

commentary

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Binaries and boundaries

I am grateful to Michael Di Giovine for inviting me to serve as discussant for the eleven panels and twenty two papers on 'Rethinking Pilgrimage' at the conference 'Tourism and the Seductions of Difference' organized by David Picard and the nascent Tourism-Contact-Culture Network in Lisbon on the 9-12th September 2010. I felt very lucky to be 'brought up to date' by the many recent research papers, including the seven in the present volume, and to have the opportunity to rethink the relationship between 'pilgrimage' and 'tourism,' a problem that I originally brought upon my own head by using the title 'Tourism: the Sacred Journey' in my first anthropological writing on our topic (1977). The questions posed by the title concern the binary concepts of 'communitas and contestation, unity and difference,' which leaves aside the perennial binary question 'pilgrimage vs. tourism' that has underlain many of the debates of the past forty years. Given the parallel debates about authenticity in the works of, for instance, Mitford (1959), Boorstin (1962) and Haden-Guest (1972) versus Dean MacCannell (1973, 1976), pilgrimage and tourism might stand in for 'authentic vs. fake,' another fundamental binary in scholarly discourse about tourism (Cohen, 2007).

As mentioned above, my own entry to the field (1977) in which I argued that tourism is a 'sacred journey' that shares many structural similarities with pilgrimage was an application of a well-known anthropological theory of ritual behavior. However, the ritual theory was not that of Victor Turner, which Nash (1981) labeled as disproven in his mistaken critique of my work, but that of my Cambridge anthropology supervisor, Edmund Leach. While aware of the works of Turner by 1973/74, I was struck by the power of Leach's work which was based more closely on European mythology and social structure than Turner's was at that time. Later, in my 'Anthropology of Tourism' (1983) and 'Secular Ritual: a General Theory of Tourism' (2001) I fully incorporated Turnerian concepts, which I still do not consider disproven. The particular conceptual model was taken from Leach's 'Two Essays Concerning the Symbolic Representation of Time' in *Rethinking Anthropology* (1961). Actually the two essays 'Cronus and Chronos' (pp. 124-131) and 'Time and False Noses' (pp. 132-148) were published much earlier, in Marshall MacLuhan's Toronto journal *Explorations* 1, 153, pp. 15-23, and *Explorations* 5, 1955, pp. 30-35. This put Leach in a much more experimental

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and imaginative 'modern' social science context. Thus I was drawing on an earlier version of post-functionalist British anthropology, in which Leach focused on ritual as creating and regulating the named periodicities of both social and natural time, both linear and cyclical, especially for people who do not have clocks and calendars, and as marking and making meanings through symbolic reversals. In my analysis I proposed that (1) tourism was for secular Westerners both functionally and symbolically akin to religious ritual and pilgrimage in more 'God-fearing societies' as marking the passage of time, both the annual cycle, and the stages of personal passage along the journey of life and (2) that tourism — voluntary leisure travel that is not paid work — is (or was in 1973/74) a positively sanctioned behavior only for certain kinds of people: healthy, self-financed adults and their children; people who choose just to stay home may be called 'idle rich' or 'hippies' if there are healthy, or they may be judged to be sick, too old, lazy, or too young. Occupations in which people who are paid to travel to places where others vacation are often the object of jealousy or even of suspicion or jokes: 'stewardii', sailors, gypsies, traveling salesmen, anthropologists, and conventioners (Graburn, 1977, pp. 18-19) — the operative binaries here are: spending vs. being paid and going on vacation vs. voluntarily staying home.

Leach used concepts of sacred and profane, masked vs. unmasked, and I have just added many more binaries, such as authentic vs. fake, pilgrim vs. tourist and those immediately above. Van Gennep (1961), following the schema that Durkheim's associates Hubert and Mauss (1898) put forth in their study of the consummate ritual sacrifice, structured rites of passage as tripartite:

1. Preparation and sacralization as ordinary life is left behind—symbolically or by travel
2. (The in-between liminal stage, so named from the *limen* (threshold) over which a man was supposed to carry his bride in European folk marriage rites, and
3. (Desacralization and reaggregation back to ordinary life, and the return 'home')

