Social II and Sacred Dance

By

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A thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
In partial fulfillment of
The requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
May 21, 2002

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acceptance of the thesis

"SOCIAL II AND SACRED DANCE"

submitted by M-José Posen, B.A. Hons.
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts
Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Thesis Supervisor

Chair, Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University
May 21, 2002

Abstract

In certain rituals, community participation and support is important to achieving transformation of consciousness. Edith Turner has proposed the existence of a particular social bond, Social II, in such situations. This thesis explores the Social II and takes issue with Edith Turner's characterization in three areas. First, Social II is rooted in the work of Emile Durkheim, as demonstrated through an examination of the literature. Second, transformation of consciousness is not due to linkage with an external source, as E. Turner suggests, but to the processing of unconscious material. This is facilitated by the ritual symbols and unifying bond generated by the intent and sense of trust among participants. A case study is presented of two types of sacred dance, the traditional Indian Bharata Natyam and modern, free form dance based on Christian texts. Third, the concept of Social II is essentially an amplification of the liminal phase of ritual as described by Victor Turner in his processual model, as illustrated by a comparison with the writing of Victor Turner. It is concluded that the idea of Social II is a helpful contribution to the understanding of ritual and the importance of community.

Acknowledgements

It has been my privilege to be guided by very impressive teachers. First, I thank my thesis supervisor, Ian Prattis, who introduced me to the world of sacred dance and accepted the challenge of guiding a “mature”, often puzzled and occasionally difficult student. His quick sense of humour has been invaluable. I am also fortunate to have had the guidance of Jacques Chevalier, whose gentle kindness and polite, patient advice have helped me immensely. And I thank Brian Given for providing me with a superbly detailed critique of my research proposal. Finally, I thank my husband and son for their support, both amused and bemused.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

My thesis originated with questions that arose in my mind as a result of my personal experience of a sacred community ritual. About two years ago my son completed his Bar Mitzvah after many months of intense preparation. This Jewish male rite of passage occurred in the presence of many friends, family and community members; afterward, we celebrated with much feasting and dancing. In the months that followed, I noticed subtle and positive behavioural changes in response to the expectations set out for him during the preparatory period. This led me to wonder about the nature of community support in ritual. As Edith Turner has pointed out, this area has received relatively little attention in the anthropological literature (1999).

In 1912, Émile Durkheim emphasized the collective experience of ritual in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1965). His concepts of collective effervescence and the power and energy generated by social gatherings provided the basis for the later study of social and individual change through ritual. They are echoed in van Gennep's analysis of rites of

passage which signal an individual's transition from one stage of life, one social status, to another (Turner, 1969,1979).

Victor Turner moved the focus of ritual study from the function of ritual and symbol in society to the meaning, drawing on his early and extensive studies of tribal, village based societies. He anchored ritual in his processual model of society, in which structure and anti-structure contribute to both stability and change. He identified a key element of the experience of anti-structure as *communitas*, the sense of unmediated communication with others (1974).

Full, unmediated communication in ritual situations is a necessary but not sufficient condition for behavioural change, as Edith Turner makes clear (1999). She suggests that the presence of community is important and a sense of purposefully working together and feeling together in ritual is essential to transformation of consciousness. In a discussion of "certain great spirit occasions" when the consciousness of a social group is changed, she proposes the existence of a social bond in altered states of consciousness that is different from the normal social bond. She calls it the "Social II as opposed to Social I, the Durkeimian structural social" (ibid.:46). The central purpose of my research is to explore the nature of this Social II and the conditions associated with it.

It is my thesis that the phenomenon that Edith Turner calls Social II is characterized by three main features. First, it is rooted in the work of

Durkheim, not separate from it, linked to his concept of collective effervescence via the idea of *communitas* introduced by Victor Turner. In Chapter 2 I support this contention by tracing the idea of Social II to its roots in Durkheim via Turner, Gluckman and van Gennep. I review some of the literature on ritual and look to selected interpreters of both Durkheim and Turner to make the link between Social II and collective effervescence.

Edith Turner suggests that the presence of the group facilitates a change of consciousness in the individual. In turn, the consciousness of the social group itself is changed. Turner asks “How do changes of consciousness occur in the milieu of groups?” and speculates on possible explanations (op.cit.46). The second main feature of Social II is that it pivots upon a sense of oneness among individuals collectively in an altered state of consciousness in ritual. The unifying bond, which may be facilitated by movement, is based on intent and trust, rather than social structure. The sense of oneness leads to transformation due to activation and processing of unconscious material triggered by symbol.

I support this element of my thesis by presenting a case study of sacred dance, and also making reference to my own experience as an audience member. Since ancient times ritual has been coupled to dance because dance is the use of the human body to make patterned movements or symbols in time and space. Chapter 3 describes the ancient roots of sacred dance and provides the modern perspective. Dance can serve many purposes.

being a medium of enculturation and bonding, a means of communicating with both the natural and the supernatural, and a way of connecting to the divine. The tendency to use dance for both sacred and profane purposes is deeply rooted in all cultures. Dance is particularly prominent in classical Indian tradition and is linked to the Divine. As background to my case study, chapter 3 discusses the symbolic importance of the Hindu deity Shiva and of Christ to specific Indian and Christian sacred dance.

The study, which I present in Chapters 4 and 5, includes interviews with six dancers. Four dance the classical Indian Bharata Natyam, an exact, very structured and highly symbolic dance form anchored in Hindu mythology, aesthetics and philosophy. It emphasizes the connection between the divine, the dancer and the audience/participant/supporter. To supplement with information from a different perspective, I interviewed two other dancers who dance predominantly to sacred Christian texts. Their dance form is largely unstructured, often spontaneous, and associated with specific texts, myths, concepts and symbols, but not anchored in any specific aesthetic base or philosophy. Nevertheless the connection of dancer to group is a feature, since the two dancers interviewed both perform with a partner or partners in worship settings and often as part of church services.

