

Performance and the Structuring of Meaning and Experience

BRUCE KAPFERER

When R. D. Laing stated in *The Politics of Experience* (1967) that it is impossible to **experience another person's experience**, he was repeating one of the central problematics of much phenomenological and existentialist philosophizing and theorizing. This problematic concentrates on the **essential aloneness and solitude** of human beings in the world as lived. Phenomenology, taking solitude as a fundamental basis of human existence, directs much of its analytic attention to the processes whereby **individuals over-come or transcend their aloneness in the world** and come to share their lived experiences with others. It is an approach which both attends to the particularity, individualness, or uniqueness, of human experience and to it universalizing character. The relation of the Particular to the Universal and vice versa is a basic dimension of the dialectic of phenomenological analysis. Of course, phenomenologists share this concern with a great many others, among them anthropologists and sociologists, who do not necessarily pursue the same theoretical orientation.¹

But let me return to Laing's postulate. If, as he claimed, it is impossible to experience another person's experience—a position I will modify subsequently—it is true nonetheless that individuals understand that aspects of their experience are shared in common with others. The world as we live it is not founded on some kind of solipsism which views only the individual self and self-experience as real. The everyday world of human action is not constituted after the manner of Mrs. Christine Ladd Franklin, an eminent logician, who, as Bertrand Russell (1948) reported, wrote

Kapferer: Performance and the Structuring of Meaning 189

in a letter that she was a solipsist—and was surprised that there were no others. The reality of oneself and the reality of individual self-experience—or to put it another way, a consciousness of being in the world—is formed within an experiential reality composed of consociates and contemporaries with whom individuals assume both a degree of commonality in experience and a shared framework of understandings through which they become aware of their own and other's experience. The basis of Mrs. Franklin's not unexpected surprise rested on the fact that the validity of her position depended on its being shared by others, an expectation that was contravened by the very position she took but that paradoxically confirmed her as a solipsist.

The structuring of social action and relationships constituted as these are by and within culture limits the likelihood of individuals **sharing the same experience**. Culture, as it relates to the ordering of life in mundane situations, is both particularizing and universalizing. It mediates the relations of individuals both to their material terms of existence and to each other. It is particularizing in the sense that the structuring of relations between individuals in terms of a framework of cultural understandings variously locates individuals in the mundane orderings of everyday life. It differentiates them and makes possible a variety of individual perspectives and standpoints on the everyday world. Individuals experience themselves—they experience their experience and reflect on it—both from their own standpoint and from the standpoint of others within their culture. This is what gives to the practical activity of everyday life some of its movement and process. Further, I do not experience your experience. Paradoxically, your experience is *made* mine; I experience my experience of you. The expressions revealed on your face, in the gestural organization of your body, through the meeting of our glances, are experienced through my body and my situation. "In being looked at by the other, I find his 'expression' not so much *on* his face as *through* my situation—in feeling admired, in sensing coolness, in apparent indifference, in being shamed or humiliated" (Natanson 1970:140).

Even so, the point remains that human beings as social actors in their cultural worlds take for granted that they are acting in relation to others who share a history and a set of common experiences and understandings of experience. We tend to others as fellow human beings, who are like us and unlike us in the cultural

worlds we inhabit. Culture is universalizing even as it particularizes and differentially situates and roots our experience. As G. H. Mead (1934) argued, I become aware of myself, of my experience, and of the possibilities of my Self-hood, through the act of standing outside myself and reflecting my action through the perspective of another person—by taking the attitude of the Other and organizing this, processually, in accordance with rules of interaction and of appropriateness, what Mead termed the Generalized Other. This Other profoundly influences our personal experience as it enters our awareness in the reflective act, such acts continually orienting and reorienting our ongoing and future action. While I understand my action and the experience of my action and the action of others through my situation in the world, the nature of my experience and what I might understand to be the experiences of others reaches clarity through a range of cultural and social typifications and idealizations of experience. This is the universalizing character of culture to which I point. What-ever uniqueness there might be in my experience is generalized and lost in a set of culturally constituted constructs, concepts, or typifications. These stand between me and my fellow human beings, between the immediacy of my experience and the experience of that other person. I understand the experience of the other directly through my experience and indirectly through the mediation of a variety of cultural constructs. These constructs, through their mediation, are vital both in the constitution of sociality and for what has been termed the intersubjective sharing of experience. What is shared, however, is not the experience of the other in its full existential immediacy. Rather, the sharing takes place at another level, at a degree removed from any immediate individual experience. The various concepts, constructs, and typifications that are engaged in the action of sharing experience are *about* experience, integral to its comprehension and understanding rather than to the experience itself.