Yet, in the effort to distance us from structuralism—the Turnerian and the Levi-Straussian more than the Radcliffe-Brownian kind, Eade (this issue) wants to do away with binaries in the effort get away from simplistic ideas such as anti-structure and *communitas* (vs. structure) and hosts and guests. While I agree that the latter dyad is rarely useful and never the complete picture, I believe we cannot entirely do away with binaries (1) when the ethnographic subjects believe and assert them and (2) because all complexities are reducible to sets of binaries, e.g. in Van Gennep's two reversals of profane vs. sacred, and back again. Eade and other post-structuralists argue that parts of life cannot be simply divided into binaries, that there are gray areas of overlap. That is true, but the 'grey' areas are the overlap of distinct categories. For instance, I myself have stated (1977) that there is no hard and fast dividing line between pilgrims and tourists, and the present ethnographic cases by Afferni, Cazaux, Doi and Frey (1998) all show the interchangeability of identities of pilgrims and tourists — though the direction is almost always starting as tourists and becoming pilgrims — but this does not deny the existence and binary nature of these emic categories. And in the ethnographic

cases by Singh, Shinde, Miles-Watson and Klimova, the tourist-pilgrimage binary is even clearer.

As Leach points out, the two ritual phases of separation and (re)aggregation are a binary of opposites, and the 'sacred' time between them is the binary opposite of ordinary 'profane' life. Leach did not use the word liminality but called it 'The marginal state. The moral person is in a sacred condition, a kind of suspended animation. Ordinary social time has stopped. . . The formal rules of orthodox life are forgotten' (1961, pp. 134-135). Though Leach did not deal specifically with pilgrimages (he emphasized festivals) the tripartite stages of: leaving/separation:: reaching the sacred place:: returning/reaggregation perfectly fit the model of rites of passage. And taking our cue from Leach that ritual 'creates time' a successful pilgrimage would mark a new stage in the religious/spiritual linear progress of the pilgrim's life. For most travelers pilgrimage is not an annual, cyclical event, though Boissevain (2011) reports that some young wealthy North African Muslim now like to make the *hajj* an annual affair! Those who undertake pilgrimage, even non-traditional spirit seekers, assert that they have been changed and moved to another stage of or even another life.

The concept of *communitas* that Turner invented in the form we know it, was closely based upon Durkheim's (1912) concept of 'effervescence' that was a source of social solidarity in his crude evolutionary scheme of social structure and religion. In his *Division of Labor* (1893) Durkheim proposed that in simple 'acephalous' societies, social solidarity was 'mechanical' based on the similarity of the persons and the groups in a community, as described in 19th century ethnographies of Australian aborigines vs. a less emotional organic solidarity characteristic of more complex societies where everyone is beholden to 'be an exchangist,' typified by market societies in which each person has to exchange their assets, material or otherwise, with others who have different assets. Later in his *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912), he used the same Australian ethnographic data to propose an evolution of religion in which the members and groups of more egalitarian societies celebrated their 'sameness' when they came together for their intermittent ritual behavior. It is the joy, the emotional effervescence, of being together on special, 'liminal' occasions that supplies mechanical solidarity for Durkheim and *communitas* for Turner. And we have to ask whether Turner was correct in asserting that this special feeling is characteristic of pilgrimages.

In my estimation, the closest antecedent to Turner's conceptual paradigm of liminality-*communitas*-antistructure was to be found in Johan Huizinga's *Homo Ludens* (1938/1955), about the 'play' element of culture. He asserted that: play is distinct from 'ordinary' life both as to locality and duration, and that play creates order, is order; play demands absolute and supreme loyalty. Most relevant to our argument is his illustration of sports teams on tour which, like pilgrimages, are 'special' out of the ordinary experiences, which require travel and have a serious goal (like sacrifice) and ideally engender a 'team spirit' of camaraderie. Huizinga points out that in successful events this spirit — effervescence, *communitas*, camaraderie — continues to exist

afterwards amongst those who traveled together, much like the bonds of Caministas as reported by Frey (2004) and others.

Di Giovine and others in this volume have remarked on the possible significance of Victor and Edith Turner's conversion to Catholicism in 1953. In the 1950s, for educated English middle-classes to choose Catholicism was choosing to 'be religious'; belonging to the Church of England was an automatic, national rather than a religious identity. In joining the military many recruits were asked 'Do you have a religion or are you Church of England?' It is suggested that the Turners enjoyed the 'communitas' engendered by the renewal of the Catholic Church known as Vatican II, which attempted to diminish structure (hierarchy) by, for instance, decreeing that the Mass should be in the local language which all could understand rather than Latin which on priests and a few 'well educated' (such as I was forced to undergo in England) could understand. But being Catholic, as were so many British social anthropologists, including E. Evans-Pritchard, would not automatically incline one to feel 'effervescent' about the changes. Mary Douglas was brought up Catholic and studied with Evans-Pritchard, and left England with her ex-Tory party official husband for the USA about the same time as the Turners, and she deplored the 'desacralization' of the Mass through the use of the vernacular, as strongly expressed in her book *Natural Symbols* (1970).