Chapter 4 discusses the feelings of the dancers in the altered state, and examines the importance of intent and trust to the experience of unity. It also draws on the literature of dance and consciousness to explain my observations on the importance of movement.

In describing Social II and attempting to answer her own question regarding changes of consciousness in the milieu of groups, Edith Turner speculates on the nature of consciousness and altered states because, she maintains, our framework for understanding is inadequate (op.cit.). She postulates a “source” of some sort that individuals in rituals access for knowledge which can lead to transformation (op.cit.:51). In Chapter 5 I interpret my interviews with the dancers as demonstrating some transformative effects, along the lines of cases described by Edith Turner. I draw on these to broaden the discussion beyond Edith Turner’s postulate. The idea of a Social II lies within the study of anthropology of consciousness, a newer field dealing with the study of altered states of consciousness (ASCs), which now assume a prominence in ritual not found in Durkheim or Victor Turner. I demonstrate that other perspectives on the nature of consciousness and activities in altered states are more helpful to an understanding of the Social II than E. Turner’s postulation of an external Source.

The postulate of a link in consciousness to an external source is the basis for the third main feature of Social II: it is essentially an amplification of the liminal phase of ritual as described by Victor Turner in his processual model. Chapter 6 discusses this amplification and relates it to Edith Turner’s orientation on the spectrum of approaches to understanding other cultures’ perceptions of reality.

Edith Turner's introduction of the idea of a Social II is a helpful contribution to the understanding of ritual, as I conclude in Chapter 7. It serves to draw attention to the modern understanding of consciousness and to the importance of integrating knowledge from various areas of study. It also highlights the continuing importance of the study of ritual and community in modern society.

Chapter 2

THE ROOTS OF SOCIAL II

As mentioned in the Introduction, Edith Turner suggests that the Social II is different from the social bond described by Durkheim, which she implies is a bond that emerges out of social structure. As I will demonstrate, Social II is rooted in Durkheim's concept of collective effervescence. I point out the tight linkage of Social II and Victor Turner's *communitas*, explore the work of Victor Turner and its basis in Gluckman, van Gennep and Durkheim, and then link *communitas* and Durkheim's collective effervescence.

2.1 *Communitas*

An essential characteristic of Social II is *communitas*. As Edith Turner makes clear, the Social II is characterized by the presence of "...communitas...the generic sense of fellow feeling, union with others..." (1999:46). She maintains that this feeling is not present in "...Social I, the

Durkheimian structural social” (ibid.). She also describes an Ihamba ritual in which the Social II was present because there was a condition in which the community was one (ibid.). This raises the question of what else, if anything, comprises the Social II. Are the Social II and *communitas* essentially the same thing? Turner implies that an additional characteristic of Social II is the access to a greater source of knowledge, one outside normal consciousness. I will address this specifically in Chapter 5, but first I examine the nature of *communitas*.

Victor Turner both studied and experienced ritual during his extensive field work in African tribal societies (E. Turner, 1992). These experiences lead not only to his perspective of ritual as symbolic action, but also to his concepts of the structural and anti-structural dimensions or phases of society and to his processual model of ritual which facilitates the transition through these phases (1966, 1974, 1979, 1992). The structural dimension corresponds to the everyday socio-economic reality of a society. The anti-structural is a marginal or liminal period, during which human capacities to understand, to feel and to create are liberated. As Prattis points out, these concepts “provided specific insights into the nature of ritual, which were about change, transformation and redefinition” (1997:209).

V. Turner gave central importance to an aspect of anti-structure that he called *communitas* : “...society experienced... as... an unstructured community, or even communion, of equal individuals... The bonds of *communitas* ... are undifferentiated, egalitarian, direct, non-rational...” (1974:48-53).

Communitas “preserves individual distinctiveness” (1979:42), even while it is a “relational quality of full, unmediated communication, even communion, between definite and determinate identities” which could arise spontaneously in “all kinds of groups, situations and circumstances” (1992:59).

Turner’s ideas of the interplay of societal structure and anti-structure and *communitas* can be traced back to their roots in Durkheim through Max Gluckman. A proponent of conflict theory, Gluckman reacted to the structural functionalist view of society that had evolved from Durkheim’s early writings. He suggested that conflict is intrinsic to social interaction, and that “....societies by their customary arrangements....accentuate conflicts. The conflicts in wider ranges compensate one another to produce social cohesion” (1956:48). Although Gluckman ultimately abandoned the position that conflict is needed to produce social cohesion and societal equilibrium (1963), his arguments had helped to establish the idea that the interplay of opposites, of structure and anti-structure, was necessary for the functioning of society.

Victor Turner also drew on the work of van Gennep to develop his processual model of ritual. Van Gennep identified rites of passage as transitional rituals accompanying certain changes experienced by individuals in a culture (van Gennep, 1960). He suggested that rites of passage have three phases: separation, margin or limen and reincorporation. These evolved into the structure/ anti-structure/ structure characteristic of Turner’s processual approach to ritual and his emphasis on the liminal phase as the location of

anti-structure and potential transformation (Turner, 1969,1979). Dunn suggests that van Gennep clearly linked his understanding of the purpose of rites of passage to a cosmological perspective, linking the social and celestial spheres, but that Turner did not understand van Gennep's cosmological framework and used the concept of the tripartite structure within his own structural framework in order to support his perspective of ritual in terms of social structure(2000).

