinman, 1986, p. 37).

Another dancer, Dana Reitz, speaks about what manifests for her as she dances:

You have no idea what's underneath as you start this rhythm...but then you see what happens and then all sorts of different moods or characters come out of it, different characters within yourself (Steinman, 1986, p. 38).

There is a way in which dance artists try to tap in, become a vessel, to their own conscious and the archetypal unconscious of human kind.

While this openness to unconscious information is essential for generating new symbols, metaphors and

paradigms for society, it is also closer to the liminal than liminoid state. The depth of experience found in the liminal reality is, as Turner points out, not to be taken lightly and fraught with danger. My own experience performing with Meredith Monk supports both the profundity of liminal dance experience and its power.

In Meredith Monk's work entitled "Vessel", the name was reflective of the central figure (an abstracted Joan of Arc) being a vessel for unconscious and spiritual forces. Monk described Joan as "the receiver of secret information. The belief in the receiving and then acting on it. The archetypal Sybil" (Steinman, 1986, p. 70). In this piece Monk asked her performers to transcend the ordinary and lead the audience to a transcendent experience.

When I performed in "Vessel" I developed a character that danced in ecstatic mania with a crazed grimace. The repetitive, manic, small stepped circle movement of this character allowed me to experience going outside my physical body, while the manic spirit danced. This was a profound and liminal experience. In traditional rituals (done in dance form) a kinesthetic cue, either a sound or a movement pattern, usually allows the person to exit while the spirit enters the



dancer. The exit of the person while the spirit dances is a dangerous transition, as Turner points out and one which is usually accompanied by a ritual form proven to assist people moving to and from this liminal state safely. In my performances, I had no spiritual leader or ritual form to assist me in experiencing liminal time during a theatrical performance. While this was possible while I performed with Meredith, it proved dangerous as I danced the same dance some ten years later, I found that the experience of having the manic spirit dance or the manic energy take over at that time, was terrifying. I danced having to force myself to the altered state and left the stage shaking, exhausted and never wanting to do this dance again. The clear thought for me was "I can't do this anymore, I have children now." Going to the liminal state is not to be taken lightly and I perceived it as threatening my ability and responsibility to my children.

I realized I had been playing with fire in a psychological and spiritual sense. Although this experience with losing myself in a liminal dance was dangerous, it is something humans have incorporated in their rituals, rites, and religions forever. Using dance to go into the liminal state in ritual traditions such as the Native American Sun dance is surrounded by

cleansing, a supportive community, traditional form, calling on the spirits for guidance and spiritual leaders to mitigate the transitions. Dance as performance genre for transformation devoid of the ritual structure must balance on the line of liminoid and liminal. Here the performer keeps the elements of play and flow as central, and the process of getting into neutral to access their own information as more important than becoming other characters or spirits. It is also possible that some dancers can safely make these transitions from normal to liminal and that having a supportive community of people involved in the pursuit, as I did when performing with Meredith, can make ventures into the liminal less dangerous.

That dance can serve as a way to access and communicate information from many levels of the integrated body and from the spiritual realm can be historically and cross culturally documented. Maria Gabriele Wosein, in her book Sacred Dance, utilizes symbols and dance traditions from hundreds of cultures stretching around the globe and throughout history to demonstrate the breadth of dance as a sacred tool. She discusses how humans have traditionally used dance to transcend their human state and become one with the divine. By dancing like the God (be it animal, human,

or super-human form), the person invites and allows the spirit to enter them or for them to enter the unearthly realms of the spirit beings. Wosein explains:

Yet in whatever form the dance presents itself it always aims at approaching the god. As act of sacrifice, as man giving himself to his god, the dance is total surrender. In this way the body in the whole range of its experience is the instrument for the transcendent power, and this power is encountered in the dance directly, instantly and without intermediaries. The body is experienced as having a spiritual inner dimension as a channel for the descent of the power... While the rhythm of the body and sound combine to allow the possibility for embodiment and expression of the god, the mind is striving and aspiring to godliness as well.... In the dance man transcends fragmentation and for the time of the dance he feels again at one with himself and the world "around" (Wosein, 1974, p. 9).

At this moment in the dance, there is a knowledge of a universal relatedness, a sense of the wholeness of life. This universality is the incentive for many primal tribes to hold ritual seizure, rapture and trance dances frequently. It is their belief that the dances keep their universe from fragmenting, as it keeps their internal corporal universe whole.