I may suggest a different biographical experience as underlying exposition of the relation of communitas to anti-structure. In 1961-62 Turner went on leave to the very unstructured Center for the Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences in Palo Alto, California, where he enjoyed scholarly communitas. Indeed, on their web site, a Fellow is quoted as saying: 'For me, it is heaven to spend a year in a place where I can interperse absolute peace and quiet with serious debate with the smartest scholars around.' (CASBS, 2011). Although Turner returned to England, he was never happy with the 'structured' academic atmosphere there. Unsatisfied with English academia, the Turners moved from Manchester first to Cornell and then to the University of Chicago. I suggest that his academic 'ethnographic' observation was as important as his African 'objective' experiences in developing his theory.

How then may we grapple with the seeming contradiction between communitas and contestation, and between anti-structure and social structure? I think we have the keys in the works mentioned and exemplars in the ethnographic papers in this volume, but particularly in Di Giovine's Introduction where he elaborates on Turner's distinction between the three kinds of communitas, each related to different kinds of 'social structure.'

First we must recognize that feelings communitas can be an ideal, always longed for, celebrated and remembered or in actual practice when it may be normative or even absent. And secondly we must agree that all events occur *within* a structure, just as structures in pilgrimages and holidays may be multiple and complex, and we should

not expect *communitas* to be 'spread' evenly through all actors. For instance in Singh's ethnography we would not expect *communitas* to unite the traditional with the charismatic seeking pilgrims, any more than we would expect the urban middle class Hindus to empathize with poor illiterate rural worshippers in Miles-Watson's Manimahesh pilgrimage. Interestingly enough, this very point was strongly and brilliantly made in two other case studies in South Asia, Ichaporia's study (1983) of class and pilgrimage/tourism at the tantric temples of Kajuraho, and Pfaffenburger's analysis (1983) of conservative middle aged and the younger pilgrims at Kataragama in Sri Lanka, both appearing the special issue of *Annals of Tourism Research* on the 'Anthropology of Tourism' (Graburn, 1983).

The solution to this 'impossible binary' lies not only in ideal vs. practice, but in their essential co-dependence. Huizinga's assertion that play demands order suggests that the freedom and creativity that accompany liminality have to be bounded, and in sports excursions as well as pilgrimages, they are delimited *and supported* in both space and time. Play, creativity and the ineffable effervescence of *communitas* (even 'serious' debate among scholars) cannot take place when buffeted by the unstructured, unprotected vagaries of everyday life—as Victor Turner probably discovered while he was a residential fellow at the Center for the Advanced Studies in Palo Alto. We should also note that Csikszentmihalyi's concept of the most intimate, most effervescent, most creative condition of 'flow' requires a psychological structure, a walling off, which eliminates awareness of time, place and appetites (1975). And where one is located, inside the structural frame as a participant, or outside as part of the enclosing structure, determines how one sees the social situation. Interestingly 'Eade's deep knowledge of Lourdes originally came from his annual participation at the site as a male helper (*brancardier*) for over 20 years, during which time he pursued his anthropological interests elsewhere.' (Coleman, 2002, p. 361). As a minder or helper of the aged and sick pilgrims to Lourdes, Eade was part of the structure and he emphasized contestation which has not been balanced by insider views on suffering, salvation and inner peace. This contrasting situated perspective is very comparable to sociologist Cohen's view (1973) of hippy-drifters vs. those of student-trekker Teas (1988 [1974]).