This entire discussion lends support to Laing's postulate concerning the impossibility of experiencing another's experience, but it is restricted to experience as comprehended and realized in the mundane world of everyday life. My argument now turns to the possibility of mutual experience in the sense of experiencing together the one experience. Such a possibility is present in many of the cultural performances we and those in other cultures recognize

as art and ritual. Art and ritual share potentially one fundamental quality in common: the Particular and the Universal are brought together and are transformed in the process. The Particular is universalized beyond the existential immediacy of the individual's situation so that it is transcended, even while its groundedness and specificity are maintained, to include others in what is essentially the same experiential situation. Concurrently, the Universal "is given a focus, an experiential content, in the immediacy of the individual's situation" (Natanson 1970:126). The process that is actualized and revealed in art and ritual as *performance*, the universalizing of the particular and the particularizing of the universal, is one of the factors accounting for the frequently observed close connection between art and ritual and the common recognition that much ritual is art, and vice versa.

What is most often glossed as "ritual," as with the variety of arts in their independent formation in numerous cultures, is a complex compositional form as revealed through the process of performance. I stress this because the word "ritual," as applied to a completed cultural performance, such as the *grail-like anthropological conceit* with discovering a unifying definition of ritual, often denies or obscures the significance for analysis of the many different forms that are actualized in what we call ritual performance. A great number of the rituals recorded by anthropologists are compositions that interweave such forms as (labeled here for convenience) the plastic arts, *choreography, song, narrative storytelling, and drama, among others*. These manifest in their performance varying possibilities for the constitution and ordering of experience as well as for the reflection on and communication of experience. Within specific cultures, and possibly across them, they are tantamount to different languages of expression and communication. But in addition, and apart from the communicational dimension of ritual, which has received the greatest emphasis in anthropological discussion, the languages of ritual contain varying potential for bringing together the Particular and the Universal. In the extent to which this is so we find the possibility for those organized in relation to them to commune in the one experience.²

At this point the concept of performance becomes critical to my discussion. I wish to go beyond the term in one of its major commonsense usages, that is, performance as the enactment of

text. A commitment to an understanding that there is an essential separation between the text and its enactment lies at the root of much anthropological debate. It opposes *some* structuralist and semiological anthropological approaches to other anthropologies which stress an attention to the description and analysis of cultural and social action through the actual experiences, dynamics, and processes of cultural worlds as these might be lived and observed. **Either way, exclusive attention to the properties of the text served.** (e.g., as a complex of signs and their structural interrelation), or a focus on enactment independent of its formative or structuring aspects, risks a reduction. As Ricoeur (1976), among others, has stressed, the structuralist analysis of a text loses key aspects of that text's meaning as it is communicated and experienced. The way a text reaches its audience is no less an important dimension of its structure. Similarly, a concern with enactment at the expense of the structural properties of the text as actualized through the specific mode of its enactment will likely overlook some of the salient constitutive properties of the particular enactment itself. Furthermore, such concern risks a retreat into subjectivism, in which the meaning and the nature of experience are simply the sum total of individual interpretive responses, the only constraining factor being the limits of the broad cultural world in which individuals are placed. A concern with the bones ignores the flesh and the blood, the spirit and vitality of form. But a concern with the spirit alone disregards the skeleton around which the form takes shape and which directs but does not determine the character of spirit and vitality. In my usage, "performance" constitutes a unity of text and enactment, neither being reducible to the other. More properly, it is what certain philosophers of aesthetic experience refer to as the *Work*, irreducible to its performances and yet graspable only through them or, rather, in them (Dufrenne 1973:27).