Dance can serve as a method to keep ones universe from fragmenting or to sense the wholeness and interrelatedness of life. It serves these functions on both a personal and community level and allows

individuals to tap archetypal and unconscious and cosmic images. It is as though one can create, rediscover and connect with ones whole self, as an individual, community member and facet of the cosmology. Dance can allow humans to feel their place in a cosmology while simultaneously recreating and affirming that order. While dance is used for these purposes in rituals around the world and throughout history, examples of it as a transformative vehicle are not prevalent in the current culture. However, the use of dance as a socially transformative tool in the present culture is not just theoretical; it is being practiced by performers, teachers and leaders of movement in many sectors of this society.

The insights and experiences of three such practitioners obtained through interviews are presented here in order to bring current and practical manifestation of these theoretical concerns. The three people presented here are all women who have been involved in dance as teachers, performers, and facilitators for over twenty years. While they are in no way a representative sample of all female dancers, they do speak for dance as transformative activity. Excerpts from interviews with Jody Sutlive and Deborah Hay, and my reflections on a specific teaching

experience follow.

In both interviews, I asked the dancers to tell me about transformative experiences in dance and how they happened. The interviews were free form, although I prefaced each interview with my interest in the subject and my interest in what I had observed of their work. From here the interviews took their own direction, my role was as a curious listener rather than as a surveyor of the territory.

Jody Sutlive teaches dance in the schools to elementary children. Her doctorate is a combination of physical education and dance. After teaching at the college level, she chose to work with children and has taught in the public schools for twelve years.

Jody began her interview by describing how she starts class by giving children movement activities and then "letting them go in their own direction." She says,

I have gotten to the point I can let them take it in their direction, so they begin to sense it's more than just a walk or more than a pedestrian thing. They can take it in their direction through the things that I suggest for them to do. So it's like them doing it through that but at the same time it's their direction, too...It is, I think, unique to dance because they don't even tap those directions in other forms. "That inner", and how that works with what's going on around them. But I guess what I try to do is tap that and then, when they begin to sense that, to let it happen.

Jody spoke about how the children are able to rise above the social problems such as picking on each other, when they begin to have a sense of working through specific problems in the dance experience. "All the other things that are negative fall away and they zero in on their own sense of direction and how it relates to other people. The combination of concentration with the dance takes them up, rising above the negative relationships."

Jody has a very clear sense of leading the children in order that they may experience their own personal and perhaps group transformation. The aspect of working on a specific problem in dance and finding a means for transformation through an activity comes through in Jody's work.

The activity of dance seems to play a key part in a redefinition or directive process. Jody saw that dance experiences have the potential to allow people to make universal or multi-dimensional connections. She felt the dance experience could allow children to feel and express things that would not be possible in other ways. She said

The stimulation of movement, that stimulation is unique, I don't think anything else can touch what that can do for the total person. When you're moving it's like a sense of the total. I see all these levels of being connected to everything, the

universe, all these levels you can reach through that energy of moving.

The setting and the goals of the dances and dance leader are pivotal in the outcome. Since its content and meaning are culturally determined, dance can be used for an infinite variety of transformations. The connections people make with the dance are essential in determining its meaning for both participants and observers.

Jody helped students make connections between dance and their lives by focusing on the work action of a farmer. She relates the story of first graders who were literally running around the room with their teacher chasing them when Jody walked into the room to teach dance.

The children were running, the teacher and two aides were running. It was dangerous - I went up and started drawing with the chalk on the black board and everybody's watching me draw - Absolutely quiet, because they were fascinated. Somebody just walks in and starts drawing, you don't see that happen very often. I started drawing farm people doing work and when the children were settled down and watching I turned around and we talked about what I was drawing and the tools the farmer was using and what work actions they did with the hoe and the shovel and they got right into it.

In this story Jody uses the idea of connection in two ways (1) that children will be fascinated by a person drawing (2) that as they see images they recognize (farmers) their interest will be sparked because it is connected to their interests or their reality. Through this particular connection process she also allows the classroom to transform, to become a place where interests are shared in a magical creative manner.

Jody also spoke of the importance of creating an atmosphere that is a "working space with magic in it, not like the children are captured in it." She feels that you can create that atmosphere in a school but it is often difficult because often the atmosphere "in the schools are like prisons. The atmosphere is that bad and you have to work against that whole set of things to begin with."