Returning to Durkheim, we can see that he was completely wrong in characterizing simple societies as only mechanical and complex societies as only organic in their mechanisms of solidarity. Even in the data on Australian societies that he used, where we can agree that all those effervescent group dances by male elders express identity and solidarity, relations of old and young, and of male and female are by definition 'organic' requiring collaboration through complementary roles, i.e. structures which are often prickly or agonistic. Similarly, in complex industrial societies, it is true that in addition to age and sex differences there is a proliferation of specializations all of which have to cooperate to function well – and Durkheim was overt in warning operatives to play their parts and not strike nor to step out of their ascribed roles and become upwardly mobile! Yet, he did not see that labor unions and trade associations are perfect examples of mechanical solidarity within the complex organic world of 'ex-

changists' that we call market society. I am claiming that just as Durkheim failed to see that mechanical and organic solidarity were essential complements in both simple and complex societies, so *communitas* and antistructure only exist as complements of each other; even Turner realized that 'hippies' (Beats, Zen and others) could only maintain a lifestyle of *communitas* as marginal to the structures of society and bounded by the temporal structure of their life's journey (1969, pp. 112-113, 138).

In Van Gennep's three-stage model, liminality is structured in time, as are all ritual and travels, and in its original European meaning it was also structured in physical space—crossing over the threshold (the *limen*) — and in society as an attribute of a set of ritual roles within a larger set of social structured roles. The quality of the experience would, therefore, be categorized as non-ordinary, betwixt and between, out of space and time. Like the artisan working towards a goal captured by the state of flow, the interior ritual space is anti-structural in that it is supposed to be cleared of the very rigid structures that uphold the society, the church, the sports team or the vacation group. For example, my mother was appalled when she went to take communion in a South African church in 1952 and was told by the pastor that she must kneel and receive communion on one half of the altar rail because the other was reserved for blacks — she was acutely upset that the external 'political' structure should be imposed on and divide the communicants, equal before God.

The set of seven ethnographic cases in this volume illustrate the complexities of contemporary religious movements. Many of these are mass movements, consisting of many subgroups. While some subgroups are co-religionists, they may be split into smaller groups by family and tradition, local origin, age and life stage. Other cases show more differences in the co-traveling publics, some including both religious and non-religious, or traditional and charismatic. Where should we expect *communitas* to break out? Following Huizinga's example, it is those who were most similar in ways that cannot always be predicted beforehand, who are able to feel the deepest and most long lasting *communitas*. On a mass endeavour, such as the Camino de Santiago or a *yatra* to Varanasi, there are many subgroups. The Manimesh pilgrimage is exemplary of almost universal contemporary class differences, reproducing in India Urry's (2002 [1990], p. 34) very English 'romantic' vs. 'collective' gaze, which in turn reify Durkheim's 'organic' vs. 'mechanical' solidarities. It is *within* the sub-parts, where *communitas* will be experienced but *between* whom there may not be 'organic exchange and cooperation' but resentment, jealousy or culture shock, all maintained by the larger sociocultural structures to which these groups belong. There is always structure containing antistructures, just as a group of communicants at their first Mass may dress and appear equal while surrounded by the highly symbolized inequalities of generation, rank and power characteristic of the Church Eternal.

Within the complex and contested liminal movements, we find islands of *communitas*, in Leach's words 'a kind of suspended animation. Ordinary social time has stopped. . . The formal rules of orthodox life are forgotten.' (1961, pp. 134-135) And as

Doi's paper shows particularly well, these cleared spaces allow for (but do not force or guarantee) social and psychological creativity that may reveal discoveries that set one on a new path of life. But just as flow cannot be forced (if it were, it would be 'normative' and hence fake or not liberating) so one cannot predict the depth of psychological freedom or inter-subjective *communitas* that the trip engenders. Yet, *communitas* is less easily subverted than one might imagine. The actors in some of our cases only make the vital connection when mediated; Klimova's elders or Shinde's *pujaris* and others are distracted neither by commercial activities (in Manimesh) nor by political cooption (in Varanasi).

There remains one form of *communitas* that is unexamined, a form that might be vital even to lone travelers mourning their divorces or their deceased spouses, that is *self-communitas*. Indeed Turnerian group-*communitas* is far more easily achieved, even normative, compared with the task of facing one's own self without the subterfuges of excuses, status and achievements. It is only in self-*communitas* that Christians can truly be penitent or that Buddhists can achieve the desired absence of temptation. In a recent publication, I have examined in detail contemporary Japanese 'self-seeking tourists' (*jibun sagashi*) in their frequently derided, often futile, and occasionally terrifying quests to 'find themselves' away from the norm-enforcing surveillance and support of their home groups (Graburn, *in press*). Perhaps we should start our examinations of *communitas* in the individual and small group instances, accepting that boundaries and contestations can be found within the smallest unit and that *communitas* may occasionally encompass the largest.

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