Additional and integral to my specific use of the term "performance" is a concern with the interconnectedness of the directionality of performance, the media through which the performance is realized, and an attention to the way it orders context. Performance always intends an audience, and in ritual this might include supernaturals as well as those from the mundane world—performers, ritual subjects, and spectators, among others. The media of performance, whether music, dance, drama, or a particular combination of these, for example, have certain structural

properties which, when realized in performance, order in specific ways those engaged to the performance. **The directionality of performance and the media of performance are structuring of the ritual context; together they constitute meaning of the ritual, variously enable the communication of its meaning, and create the possibility for the mutual involvement of participants in the one experience, or else distance them and lead to their reflection on experience perhaps from a structured perspective outside the immediacy of the experience.** The approach I adopt here is broadly in agreement with Dufrenne's (1973:59–60) analysis of the work of art: "The work has the initiative. And forbids any subjectivism. Far from the works' existing in us we exist in the work. . . . The ideas it suggests, the feelings it awakens, the concrete images—*Ansichten*, as Ingarden calls them—which nourish its meanings vary with each spectator. But they vary like perspectives which converge at the same point, like intentions which aim at the same object. All these views only display or exfoliate its possibilities. . . ."

The elaborate exorcisms that Sinhalese perform in the south of Sri Lanka provide some grounding, as well as extension, of my argument. These rites continue throughout the night, from dusk to dawn, and are directed toward severing the malignant and individually disordering and disorienting attachment of demons to a patient. Paradigmatically, the logic and structural process of exorcism ritual is constitutive and reiterative of principles that are central to Sinhalese Theravada Buddhist culture. The key dimensions of this paradigm underpin the structure of every key ritual event, in the ordering of symbolic articles and actions within them, and in the arrangement of events in the diachronic and syntagmatic progression of an exorcism performance. Thus, at the paradigmatic level and in accordance with the Sinhalese cosmological view and worldview, **demons and ghosts are at the base of a hierarchy dominated by the Buddha and a host of major and lesser deities.** The organizing principles of this paradigm, purity and pollution, attachment and nonattachment, knowledge and ignorance, to name but a few, articulate the cosmic hierarchy and variously locate supernaturals and human beings in its order. In terms of a structuralist analysis wherein the exorcism as a whole, or each ritual event in a syntagmatic progression, is examined at its deeper level, as an abstract system of signs, few transformations

in structure or in meaning as a function of the structural interrelation of signs would be detected. As they progress exorcisms effect a reversal in the relation of demons to human beings. Throughout much of the rite, human beings—exorcist and patient—give demons offerings to signify their subordination to them. But at the close of the rite the demons give offerings to deities and to human beings, thus signifying the culturally agreed proper relation of subordination of demons to deities and to human beings within the cosmic scheme. This need not necessarily be interpreted as a transformation at the level of the deep structure of the rite. Rather, it is a final and completed revelation of the paradigmatic structure of the ritual action which has continually informed the logic of its progression. At all points in the rite the offerings given to demons are conceptualized as dead and polluting. The reversal is simply a rendering, as consistent, of the structural logic of the rite as it is present from the very beginning.

I definitely am not arguing that shifts and transformations do not occur in exorcisms. Their overt purpose is, after all, decidedly transformational. Exorcists, patients, and others assembled at exorcisms understand them to be effective ways to sever the malign relation between demons and patient, to move the patient from sickness to health, and to achieve important definitions and redefinitions by the patient and others of the reality in which they all are placed. Instead, I am directing attention to the level at which shifts and transformations in meaning, understanding, and experience are achieved. This is not at the level of the text, here identified as a combination of the structural principles ordering the rite as a whole and the rules governing both the syntagmatic progression of ritual events and the manner of their enactment. Rather, important definitions of reality by the patient and others assembled for the rite, and shifts and transformations in these definitions, are possible through the structure of performance.