2.2 Collective Effervescence

The first glimmers of the interplay between cosmological and structural frameworks, and among structure, anti-structure and the ritual process, can be found before van Gennep, in Durkheim's later works. Fields, in her introduction to her translation of *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, emphasizes Durkheim's view that religions are founded on and express 'the real'"(1995: xvii). Olaveson demonstrates that Durkheim viewed ritual as the basis of religion, and of society itself, and thus that he believed that ritual had inherent power (2002). Alpert underscores Durkheim's suggestion that the disciplinary aspects of rituals prepare individuals for social living and that social gatherings involving rituals reinforce social solidarity and revitalize the group by linking present to past and to moral tradition. In addition, he suggested rituals serve to establish a pleasant feeling of social well-being, especially in difficult times of group stress or loss of individual members (Alpert, 1965,137-141). Durkheim states "...even when religious

ceremonies have a disquieting or saddening event as their point of departure, they retain their stimulating power over the affective state of the group and individuals. By the mere fact that they are collective, they raise the vital tone” (1965:454). Thus, Durkheim recognized that ritual’s power could have a profound emotional effect on individuals and on the group.

As Pickering points out, Durkheim perceived more generally that social behaviour and change could not be fully explained by a strictly functionalist perspective but he was unable to discover the factor which was evidently operating. The concept of altered states of consciousness as we know it today did not exist at that time. Durkheim did, however, explore the link between people and change, and the idea of social and individual change, through his concept of collective effervescence. This idea of a “new kind of psychic life” appeared both in his early writings on suicide and in his later works on religion (Pickering, 1984: 380-4). It is important to distinguish between the effervescence that results simply from the gathering of a crowd (and can be explained by simple crowd psychology) and that which results in association with a purposeful gathering of people. It is this latter which captured Durkheim’s interest, and Pickering refers to it as “effervescent assembly” (ibid.). He calls attention to Durkheim’s suggestion that moments of such collective ferment or effervescence could allow new ideas and societal ideals to emerge. To incorporate the experience into daily reality, people need to recall it, and do so through symbolic re-enactment in sacred rituals.

Durkheim suggested that groups exert a collective force, not on individuals but through them. This “strengthening and vivifying” action of society is especially apparent “in the midst of an assembly animated by a common passion” when “we become susceptible of acts and sentiments of which we are incapable when reduced to our own forces”. In illustrating his meaning with an example of an inspired orator, he suggests that the “moral force” or energy which overcomes the individual is “very real; it comes to him from the very group which he addresses” (1965:240-1). There is in this description a clear implication of an altered state of consciousness, a concept which Durkheim was unable to articulate.

Moments of collective effervescence not only permit the participants to feel a bond of community and unity, but they “... call individuals out of themselves, imbuing them with a heightened sense of their participation in the collective, of being borne along by the collective ...”(Ramp, 1998:141). Durkheim, describing what he meant by effervescent assembly, stated:

“The collective which gives rise to religion is the communion of *consciences*. It is the resulting *conscience* which momentarily absorbs them.....Every communion of *conscience* does not produce what is religious. It must... fulfil certain specific conditions. Notably it must possess a degree of unity, of intimacy, and the forces which it releases must be sufficiently intense to take the individual outside

himself and to raise him to a superior life. Also, the sentiments so roused must be fixed on an object or concrete objects which symbolize them.” (Pickering, 1984: 407).

Bohannon points out that Durkheim used the French word *conscience* to mean not only internalized sanctions (as in the English word conscience), but also awareness or consciousness (1964). In addition, he used it to refer to perceived culture, so that the “knowing instrument” (consciousness) and the “known thing” (culture), were assimilated into a single concept. In contrast, English separates the concepts (ibid:78).

In his discussions of the elementary religious forms, Durkheim illustrates the “ violent super-excitation of the whole physical and mental life...” in certain rituals of Australian aboriginal life, and he states:

“It is not difficult to imagine that a man in such a state of exaltation should no longer know himself. Feeling possessed and led on by some sort of external power that makes him think and act differently than he normally does, he naturally feels he is no longer himself. It seems to him that he has become a new being. The decorations with which he is decked out, and the masklike decorations that cover his face, represent this inward transformation even more than they help to bring it about. And because his companions feel transformed in the same way at the same moment, and express this feeling by their shouts, movements and bearing, it is as if he was in reality transported

into a special world inhabited by exceptionally intense forces that invade and transform him....(1995: 220).

Here, then, are found clear descriptions of individuals and groups entering altered states of consciousness in each other's presence, in specific ritual situations. This coupling of the concept of collective effervescence with ensuing ritual effectively delineated a process for behavioural and social change. (Pickering, 1984: 388-90). It was to be half a century before it was explored more systematically by Victor Turner in his work on structure and anti-structure and *communitas*.

Olaveson (2002) maintains that usual perception of Durkheim as a firm positivist focussed on issues of social order is incorrect. Rather, he was concerned with ritual, emotion, the non-rational, creativity and social change. Olaveson maintains that Durkheim developed a processual model of ritual and society more than half a century before Victor Turner established a similar model using the terms structure, anti-structure and *communitas*. In fact, Olaveson makes a convincing case that *communitas* and collective effervescence are, in effect, equivalent concepts.

2.3 *Communitas* and the Social

Turner's concept of *communitas*, especially in its later form, echoes Durkheim's concept of society. Nisbet maintains that this concept of society is based on the Latin *communitas* rather than *societas* (1965:34-35). The former suggests a sense of fellowship and community in feeling, while the

latter suggests fellowship and union for a common purpose (Lewis & Short)., Durkheim saw society as approximating the *conscience collective* and suggested that “ the collective consciousness is the highest form of the psychic life, since it is the consciousness of the consciousnesses.” (Pickering, 1984:248-53; Durkheim ,1965: 492). In addition to his assertion of the broader meaning of the French *conscience*, referred to earlier, Bohannan points out that *collective* means it is “greater than or superordinate to” the individual mind (op.cit.:81). It is clear that Durkheim seems to have seen society as a “vast synthesis of complete consciousnesses” (ibid.:492), as a result of which the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

It would seem, then , that the sense of an antistructural or liminal phase existed in Durkheim’s work, although it was unarticulated. Furthermore, there also existed a sense of the importance of the special communication among individuals in altered states of consciousness in this phase of ritual. I conclude that the Social II is rooted in Durkheim’s work, and, through its coupling with the idea of *communitas*, bears at least some similarity to his concept of collective effervescence and its effect on and function in society. In consequence, E. Turner’s contention that it is not the same as the “Social I, the Durkheimian structural social” is problematic (op.cit.:46).