In observing Jody teach elementary students I always feel as though I have been to a celebration. The children's eyes sparkle as Jody creates a magic space where they move, confident that they are beautiful and exceptionally creative. It is a situation which proves the theory that children can rise to others expectations. Jody expects that each class is going to transcend into the magic of the creative process and



they do, class after class, and day after day.

Deborah Hay is an internationally recognized dancer who has spent over twenty years, since leaving the traditional New York dance world, exploring changing consciousness in the dance experience. Her book, Moving Through the Universe in Bare Feet, contains this background on Deborah and her work :

Moving Through The Universe in Bare Feet is the result of thirty years of moving, a lot of that time, studying dance. During dance class and performance there were only very brief moments when I transcended my body and no longer felt responsible for my own movement. Those were the most exciting moments of my specialized career.

Soon after this realization ,I became a student of Tai Chi Chuan with Professor Cheng in New York City. Here I began to let go of all I had learned, and to trust a new thing called flow, or myself, or the universe. ...

After I left New York for life in rural Vermont,I continued doing the classes/ dances as a guest artist at colleges and universities. Each time the dances were done, the movements became less specific with more awareness placed on breath imagery. Each movement slowed down 'til we were doing one movement per song. My choreography was following a similar pattern until the only direction was to form a circle and see what happened" (Hay, 1974-5, pp. 4-5).

Following are excerpts from an interview in 1989, 15 years after the book was published. Deborah Hay's dance had evolved from the circle dances to using dance to help change peoples consciousness. When asked to talk about transformation she had this to say:

Consciousness is visible; being awake is visible, being less than awake is visible. How teaching functions for me, why I love it so much, is that I really get to test the values in this faith in the validity of consciousness and what a delicate and frail thing it is, what a fine threshold it is. And how in becoming conscious, as an individual in a group or a group in a group, that there is a sense of affirmation and joy at this consciousness, of freedom, freedom that I am not stuck! In teaching, if I see one person who reminds me to remind everyone and I say something out loud like: " Use one another to remind you of your wholeness changing, you are not stuck". I could say that to a group, "you are not stuck", and immediately there's a shift in the energy and attention level and brightness and clarity in the room. I see it time and time again, and I love to play it. When I come in and say these things, it's often because I really want to experience that shift and I want to see it again. It's such a visible, tangible thing, this realm of consciousness, and every time I see it I'm just overjoyed in the visibility of it.

Deborah's work toward shifts in consciousness does not always cause shifts in movement, nor is it meant to, however she does feel that movement is the vehicle for change.

I think it's the only vehicle for it, to be quite honest. I don't know how else you would do it. It's the body ... I don't see how it could happen separate from the body, that kind of consciousness; being whole and awake in the world.... And in order to live you need to keep the vitalization going in your body.,... You have to perceptually choose to exist through your body, be awake throughout your body.

Deborah felt that her work resonated with Matthew Fox's use of moral imagination, " Through imagining it we get familiar with what it might feel like and then can play it . . . . Imagination is the tool for transformation, I think it frees us from the three dimensional body." While using the imagination to free us from the limits of our three dimensional bodies, Deborah also reminds participants in her workshops , "thank heavens for the limitations of our three dimensional, once in a life time, body." For Deborah the imagination allows us to imagine what we can only catch glimpses of, i.e. our wholeness, and the incredible mystery of these bodies which at once limit and facilitate our understanding of "this wholeness changing".

Deborah's work involves consciousness and imagination through movement and community. It involves the looking and seeing each other without pretense which is integral in *communitas*. In describing her work she says:

There everyone is, seeing everyone else not doing it, as much as doing it ,and I think that's fantastically generous of everybody. To be together with everyone in that way and it's ok ,we are not perfect. . . .I think our mind in most learning situations is full of judgement and what makes the dynamics of these workshops so rich is that they are pretty free of judgement. (Hay, 1989).

Deborah's workshops, which focus on changing consciousness, provide an atmosphere that supports exploration and transformation for its primarily adult participants. The joy and ecstasy of extrovert meditation are present along with the dialectic in the creative process of play and serious work. Here transformation and *communitas* or what Deborah calls "consciousness changing and being visible" is a clear and oft stated objective.