I isolate two aspects of performance: as the structuring of standpoint and as the structuring of context through the medium of presentation. The analysis of both aspects is critical to an understanding of how ritual establishes and transforms meaning and experience for participants, and for understanding how ritual might create the potential for engaging participants in the one experience as well as enabling their reflection on that experience. Although I have distinguished analytically the structuring of

standpoint within performance from the medium of performance, both are closely related in any one observed performance. Thus, Sinhalese exorcisms comprise a complex interweaving of performance modes—music, song, dance, and comic drama, to name but a few—and it is the nature of their interweaving, as well as their constituting properties as forms actualized through, and only apparent in, performance, which is integral to the structuring of standpoints and to the constitution of context. Through these aspects of performance, too, specific possibilities for the realization of experience and meaning, and their transformation, are created.

Major Sinhalese exorcisms vary from performance to performance, and this variation is related to the particular demands of clients and the exorcism tradition to which the exorcism specialists belong. Within the area I worked, however, there are certain invariant aspects of the performance structure which are apparent at the level of each specific performance. All performances, for example, regularly move members of the ritual gathering from positions in which their standpoints are largely structured in contexts external to that in which the patient is located, to positions within the context established around the patient. In addition, all major exorcisms concentrate specific media of performance at certain periods in the ritual progression. Thus, the elaborate performance of music and dance is most marked in the period known as the midnight watch—when the demonic is made present in its full dominating power and becomes manifest in the entrancement of exorcist and patient. Later in the midnight watch, usually after the entrancement of the patient, and throughout much of the morning watch, when the exorcism draws to a close, comic drama is the dominant medium of ritual presentation. This form often involves exorcists appearing in the masked guise of successive appearitions and demons.

In Sinhalese cultural understandings a demonic victim approximates what I refer to as an existential state of solitude in the world. The demonic as conceptualized by Sinhalese is similar to that which Goethe recognized from within the worldview of European culture as ultimately everything that is individual and separates one from others. Demons attack individuals who are understood to be in a state of physical and mental aloneness. Solitude and its correlate, fear, are among the key essences of the demonic. Exorcisms represent these as the condition of the patient and can,

as a logical possibility of the structure of their performance, reproduce and actualize the experience of the demon in a patient and in other participants.

The early phases of an exorcism involve exorcists in summoning the demons to the ritual site and in the construction of that reality in which the patient is understood to be immersed. The patient is isolated from others in the ritual gathering, and the ritual action is directed and focused almost exclusively on the patient; other members of the ritual gathering are virtually irrelevant to the ritual process orchestrated by the exorcists. While the patient is engaged in a reality in which the powers of gods and demons are invoked, the others who assemble at the rite are involved in everyday action contexts. Some drink and play cards, while others renew friendships and share everyday gossip and information. The maintenance, and to some extent development, of contexts of meaning and action outside of that in which the patient is placed, but within the immediate setting of a performance, is in part a product of the way exorcists organize their performance in this early period. What I must stress here is the difference between the standpoint of the patient, on the one hand, and the possible standpoints of the rest of the participants, on the other, as these are structured through performance. Patients are not just isolated in a world of the exorcists' construction but are limited in movement. They are expected to remain seated, to refrain from conversation with others who attend the proceedings, and to concentrate on the words and actions of the exorcists. Patients are limited in the number of standpoints outside their immediate experience which could be taken on the action. Indeed, they are restricted to the standpoint of demonic victims as this is culturally defined. What is understood to be the subjective world of the patient becomes objectified in the ritual action—the subjective is also objective, and vice versa. Imprisoned in a subjective world of struggling supernatural forces in which Life and Death are held in balance, and impelled to reflect on this world from a position within themselves, it is no surprise that patients should occasionally express outward signs of terror and occasionally lapse into unconsciousness or manifest trance-like behavior.