I suggest two factors may contribute to the problem. First, it implies concurrence with the increasingly disputed view that Durkheim was a

staunch positivist and saw the social only in structural terms. I have argued otherwise. Second, a problem of understanding and perhaps translation of thought arises because Durkheim was writing, in French, from a paradigm very different than the one we use today, one that did not include an understanding of, or language to describe, concepts that we know today as liminality, anti-structure, consciousness, altered states of consciousness, transcendence, and psychic unity in social gatherings. For Durkheim, the social bond seems to have been essentially the same, whether in the structural or anti-structural social modes, but much more intensely experienced in the latter, in situations of collective effervescence. As Fields points out, Durkheim describes a real power that is felt when human beings assemble and use what today we call drivers to transport themselves beyond themselves. Durkheim saw that the mechanism is universal, the power is real, the state of mind is altered and the effect is transformative. It is felt not only physically but also mentally, in the group's "conscience collective.....its conscience and consciousness" (1995,xli-xlii).

Nevertheless, the characterization of the bonds among individuals arising out of social structure and the concomitant " roles, statuses, classes,etc." (V. Turner, 1979:43) as Social I is useful, if not necessarily Durkheimian . It serves to underscore the intensity of the social bond that arises in what Victor Turner called "certain kinds of liminality (that) may be conducive to the emergence of *communitas*" (1992: 60). It also opens up the idea of a

Social II which is linked to altered states of consciousness. This is explored more fully in the following chapters.

Chapter 3

SACRED DANCE, SACRED SYMBOL

Dance has been defined as the intentional use of the human body to make patterned movements in space and time (Royce, 1977: 3-5). In fact, Royce suggests that dance derives its impact from this use of the body to incite emotion. Several channels of expression are employed: kinaesthetic activity/response; visual; aural; touch; smell; body heat (ibid.). More generally, dance can be considered to have some of the attributes of transformation ritual. Williams, echoing Langer, sees dancing as “the termination, through action, of a certain kind of symbolic transformation of experience” (1978:213). In this Chapter, I support my use of sacred dance as a vehicle to study Social II by reviewing various perspectives on dance and tracing the historical linkage of sacred dance and ritual. I follow this with a discussion of selected authors’ work on the use of the body in dance to activate various levels of consciousness through movement and symbol. Finally, I demonstrate that the link with mythology ensures the sacred symbols, Shiva and Christ, are present for the dancers.

3.1 Perspectives on Dance

Dance can be examined in both its structural and functional aspects. A structural analysis, which examines the relationships among components of a dance, is a grammar of dance. It can be used to elucidate ethnochoreography, changes over time, and cultural values and norms with respect to creativity (Royce, op.cit.:64-66).

In both non-literate and complex, urban societies, dance is multifunctional. It can be used to transmit knowledge; to delineate personal and group boundaries; to generate and maintain sentiments; to provide cathartic release; to give shape and meaning to human existence through ritual drama; and to enhance social bonds by generating a sense of communion among individuals. It can reflect and validate the social organization of a group; provide social diversion or recreational activity; reflect aesthetic values or economic subsistence patterns; and it can be a means of secular and religious expression (Royce, op.cit; Spencer, 1985).

Hanna, working from a dynamic communication model of dance, suggests that not all dance has as its aim the creation of visual images, and that motion has inherent value (1979). She points out that dance, while common across cultures, is nevertheless culturally patterned and meaningful. Echoing Williams, she suggests that even mechanically performed dance retains its essence as symbolically transformed experience.

There are, then, a variety of perspectives on dance, ranging from dance as a medium of enculturation and bonding, to dance as a means of communicating with the supernatural.

3.2 Sacred Dance and Ritual

Sacred dance can be defined as dance that speaks to an awareness of, or possibly the intention to connect with, the divine, the holy, or the transcendental. It may have been the earliest form of human ritual and it still survives today as a modern form of ritual.

Lange examines the historical use of dance as a vehicle for spiritual activities. He notes that dance, religion and medicine appeared together at the dawn of civilization and suggests that dance was used both for union with the divine and for group and individual psychotherapy (1975: 61-95). Eliade suggests that in the most ancient times all dance was sacred, and modeled after something superhuman. Dance always imitated an archetypal gesture or commemorated a mythical moment (1985).

Stewart suggests that in prehistoric times dance and worship were the same: "It is the oldest, most elemental form of religious expression, repetitive rhythmical movements being essential to the process of union with the deity and the cosmic flow" (2000: 3). In her exploration of sacred dance and women's spirituality, she traces the evolution of sacred dance back to archaic forms of goddess worship and the essential role of the priestess as divine

interpreter through dance. The priestess–dancer was important in the ancient civilizations of Greece, Egypt, India, Persia, Pompeii, Rome and the biblical lands and cultures. In time the priestly caste arose and took over many interpretive functions, and the priestesses gradually became temple performers. Eventually dance became largely entertainment, initially executed by women for men and subsequently by both sexes for mixed audiences or for social and personal pleasure. Stewart suggests that groups of women, coming together in sacred dance, may reawaken the priestess, and value her as a spiritual guide (ibid.:29-47). She maintains that classical Indian dancing, even today, still retains some of the essence of the dancer as priestess.