As a freelance dancer, I performed extensively and taught all levels of dance from pre-school to senior citizens for thirteen years. When the doors of the studio were closed my students or company members and I often explored transcendence. I now teach dance education courses at a university in which transformation is possible but difficult to engender. In the last three years I have led dance workshops for principals and school administrators which have had many elements of transformative experience. The following is a description of these workshops called ArtsWork.

The ArtsWorks workshops take place in a retreat setting in which the participants are separated from their usual responsibilities, professional and personal

roles and normative social structure. This in itself allows them to begin to be open or vulnerable to new experiences and images which Turner has noted as important in his writing about liminal reality. While these participants are not stripped of all their status indicators they are without their desk, suit, office and dominant position. Rather they find themselves in a large open space in recreational clothes, preparing to do something they have never done and generally feel quite embarrassed and inhibited about.

The fact that dance class concerns the body and art (in which evaluation is largely a matter of taste) gives the teacher unlimited authority to humiliate the participants. This is not what the teacher does, but this situation meets many of Turner's criteria for liminality which affects the transformation quality. The actual practice in the workshops is not liminal, but liminoid, in that it is fueled by play which democratizes and empowers, in contrast to power over liminality. In these workshops the key elements are 1) moving, 2) laughing at oneself and with others, 3) sensing and expressing ones comfort and discomfort with physical activities or physical proximity, 4) and support for all individual solutions and creations. Developing a sense of commonality and community is also

a primary goal, and activities such as partnering, touching, eye contact, and laughter providing activities, are elements which occur early in the workshop. As the workshop progresses the sense of community leads to sharing and trusting with each other's weight, creative ideas, and feelings. It is important that this is all processed through the medium of dance. As in sport the sensation of "flow" which comes from concentration in a physical activity, is profound in this dance experience and leads to the state of *communitas*. The flow experience is not engendered by following the teacher's movements, but rather by focusing on one's own movement motivation and perhaps in moving with others. While a feeling of flow and *communitas* may occur in the first, second, or third hour sessions, it becomes a regular occurrence in the more extended sessions which occur on days four and five of the workshop. The workshops on these days are comprised of a group that has chosen dance, based on their experience in the earlier sessions, as their area of concentration. In these two days of full-time dancing together, the group engages in flow and *communitas*, and one can see a clear transformation from the initial sessions in the movement quality, body posture, and the emotional state of the people. A special bonding

becomes evident among the participants and a desire to continue the creative process in dance and the connections with the group are voiced. It is an impressive transformation to experience, in which dance facilitates the breakdown of limited socially normative behavior to engender in people a deep sense of community, flow and communitas which allows them to celebrate their diversity and connection.

There are several components shared by these three dance practitioners that portray methods by which one can think about a dance curriculum for transformation. One key element is "play" in dance. With children the journey to transformation is often through play, and this element is central to the work with school principals and in Deborah Hay's work when she asks participants to "Play It" or "Play" being fully present. In Victor Turner's work play is important because it keeps the transformative process communal and democratic rather than being directed by one person. In traditional rituals, play is incorporated through activities or by character roles such as the Heyoka, or clown of the Native American tradition. Matthew Fox speaks about the importance of play, joy, and celebration in the transformation of consciousness towards a new paradigm. The creative process is infused

with play; messing around, playing with elements of style or form, or playing with fellow artists.

The creative process acknowledges the stimulating dialectic of playing around and seriously making critical decisions. This dialectic and interdependence in the creative process that is play and whimsy in consort with committed serious decision making is found in each of the dance practitioner's descriptions of their work. The creative process is the avenue for the playfulness to move to serious work and all the while the participants are "Playing It." Without the dialectic embedded in the creative process the dance activities could stop at play and be recreational or only contain serious work as in the conservatory. The decision making, focused, serious intention of the creative process is equally as important as the "messing around," and essential to these people's work.

The third component mutually held by these approaches to dance, is the desire on the part of the leaders for the participants to have a transformative experience. This is demonstrated by the concepts that: the children can "rise above social problems," (Sutlive) or looking for an openness leading to a strong sense of community among the participants,(Hunt) or wanting to see the "shift in energy and attention level, brightness



and clarity in the room" (Hay, 1989).

The intent of these practitioners is for much more than the form of dance, it is for a personal and group transformational energy. As Deborah Hay says, "We all have this work to do to become awake, responsibly awake, and to take our awakesness and act on it" (Hay, 1989).