In terms of the structure of performance, what is experientially possible for the patient is not so for those gathered for the occasion. The other participants are placed outside the context of

the patient and, furthermore, are enabled to adopt a variety of standpoints on the ritual action in terms of rational, everyday constructs and understandings. Members of the ritual gathering are not confined within their own experience and understandings, but by their interaction they are able to stand outside themselves and interpret their experience through shared constructs and understandings constitutive of an everyday world not determined by demonic malevolence. Their experience, insofar as it is reflected from their own situated and reciprocally shared standpoints outside that of the patient, is made distinctive of the patient's, through the structure of performance. The patient's behavior, in that it is perceived through the particular experiences and structured standpoints of audience members in the world, is rendered potentially quite strange. The meaning of the patient's behavior might be conceptualized through constructs and typifications of the demon, but members of the ritual gathering do not share in the immediacy of the patient's experience.

A significant shift in the structuring of contexts through performance occurs from the start of the elaborate presentation of music and dance in the midnight watch. For the first time exorcists use the entire performance area and direct their action inward to the patient and outward to the audience. What usually occurs is that most members of the ritual gathering become directly focused on the action and thus become individuated and separated from those mutual engagements in which everyday contexts of meaning and action were sustained. This change in the structuring of performance is one means whereby everyday contexts, hitherto part of the performance setting, can be suspended and members of the ritual gathering recontextualized within fundamentally the same context as the patient. Through their individuation, members of the audience are located in essentially the same relation to the central events as the patient. And by virtue of relocation, one condition is established for the potential engagement of audience and patient in the one experience—a common isolation in the world of experience.

Through the media of music and dance, members of the ritual gathering are further impelled in the direction of the patient's experience. The reality of experience constructed in music and dance reaches the senses directly through these media as aesthetic forms and in much the same way, given the extent to which

members of the gathering are uniformly individuated and restricted from adopting standpoints outside the immediate experiential realm constituted in music and dance. Those who are directly and immediately engaged in the realms of music and dance experience in different ways. However, this ability to reflect on music and dance in the act of experiencing it requires, I would suggest, some capacity for individuals to disengage themselves from the experience while it is being experienced. It is largely only when the music or dance stops, or in some way interrupts its own flow and movement, that reflection and the treatment of experience as an object—a vital element of all reflection—becomes fully possible. Musical and dance form, as revealed in performance, are constitutive of subjective experience; they mold all subjective experience to their form.

A concern with the internal structuring properties of music and dance as forms revealed in performance makes possible some statements as to the parameters of experience constructed through them. Music and dance, for Sinhalese exorcists, are closely connected. The basic sounds out of which the structure of Sinhalese music is built also correspond to the fundamental body gestures and steps of the dance. In the Sinhalese system, dance fills out the time-structure of music and makes visible its movement and passage. An essential property of the time-structure of music and dance is that it constitutes a continuous present. Musical time is movement and passage filled out in its existential immediacy. Because of these aspects, members of the ritual gathering who are engaged within the musical context of the patient can share the same vivid and continuous present, which is an experiential possibility of music. Musical time is reversible, and it is in this reversibility that the structure of music and dance finds its essential coherence. The time-structure of music and dance tends both forward and back in the very moment of its presentation to the senses.

The structural hierarchy of the Sinhalese cosmology is continually present in an exorcism. Demons are unambiguously subordinate within the cosmic order. It is through the power of the Buddha and the deities that the demons are summoned to the rite, that their hold over the patient is progressively broken, and that their polluting and illness-causing essence is withdrawn from the patient's body. The attitude of demonic victims, as this is cul-

turally typified, denies the cosmological order. Patients are understood to see their reality as crowded by demons who determine their action and who vie with the powers of the gods. Contrary to the view of healthy Sinhalese, demons are seen to be in the same phenomenal plane of existence as the deities, and they evidence a similar relation to human beings.