While down through the ages dance has been associated with either art or the magico-religious complex, as an art form it evolved both into pure entertainment and into drama and theatre. As Sachs pointed out in 1937, “The divinely inspired dancer has become a rarity in the occidental world” (55). In Western culture today, and especially in North America, dance is largely secular, associated with entertainment, performance, or cultural continuity and community bonding through folk dancing. Yet even in the face of historical opposition from the Christian church, the dominant Western religious authority, sacred dance survived. Referring to various folk dances associated with Christianity, Sachs suggested they were survivors of an inner ecstatic life dating from paleolithic times and never completely extinguished

despite innumerable cultural evolutions and restraints(1937, also Stewart, 2000). Today, there appears to be a resurgence of interest in sacred dance, with the Sacred Dance Guild (North American) currently listing approximately 700 members (2002). A quick perusal of the membership list demonstrates that the boundaries between sacred and secular dance are somewhat blurred. A number of dance companies, or dancers, offer performances which include themes such as the environment, nature and community, and are not specifically based on recognizable religious texts. However, others perform, or practice in small groups, dances based on themes from sacred texts or mythologies. It is evident that today sacred dance still meets the needs for rituals to support specific belief systems and thus is an appropriate vehicle to explore Social II.

3.3 Dance and the Body-Consciousness Link

Dance can impact consciousness through its power of communication and its association with emotion. As a means of communication, dance carries information via several channels simultaneously - sounds, costumes, smells, body heat and body postures (Royce, 1977). A number of scholars have examined the power of dance to facilitate a profound level of communication among individuals by looking at the dancer's use of the body. Dance is seen as much more than a language and system of signs. It is considered not only a social experience, but a medium of profound communication at the physiologic and symbolic levels, rooted in

predisposing psychobiological processes. For example, in an exploration of the performer-audience connection, Hannah points to Nijinsky's concern with maximizing the kinesthetic response (1983: 39). She suggests that, through kinesthetic sympathy, the audience experiences the performer's movements vicariously. The resultant changes in nerves and muscles evoke emotions and sensations similar to those experienced by the original mover. This idea of kinesthetic response is similar to the theory of *rasa* which I will discuss in the next chapter in relation to Bharata Natyam. It may also have a biological substrate in the "as if loop" which I will also discuss.

Williams argues that the effect of human dance cannot be explained by stimulus-response theory (as is applied to animals), but that dance is "felt" through its "deep structures" (1978,225-6), which, by implication, resonate with some underlying psychobiological process. Hanna maintains that in the West, non-verbal communication is repressed, or at least not encouraged. This attitude may be reflected in the scholarly differences with respect to whether expressive body movement is a culturally determined level of communication, or whether it reflects universal human patterns, some of which can be manipulated and combined to produce cultural significance (1979).

The latter view, that expressive body movement reflects universal human patterns, is one of the foundations of modern dance (psycho-) therapy. A basic principle of dance therapy is that dance can both be motivated by

emotion and can have an effect on it. Dance sometimes leads to cathartic release, and sometimes develops, refines and completely transforms an emotional state (Chodorow, 1991). A key aspect of the work with movement in psychotherapy is the presence of the witness, because it is the relationship of trust between witness and mover that facilitates the therapeutic process. The witness functions on a range of different levels, from simple observation to “empathic relatedness, emotional attunement” (ibid.:152).

Chodorow anchors dance therapy in Jungian theory, and maintains, following first Darwin and more recently Tompkins and Stewart, that there is a limited range of primary, innate emotions, organized around innate potential images, and these have universal patterns of expression through processes that take place in the layers of consciousness. When the innate image is somehow mirrored by a corresponding life experience, they unite to form a symbol (or to confer symbolic power) and release emotion. Innate potential images are found in dreams, myths and fairy tales, religion and culture. The conscious aspect of the symbol is the particular experience or stimulus; the unconscious aspect is the innate, universal, potential image, or archetype, which is released and becomes personal in the process of penetrating to consciousness (1991: 62-82).

The work of various dance scholars, then, suggests that sacred dance and movement can both express emotion and be generated by it. It can also evoke emotion in an observer, and in so doing generate a strong social bond

which is associated with a sense of being united to, or merging at some level of consciousness with, other individuals or a transcendent, divine or universal entity. Again, this echoes the Hindu concept of *rasa*, and I will explore this further in the next chapter.

3.4 Forms of Sacred Dance

It is clear from the foregoing that sacred dance is an appropriate vehicle from which to explore the nature of Social II. Yet, as Stewart points out, there are many forms of sacred dance (op.cit). Some, such as the classical Indian, are highly structured and disciplined and closely linked to sacred texts. Others, such as the Dances of Universal Peace, are more free flowing and may be associated with concepts rather than specific texts. While dance by its nature tends to incorporate elements of ecstasy, some forms, such as the Sufi *darwish* or whirling dance are specifically intended to lead to transcendence (Stewart, op.cit.:187).

Hanna classifies dance generally according to several typologies (1979:55-56). Those based on elements of movement, body emphasis and gender do not speak to the sacred in a society. However, a typology based on aspects of participation includes situations in which dancer-audience interaction is significant. A typology based on consciousness includes situations in which the purpose is to achieve extraordinary metaphysical experience, whether in a religious or secular context. Extending Edith Turner's concept of Social II would suggest a blending of the latter two

typologies, to include situations with both transcendental purpose and significant performer-other connection. In effect, such a perspective looks to the intention and depth of meaning sought by the participants, whether audience, supporter or dancer, rather than to a culturally imposed purpose of a dance. It facilitates the understanding of linkages among group, dancer, and altered states of consciousness because it recognizes that no dance form is pure and consistent as to purpose. For example, in the context of dance in general, Bauman points out that a performance is intended to assist spectators to develop an alternate awareness of their situation and perhaps a sense of emotional release, by evoking another reality or a more intense experience of the existing one (1986). At the same time, Stewart points out that in sacred dance ritual, there is not a division in which the performer-artist performs the symbolic action and the audience-recipient contemplates it theoretically or judges it. Instead, "all members of the assembled community participate in some way, either actively or supportively" (op.cit.:215).

The links that make that collective participation possible are symbol and mythology, as Prattis points out (1997). In a discussion on Sacred Dance and Cultural Bridges, he maintains that myth provides "...the general foundation from which the specific features of sacred dance emerge, providing a symbolic transformation vehicle for both dancer and audience. In other words, sacred dance is mythic enactment" (ibid.:157).