It is important to note that all three of these dancers feel dance, the moving body, is a special vehicle for transformation; and that the component of moving through space, whether to engender flow, *communitas*, a sense of freedom, groundedness, or holistic knowledge is a very important aspect in transformation. For these dance practitioners it is the way of transformation. Deborah Hay responded to the body's role as a vehicle for transformation with "I think it's the only vehicle for it, to be quite honest. I don't know how else you would do it" ... "I don't see how it could happen separate from the body; that kind of consciousness of being whole and awake in the world, of owning one's wholeness" (Hay, 1989). The condensed picture that emerges is one of people dancing with the playfulness and seriousness of the creative process, in a group moving towards a clear vision of human wholeness.

These three practitioners point to the ways in which dance can engender transformation towards the vision of more holistic, interdependent individuals and communities. They are also in the minority of dancers, of educators, of leaders in the current social structure. All of the aspects of their curriculum: i.e., creativity in the arts, dance, wholeness, interdependence and transformation towards new paradigms are each and all outside the normative social structure. We are faced with a vision and a methodology which is neither sanctioned nor supported by the society and its institutions. Even these three dance practitioners, knowing how and what they want to have transpire, struggle to find the environment in which it is possible. I have found it difficult to engender transformation in a university setting, Jody has spent seventeen years in the public schools developing a method and an environment for her craft, and Deborah receives minimal financial support through her workshops, residencies, performances, and grants to continue her profound work.

To engage in dance as a transformational activity there needs to be as environment or location for this process. While the public schools offer the largest most diverse and representative population for any

curriculum or program, they are in many ways the least likely forum. Dance is seldom found in the public school and only occasionally in higher education. When dance has been able to carve a niche in public education it is often not involved in transformation towards social change, or the creative process, and it is usually under-valued if valued at all.

Viewing the paucity of dance in the public schools provides a model for understanding how transformation for a new social paradigm through the creative process and specifically dance, is in conflict with the schools and their role as the propagators and preservers of the societal structure and norms. By looking at the problems posed by dance (as I would like to see it practiced) to the schools, the problems and promises of implementing a new paradigm can be seen. Schools clearly reflect the most conservative, hierarchical principles in the society. The public schools are not promoting new paradigms which celebrate diversity, mystical, holistic knowledge, interdependence and non-hierarchical values. Rather their entire structure is one of hierarchy, in which conformity, power over, separateness, and intellectual knowledge as separate from spirit or body is the only acknowledged methodology. While occasionally cooperation,

creativity, and the emotional, spiritual and physical realm of the human is allowed to surface in schools, it is never rewarded as is competition, pragmatism and intellectual rigor. From the salary scale to the grading curve, public education reflects the meanest values of the patriarchy and has no interest in promoting transformational activities to engender a new paradigm. Human liberation, energy, potency, and diversity do not mesh with the narrow, constricted goals in the school system. It is more useful for the students (and the teachers to some extent) to be bound, listless, impotent, unquestioning recipients for the reality the school is promoting.

The schools have no interest in changing to a new paradigm, nor do they want to utilize the creative process. In such a closed system creativity is close to insurrection. There is the potential for creativity to incite transformation, critical evaluation, and illumination of ones own experience as relevant. These are explosive traits which can break through the walls of a constrictive reality, freeing the student from being "a prisoner in a circle of certainty, within which he also imprisons reality" (Freire, 1970, p. 23).

Creativity challenges ones perception of reality and is a personal risk because it does not accept a more

comfortable position in a "circle of certainty."  
 Creativity challenges the concepts of stasis, and poses a risk for the creator and a threat for a system which teaches that reality is static and predictable. This is the banking system of education in which the teacher deposits knowledge in the empty vaults of the students' brains. Paulo Freire explains how in a system of oppression the banking system works to maintain the status quo while creativity may transform it.

The capability of banking education to minimize or annul the students' creative power and to stimulate their credulity serves the interest of the oppressors, who care neither to have the world revealed nor to see it transformed. The oppressors use their "humanitarianism" to preserve a profitable situation. Thus they react almost instinctively against any experiment in education which stimulates the critical faculties and is not content with a partial view of reality but always seeks out the ties which link one point to another and one problem to another (Freire, 1970, p. 60).