The time-structure of music and dance, and their internal coherence in performance, contain the potential for creating such an experience for the patient and for extending this experience to the members of the ritual gathering. Music and dance, through their structuring capacity, can render as copresent and mutually consistent those dimensions of experience that might appear as distinct, opposed, even contradictory, from the rational perspective of the everyday world. In the music and dance of exorcism, both deities and demons are constituted of the same fundamental units of sound and gesture. They are made coexistent in the single and continuous flowing motion of music and dance. In the reversible time-structure of music and dance the deity can rise in the midst of the demonic, and vice versa. Through the form of music and dance the relation of the demonic to the deity is uncertain and unstable. At one moment one might appear to dominate, only to give way to the domination of the other.

In the music and dance of exorcism the Particular is universalized and the Universal is particularized; and the culturally understood subjective world of the patient finds external form. This subjective world, in turn, insofar as music and dance order the context of experience, is rendered capable of entering directly into the experience of the spectators who have hitherto stood outside the patient's experience. It is in the individuation of members of the ritual gathering in relation to the central ritual events and through the media of music and dance that the experiential state of the patient, alone and terrified in the world, is most nearly approached. The drama of exorcism which follows ends this isolation and destroys that particular accent on reality which is a potential of the structuring of context through music and dance. Drama, and especially the highly comic form it assumes in exorcism, can achieve this by virtue of its own structuring properties as revealed in performance. In its dialogic mode, and in contrast to music and dance, drama is intersubjective rather than subjective in its process. It does not appear to the senses so much di-

rectly, as in music and dance, but rather organizes its meaning—for the characters portrayed in it and for the audience—indirectly and at a distance, in accordance with the different structured standpoints the characters in the drama assume. Both the characters and their audience are enjoined to adopt perspectives outside their own particular subjective standpoint and to reflect on them. Drama is quintessentially reflexive as a property of its own internal form. In the drama of Sinhalese exorcism, the ritually constructed world of the supernatural is joined to the everyday world of Sinhalese action and understanding. Exorcists who appear in the masked guise of demons, for example, not only act these roles but also those of characters who figure in daily experience—politicians, police officers, government administrators, girls in search of lovers, schoolteachers, and so on. The drama of exorcism is conducted in the discourse of everyday speech, not in the specialized verbal forms apparent in the earlier phases of the ritual.

It cannot be overstressed that the drama of exorcism is comic in form. Through comedy, various meanings which lie within the structure of exorcism and which inform its process, but which are variously hidden or suppressed through the structuring properties of such performance media as music and dance, are revealed and subjected to examination. Comedy and the discovery of the comic finds its specific movement and process in the juxtaposition of opposites, in the linking of categories of experience and knowledge which in the everyday cultural world are understood to be located in different domains, and in the realization of contradiction. Of course, these are also features of other modes of discourse and symbolic action. The distinctiveness of comedy, however, is that even while engaging in these processes it invites those who attend to it to see such juxtapositions, oppositions, and contradictions for what they are: as absurdly, impossibly, and inappropriately linked in terms of the everyday typifications and understandings of the cultural world. Comedy finds its form in inconsistency as a guiding principle; and the enjoyment it can evoke is dependent on the realization by the audience of this essential inconsistency. The comic process itself reveals this inconsistency, but the recognition by an audience of the full potential of the comic is dependent on their being conscious and committed to their everyday world as it is culturally and socially typified. Patients are enjoined by exorcists and by other participants to laugh, and their laughter in the

company of others is taken to be a sign that they have reentered the world as experienced by the normal and the healthy. To laugh at and with the comedy, as do all audiences in the comic drama of exorcism, is to share in a universally typified and comprehended world.