The same general thought is expressed by Meyerhoff, who holds that ritual includes precise, authentic and accurate forms, and specific language,

gestures and dress, to suggest something apart from the ordinary, having to do with authoritative and axiomatic principles to guide our lives (1983).

When rituals employ sacred symbols, these link the participants to wider collectivities, including the ancestors and the not yet born, and to their inner selves through stages of the life cycle, making individual history into a “phenomenological reality” (ibid.:152).

In a later chapter I will discuss transformation. Here, I want to establish that, for the dancers I interviewed, two important mythologically-based symbols are present in their dances. I will first discuss the importance of (Shiva) Nataraja in Indian thought, and then make reference to Christ in the Christian context.

3.5 Sacred Symbols

A key symbol in Indian dance is Shiva Nataraja, Lord of the Dance (see figure 1, following). The many iconic variations of Nataraja originate in the 13th century bronzes associated with the Temple of Shiva at Cidambaram in Tamil Nadu state, in South India. The dance form Bharata Natyam evolved from earlier dances at this temple, and remains particularly closely associated with Nataraja (Khokar, 1979). Three of the Bharata Natyam dancers I interviewed were born and raised in India and completed many years of training there. One dancer, (C), studied at the home of his teacher near the temple at Cidambaram. The fourth dancer was trained for several years in

Figure 1

years in India, and has subsequently spent much time in India, developing an intimate familiarity with Hindu culture.

Swami has pointed out (2000) that a dance space, such as a stage, is made sacred by the addition of small alters holding statues of Nataraja and offerings of flowers. In recent months I have attended an arangatram, a young dancer's first public recital (Gaston, 1996), and a dance competition. At both, such alters were prominently featured. Even when dance is presented as entertainment, the dance maintains a sacred aspect. One of the dancers I interviewed, (C), spoke of making an offering to the spectator-participants : "When you are performing, you are giving a gift to the audience, an offering....". As the discussion which follows shows, the image of Nataraja is so important to Hindu culture as to be pervasive, and dancers trained in Bharata Natyam carry the symbol with them mentally, if not physically, each time they dance.

3.6 Why Shiva Dances

In India, classical dance is a symbolic language which portrays mythological characters as living in the world. Through its musical rhythms it invites spectators into that world in time, and through its sculptural poses, to that world in space. Indian aesthetics assumes a fundamental interrelationship of all the arts and considers dance, with its integration of symbol, sound, movement and rhythm, to represent the synthesis of all aspects of creative activity. The Hindu mind views the creative process as a

means of suggesting or recreating a vision of divine truth, however fleeting it may be. It regards art as a means of experiencing a state of bliss akin to the absolute bliss attained with release from life (Coomaraswamy, 1957).

Coomaraswamy maintains that the essence of Indian philosophical thought is the constant intuition of the unity of all life, and that the recognition of this unity is the highest good and the ultimate freedom (1957: 4-18). While other individuals have shared this thought, only in India has it been made the basis of society and education. In India, philosophy is seen not as a “mental gymnastic”, but as the salvation from ignorance-“philosophy is the key to the map of life” (ibid.).

Nataraja, the form of the dancing god Shiva, is an ubiquitous image. A fusion of ideas from the north, south, Aryans, Dravidians, Vedics and Brahmins, it permeates Indian culture (Devi, 1972). A static representation of the fluidity and energy of the dance, it holds an overpowering fascination for the Indian mind (Vatsayan, 1968). Nataraja is a complex image, projecting an array of polyvalent and multivocal symbols (V. Turner, 1966). Such a highly condensed symbol can be considered a text which reflects Indian culture, values and philosophy.

Coomaraswamy (op.cit.) holds that the root idea behind the many dances of Shiva Nataraja is the manifestation of primal rhythmic energy. He draws on the sacred texts to ascribe a threefold significance to Nataraja's dance. It is the image of Shiva's rhythmic play as the source of all movement

within the cosmos, represented by the arch. The purpose of the dance is to release the souls of men from the snares of illusion. And the place of the dance, Cidambaram (in India), the centre of the Universe, is within the heart. Coomaswaramy maintains that we moderns can scarcely do better than admire the ancient Indians' sophistication of thought and creative power of expression in static form. He suggests that modern science's postulate of an energy that lies behind all phenomena cannot be more clearly expressed.

Eliade suggested that the religious experience presupposes the partition of the world into the polarity of sacred and profane zones (1969). Cosmologies and mythologies offer an enormous variety of solutions to "the enigmas of polarity and rupture, antagonism and alternance, dualism and union of opposites" (1969:133). Gombrich has pointed out that ancient Indian cosmology is very complicated, in part because no idea was ever abandoned, it was simply incorporated and allowed to exist alongside a new perspective (1975:111).

In Hinduism, the enigmas described by Eliade emerge as responses to the ancient question of how one can live in the world, enjoy its pleasures and procreate, yet renounce the world and free the spirit. In some cultures this paradox is transformed into a struggle between God and man, spirit and flesh, the hereafter and the present. Hinduism's solution is not to resolve the paradox by forcing compromise, but to hold the tension of opposing ideas. The correlative opposites are in effect not a paradox, but a set of

interchangeable identities that form essential relationships (O'Flaherty, 1973). Each 'potentiates' the other.

Nataraja, the Lord of the Dance, explores the relationship of opposites and exposes the underlying unity. Dance exists in time and space, but cannot be held by either. It engages the relationship between consciousness and the body. Nataraja speaks to all and teaches us to savor the joys of simple pleasures-laughter, music, dance- while remaining aware of cosmic and metaphysical dimensions-the need for suffering and the randomness of death. He invokes the past and presages the future (ibid.).

The ancient Vedic texts developed the idea that the world started with a golden germ of fire which sprang up within primordial water. Thus a crucial theme in Indian mythology was established: fire/water, heat/moisture, and sun/rain are polarities or binary combinations which each require the other to exist, and which transform each other. Eventually this theme was used to explain the relationship of microcosm to macrocosm (Gombrich, 1975).