Creativity in any subject has the potential to reveal, to show some aspect not previously seen on a personal or societal level. It can bring forth new images and embody a transformative birthing which merges the physical and psychological. The creative process flies in the face of dualistic structures and embraces the interconnection of the right and left brain, ecstasy

and structure, the creative union and the divine. This is not a safe process; it is transformative; it generates and degenerates, has prophetic power in its new images, and affects the personal, social, and psychic states of the global community.

The creative process is transformative and not only are the schools and the society not interested in changing the structure, or supporting the upheaval and questioning caused by the creative process, the act of transformation itself is a threat to the current structure. It is apparent that cultures having strong ritual and transformative traditions have been denigrated and destroyed by Western Culture. Native American, Wicca, Pagan, and all non-Christian traditions have been banned and persecuted by the Western Christian tradition in an attempt at social spiritual hegemony. All transformative rituals including the profound Christian rituals, according to Turner, have been denuded until the current society is left devoid of transformational rituals. Transformation and the ritual process that has traditionally accompanied it threatens a hegemonic social structure in many ways: 1. Traditionally controlled by spiritual leaders rather than political leaders. 2. Takes place outside normative reality. 3. Involves the shedding of

traditional roles. 4. Allows new insights for traditional situations. 5. Provides *communitas* among people. 6. Allows individuals to have their own individual profound experience or unique understanding of truth. Transformative experiences also provide a method for processing social crisis and remembering ones cosmology. Transformative activities give humans a method to remember their interdependence in *communitas*, in cosmology, and in social drama while recreating their images, social roles, individual visions, and solutions for social dilemmas. Transformative activities have traditionally been used to reclaim and renew an individual's or community's power and connection to their cosmology.

Traditional societies stripped of their transformative rituals have disintegrated, come apart with no method to renew them as individuals or as a society. In a hierarchical social structure the less power and connection an individual or a community has the more effective the power over principles.

While schools and the society at large opposes transformation, the creative process and any new paradigms, using dance to facilitate these changes opens up another area of taboo: sensitivity to sensuality or body awareness. Although psychologists have found that

a healthy attitude toward ones body is essential for vitality and happiness, it is seldom found in the Christian-Judeo puritanical culture of America. Dance acknowledges that we have bodies, and that we can feel comfortable in them no matter what their shape or texture. This comes as a radical departure from the societal norm. The pedagogy in creative dance celebrates the body. It advocates exploration, investigation, enjoyment, discovery, contemplation, discipline, and celebration of the body instrument. Potentially, this could engender a self acceptance of ones totality, a knowledge that it's o.k. to be who we are in this body.

An outcome of physical self-acceptance might be that a student could just stand and allow others to see him/her celebrating his/her "fabulously unique, three dimensional body" (Hay, 1989). Celebrating a body is closely related to celebrating exactly who we are. Body acceptance can be transformative and is a radical assault on the American value system. Madison Avenue alone bases most of its business on America's bad feelings about their bodies: too fat, skinny, ugly, smelly, bald, out of shape, small, flat chested, weak, old, or with bad split ends, teeth, skin, breath, clothes, beard, hair color, etc. Multinational



corporations make billions of dollars selling products that help people change their bodies, and good education must fall within the bounds of "good business." Good business involves not allowing people to feel good about how they look and feel.

Enjoying ones body may not only be liberating in terms of self concept, it may also perk critical thinking. If one is engaged in the celebrating the sensual body in all its infinite possibilities, it will be hard to accept the societal view that the body is an embarrassment. This is one of those perfect teaching moments for critical thinking; i.e.: "why does the society want me to feel bad and embarrassed about my body when my experience tells me it is a source of joy, wonder, and self love?" As creativity can transform ones view of the world, ones relationship to ones own body can make perceptual changes that cause questioning of the previously unquestionable.

The problematics for dance as a transformative activity in the public schools illuminates the obstacles for all of the facets of Matthew Fox's paradigm. The problems facing the world as reviewed in Chapter I are not minor nor easily fixed. The attributes of the creative process as outlined in Chapter II give great hope for the renewal of both personal and global energy,

power, integrity, and insight. The ritual traditions that are being practiced at an ever expanding rate and resurrected in an attempt to remember lost cosmology are utilized by many for the vision for change. It is with great reverence and thanks that I have used the models of these traditions in Chapter III for the insights they provide. Victor Turner is clear in his vision that societies need rituals, or cultural performance genres, in order to process, grow and move through social and political changes. The Dance world as documented in Chapter V, has as many or more problems to overcome than it has attributes, for its use as extrovert meditation. However, there seems to be a kernel of the dance experience that has survived to inform us.