The comedy of exorcism, as a central structuring dimension of its performance, plays in word and action with structure ordering and reordering of the categories and relations in terms of which experience is understood and meaning is generated. If comedy is disordering, it is ordering at the same time, for in discovering and bringing to realization the absurd, it also points to that culturally defined proper order of things. The comic drama of exorcism is both an attack on limiting form—on that which hides, obscures, and restricts—and an attack on falsity and illusion, the handmaidens of limiting form. Demons, who in themselves are masters of falsity and illusion, are harbored and nurtured in the limiting form of music and dance and by the restriction on standpoint produced through the realization of these forms in performance. The comedy of exorcism breaks through such limitations, however; it frees individuals from the solitude of subjective experience, links them to others through the mediation of shared constructs and typifications, and demands that they take a variety of standpoints on the world as experienced and as it achieves its diverse meanings.

Demons and the demonic cannot live in the expanded world of everyday understanding created in the comedy. They represent, as part of the comic and in their own essential absurdity, a failure to unify to their being the world as experienced in its diversity of context and in its movement and process. And so the demons appearing in exorcism retreat from the stage of human action, and in their failure to unify they are replaced in their subordinate position in the cosmic schema. Through the comedy of exorcism the particularity of individual subjective experience, and the danger of the solipsism of the demonic, is transcended and to some extent lost in the universality and legitimacy of agreed and shared cultural understandings.

Sinhalese exorcisms exhibit an essential joke form with demons as the ultimate butt, as Mary Douglas (1968) has noted more generally for ritual. A broad conception of exorcism ritual, one not too distant from that which exorcists themselves hold,

might be that of a magnificent trap in which demons are ensnared only to be repelled for the moment from the cultural world of human beings. This trap is elaborately set through the various illusions created by form realized in performance. Demons and human beings are subject to these illusions of form, though in different ways. Yet when the illusions are finally dispelled, the demons are caught and subordinated in the very cosmic reality they have sought to subvert, and human beings are freed from their capricious control.

If there is one general point underlying my argument it is the critical importance of performance in the analysis of meaning and experience. Performance as the unity of text and enactment is realized in a variety of forms, aesthetic and otherwise, which carry with them, as a potential of their structure, their own possibilities for the realization of meaning and experience. They are not necessarily reducible one to the other.

Performance, in my view, is the structuring of structure, and it is this critical feature which makes performance essential to the analysis of ritual and other modes of symbolic action. Natanson (1974) has recently noted that the difference between some phenomenological approaches, on the one hand, and some Marxist approaches, on the other, was that while blood flows for the Marxist, the phenomenologist contemplates the essence of gore. Add a structuralist to this macabre gathering and we might have a person who cleans away the blood and gore only to reveal the bones. It is conceivable that in the analysis of performance all these approaches could combine to increase our understanding of the complexities and wonders of the cultural and social worlds of human beings.

NOTES

1. Theory in anthropology and sociology has continually been drawn to the central issue of the relation between the Particular and the Universal. It was one of the major concerns of Durkheim and underlies his final great work, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1915). Enduring debates in anthropology revolve around cultural relativism, cultural determinism, and questions of individual freedom and the degree to which individuals exercise choice and control over their own action and experience, are all instances of this central concern.

2. Ritual is not just communication; it is many other things as well. The recent work in hermeneutics and phenomenology, particularly in the area of narrative form and poetics, has much to add to the anthropological analysis of ritual.

REFERENCES

- Douglas, Mary. 1968. "The Social Control of Cognition: Some Factors in 'Joke Perception.'" *Man* (n.s.) 3:361-76.
- Dufrenoy, Michel. 1973. *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press.
- Durkheim, Emile. 1915. *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. New York: Macmillan.
- Laing, Ronald David. 1967. *The Politics of Experience*. New York: Pantheon.
- Mead, George Herbert. 1934. *Mind, Self, and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Natanson, M. 1970. *The Journeying Self*. Menlo Park, Calif.: Addison-Wesley.
- _____. 1974. *Phenomenology, Role, and Reason*. Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas.
- Ricoeur, Paul. 1976. *Interpretation Theory*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press.
- Russell, Bertrand. 1948. *Human Knowledge: Its Scope and Limits*. New York: Simon and Schuster.