By encapsulating and absorbing archaic precepts and thoughts, the ancient Hindus tended to view moral, ethical or philosophical problems as the interplay of natural powers. Prattis points out that this is the concept of structure and antistructure applied beyond the societal level (personal communication). Constantly in flux, the natural powers influence gods and humans through impulses to desire, asceticism, passion, anger. On the mythological plane, these forces develop to an extreme and are then balanced

through transformation. At the cosmic level, transformation through the interaction of fire and water animates the flow of vital forces within the universe. Opposites are not synthesized or dissolved, they are kept in suspension. Yet time flows; the universe is boundless and wonderfully complicated; everything occurs simultaneously; many possibilities exist together (O'Flaherty, 1973:316-8).). I have suggested elsewhere that the very complex figure of Nataraja incorporates some of these polarities and possibilities and seems to mediate between macro- and microcosm, connecting the individual to the entire universe and the Ultimate (Posen, 2001). Nataraja symbolizes unity.

3.7 The Presence of Christ

While the image of Jesus is not nearly as culturally pervasive for Christians as Nataraja is for Hindus, it is nevertheless a common image, particularly for those actively involved in Christian worship services. I interviewed two people who danced to themes based on the Christian bible, the mythology associated with the life of Christ. Both were raised in actively Christian homes. Both are members of a church and participate in services regularly. Both see dance as a partner in the liturgical activities in their respective churches. Both dance, at their church services, to themes such as “the hands of Jesus” and “carrying the cross”(Dancer F). It is apparent that the image or symbol of Jesus is a significant presence for these dancers and that in their sacred dance situations, they bring to awareness the image of

Jesus, the symbol of love and compassion, the inward experience of God in Christian thought (Henry, 1992).

In summary, then, sacred dance is clearly an appropriate vehicle to explore Social II. Its ancient link with ritual and the pervasive presence of key sacred symbols set it aside from other types of dance. These symbols arise out of the shared mythology of the participants. Dance is linked to underlying psychobiological processes, and can express emotion and evoke it.

Chapter 4

CONNECTION AND INTENT

An essential feature of Social II is the sense of connection or unity among individuals collectively in the altered state of consciousness. I maintain that the basis of this bond is intent and trust, and movement facilitates its formation. In addition, the sense of unity permits symbol to activate unconscious material which is processed and leads to transformation. In this chapter I begin the discussion of my case study, and reference my own experience, to make the linkage among the altered state, the sense of connection, movement and the importance of purpose or intent. In the next, I will discuss the process of transformation.

I start by providing an initial description of the dancers, and follow with a discussion of the experience of the Bharata Natyam dancers and its relation to the underlying theory. After establishing that the dancers enter into an altered state and connect to something beyond themselves, I highlight the importance of intent or purpose for both dancer and audience or group, referencing my own experience. I then discuss the experience of the two individuals who perform sacred Christian dance, drawing on the literature on

movement to illuminate it. Finally, I look to a biological approach to consciousness to explain the effect of intent.

4.1 The Dancers

All six dancers interviewed live in large North American cities, and perform at various locations on this continent. The Bharata Natyam dancers also perform in India on occasion. All six dancers work with groups, or perform for audiences, which may not have similar cultural backgrounds. This point is important to the discussion of intent which follows later in the chapter.

The four Bharata Natyam dancers were all mature individuals trained in India over many years, including the one who was not born into Hindu culture, as mentioned in the last chapter. While all performed Bharata Natyam, they also were expert in other forms of sacred Indian dance. One has been dancing sacred dance for about three decades, two for almost five decades, and one for almost six. They are very mature, experienced professional dancers who have completely internalized the movements, the *mudras* or hand gestures, and the mythology. At the same time, two of the four engage in other professions unrelated to dance, and all four teach dance extensively.

The two individuals who dance in free-flowing form to Christian mythology are also very mature dancers with some two to three decades of experience each. They do not perform professionally, or as cultural

entertainment, but confine their dancing to liturgical situations as well as teaching, workshops and group study. They also have internalized the Christian mythology on which their dances are based.

All six individuals who were interviewed were guaranteed anonymity. The sacred dance community in North America is closely connected, and most of those interviewed are members. Some did not want to be identified for this study. The tape recordings and detailed notes of the interviews were coded to ensure protection of identity, and each dancer designated by a letter (A to F) for purposes of direct quotes. I interviewed the dancers for one and a half to two hours and asked similar questions in each interview, in order to understand the feelings they experienced during the dance, the effect on them of dancing with others in contrast to dancing alone, the implication of technique and movement, and their motivation for dancing. Appendix I is a summary of the interviews, and Appendix II is the Interview Guide which I used.

4.2 The Bharata Natyam Experience

It was clear that the Bharata Natyam dancers enter an altered state when they dance, although they did not speak of it in such specific terms. Rather, they spoke of meditation and concentration: "I get completely involved....it's like a meditation...it takes you completely into another world....because I have been dancing for so many years, that's my familiar world...it's so comfortable, really energizing"(B); "When I dance I feel joy

and total concentration...” (D); “...it’s like a total meditation...there is a stillness, and ...everything is firing off right...you know if that stillness is there and you can't predict it's going to happen” (A); “When I’m performing, I get totally involved in giving my best....when I dance alone, a lot of things fall away...” (C).

4.2.1 *Rasa* and Bharata Natyam

This general acceptance of the entry into the altered state reflects the training of the Bharata Natyam dancer, which in turn reflects Hindu philosophy and the concept of *rasa*. *Rasa* is defined variously as “ ‘juice, flavour’; mood; the essence of an artistic experience, aesthetic tenor, aesthetics (Gaston,op.cit.:371). The theory of *rasa* underscores the importance of clarity of purpose, or intent, as well as a sense of connectedness.