In conclusion there is much work to be done in the area of dance, politics, social change, creative process, and new visions and images for the future.

## EPILOGUE

## PERSONAL STATEMENT

Matthew Fox has provided a stimulating and integrated vision for change which can provide a model for growth even in the face of seemingly impossible obstacles. The following excerpts from his newsletter of December 1990 gives the most current insight into the vision which encompasses the gigantic problems and need for a Renaissance of hope and joy.

I know you are concerned about the well-being of our planet and its peoples. We face an ecological disaster that is unprecedented and almost incomprehensible in scope. We also face as a planetary people the threats of worldwide and simultaneous recession and inflation ... and massive war in the Middle East.

As we face our reality this directly we can give into our fears and feel defeated. Or we can reorient our vision and operate out of our own ever-deepening wells of spirit and care. I believe that as spiritual people in the Creation tradition you choose with me this latter way of seeing and being. By so doing we have great hope and great joy! (Fox, 1990, ).

He continues with the images of the struggle against "the cultural mainstream and daunting institutional bulwarks" in consort with "the wholeness and holiness that creation spiritually can rouse." He

feels "that our broken hearts are cosmic in size" and ends with "And what can heal this cosmic broken heartedness? Nothing less than a Renaissance, what M.D. Chenu called "a new birth from a spiritual initiative" (Fox, Letter, 1990).

Fox's vision calls for transformation which integrates the hearts, minds and systems into an interdependent global community. That he incorporates the arts and creative activity in his vision allows my passion and life's work to play an active part in co-creating a renewed community.

This led me to rediscovering the creative process in my own art through performing in and structuring a new dance work. After writing about dance in this dissertation the process of returning to it, as the source of my interest and inspiration, and working in the media I am most familiar with had several important benefits that are reflective of the theme of this written epistle. In my dance "Paths Past Post Patriarchal Principles" I created a dance to give voice and vision to some of the words in this dissertation. While in the process of forming this dance to communicate the perils and jeopardy of the Patriarchal system, I was reminded of all the ways this same hierarchy impinged on my role as choreographer. The

traditional role of the choreographer is one of power over and of directing the performers every move, which reflected the structure I opposed. This was changed through the process of co-choreography and performance with the cast, which engendered the aspects of flow and *communitas* in the production and performance. There was also the value of producing new images, albeit rough-hewn and unrefined in nature, the images were unique and brought this dance away from the pretty and abstract to the large brush strokes of political satire and commentary.

The experience of producing a performance which generated new images for looking at the current social structure and for trying to find a new paradigm was fulfilling, from the aspects of being involved in the central process and using the specific tools of dance.

A powerful inspiration for my dance this fall was my participation in the audience community at Bread & Puppet Theater's "Resurrection Circus." This all day event takes place on a Vermont farm where thousands of people gather to interact and experience a master work of co-operation and vision. Peter Schuman's political vision is as reality based and joyous as Matthew Fox, and as unique as the man himself. While thousands of people walk, run, saunter, bicycle and caper to this

event there is no charge and bread is baked, cut, buttered and given free to anyone present. Schuman accepts no governmental grants and his work both exposes the insanity of this culture and celebrates the earth's simple people, pleasures and beauty.

The cast of performers includes all ages, races, genders and vocations, including thirty to fifty children and totals 175 people and thousands of spectators. During this spectacular event where was Peter Schuman? Out signing autographs or telling people what to do? No, he was baking bread in the big outdoor ovens, as simply as if he were just one member of a global community which he was and is. His work has spoken clearly and brilliantly for his values for the twenty years that I have seen and another fifteen before I learned about him. It is to society's credit that this work has received acclaim all over the world, and to Schuman's credit that they still tour in old half-heated school buses, make their costumes from rags and society's surplus clothes and use sticks bound with string to support their props and scenery.

Peter Schuman, Matthew Fox and my own renewed discovery of the ecstasy of creative work and spirituality give a personal light in this impersonal world. While writing a dissertation is in no way

superior to creating a dance, it has been fascinating to explore the two forms simultaneously and to feel and sing and dance with the textures and tastes of these two creative processes.

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