Bowers (1967), Morris (1994), Coomaraswamy (1957), Davis (1991), Devi (1972), Khokar (1979) and Gaston (1996) are several scholars who discuss the aesthetic basis of Indian arts, but Vatsayan (1968) is one of the most thorough and most accessible writers. In his overview of Indian literature and the arts, he explains that a key Hindu concept concerns artistic creation as a means of realizing the “Universal Being” (ibid.:5). An individual who practices any form of spiritual, mental or physical discipline develops an adeptness and efficiency in activities he/she undertakes. This in turn leads to the ability to concentrate mental energy solely on that activity

undertaken with the specific purpose at issue. It also leads to a “perspicacity of vision which enables one to see the underlying unity of everything”(*ibid.*). Cosmic sacrifice is the offering of the best that one can do to the best that one seeks. Thus, the traditional Indian artist was involved in a discipline to attain bliss, the Infinite, the Universal Being in his individual self. His challenge was to suggest or reveal this Infinite in his art, through finite symbols such as stone, language, sound and movement. The Indian artist did not regard art creation as an exercise in giving universal significance to his own individual experience. His art was successful if it achieved the supreme artistic purpose of creating a state of bliss, both for himself and for the recipient. Thus classical Indian aesthetics, like religion, was not limited to ideas, conflict, thought or pain and suffering, but was the realm of the spirit. The artist’s preoccupation was with the means or symbols through which the states of being could be suggested or recreated, not with subjective personal experience. Only when the artist had attained a calm state of mind, a state of detached emotion, could he symbolically present aspects of life and recreate a similar state of being in the recipient of his art. From this fundamental belief about the aesthetic experience emerged the theory of *rasa*, which underlies Indian arts (Vatsayan, *op.cit.*)

Rasa has two aspects. One is the evoked state in which transcendental bliss is experienced. This corresponds to the states of meditative calm and peace described by the dancers, and particularly the feeling of joy they

describe: “..there is so much joy...it’s very tranquilizing...it gives you energy back...”(B); “Dance gives me joy...and the use of the human body fascinates me”(C); “I like to do life-affirming and joyous dance....” (A).

The second aspect of *rasa* is the sentiments, moods and states (permanent and transitory) which are the object of a presentation. In effect, the second aspect is the content of the art which has as its objective the first aspect. Vatsayan points out that the two aspects of *rasa* gave rise to two sets of discussions in the classical Indian texts on aesthetics. One, found in the various Indian philosophical schools of thought, was an enquiry into the nature of the experience. Despite their different approaches, all the schools agreed that “the aesthetic experience at the highest level was essentially different from any experience in the empirical world”(ibid.: 7). This distinct quality of the aesthetic experience requires an initiated and responsive mind. The Indian artist trained in classical traditions thus begins with the premise that his ultimate aim is to attain the Universal Being, a perfect state of release, and that his art is the instrument through which he reveals to the responsive mind the reality of that release as he experiences it. This supports statements by at least one dancer regarding the intention to carry out an obligation or make an offering to the audience: “My teacher taught me that art is like a flowing river...if you have art, you give it...when you are performing, you are giving a gift to the audience, an offering....” (C).

The other discussion arising from the two aspects of *rasa* concerned the techniques of the Indian arts, the rules within which these *rasa* states can be evoked (op. cit). Thus, classical dance traditions dictate patterns of movements of limbs, just as classical principles of measurement and stance guide sculpture. Indian dance combines the salient features of the other arts -- drama, music, painting or costume and form or sculpture, along with movement to provide a concrete manifestation of the inner state described earlier. The dancer accomplishes this manifestation, or attempts to, by using the combination of art forms in the dance to evoke *bhavas*, the emotions or aesthetic states expressed by the forms.(Gaston defines *bhava* as feeling,op.cit.:365).

Classical Bharata Natyam, for example, has seven parts. The first, *Alarippu*, is an abstract dance which is also a process of offering to the audience. *Thodana Magalam* , an invocation, follows, and is succeeded by a piece of abstract dance, *Jathiswaram*. Next comes *Sabdam*, an expressive dance, followed by *Varnam*, which features both abstract and expressive aspects. The final sections, *Padam* and *Thillana* are expressive and abstract respectively. (Vatsayan, op.cit.; Swami). The four Bharata Natyam dancers all referenced the importance and value of the dance discipline: “ The discipline and structure of the dance helps...”(A); “The technique becomes second nature to you, so you can bring out different aspects (each time she dances)”(B); “Once you work out the choreography, it becomes automatic...the discipline leads to freedom, actually...” (C); “the discipline

makes it automatic...I don't need to remember the steps, I feel it and everything falls into place" (D). Prattis maintains that the timing and precision of the form (a succession of symbolic hand signals) allows the body to act as a lens through which breath is consciously drawn to magnify the experience (1997:155-169). I explore this further in the next chapter.

4.2.2 The Sense of Connection and Purpose

As Swami points out, when a skilled dancer creates *bhava* and a prepared observer experiences *rasa*, a sacred connection occurs (2000). My Bharata Natyam dancers expressed this sacred connection in different ways. Two spoke of a sense of connection to the characters portrayed: "When I dance, it's not the stage for me; I really feel I am there (where the story takes place) with the others (the other characters), beside them..."(B); "When I dance, I become the persons in the myth...I am Sita, in the forest, feeling the pain....if I am Krishna, I see the ...gopis dancing around me"(D). This dancer also mentioned a sense of connection to her partners, the singer and drummer: "When the music is heavenly, you get carried away...you don't think about the choreography, it flows...a live singer and drummer are important because we can read each other's moods..". One identified a connection to the audience: "...the crowd can be reinforcing, especially if they are intense....you definitely get a sense of the crowd...you just feel it" (A). Another, referring to the offering of his art, said: "....audiences know, people don't realize how sensitive audiences are....there's something in the

vibrations, you can feel if they are with you....if the audience is not, you have to work very hard to draw them into the emotion” (C).

This dancer also mentioned connecting in the sense of a greater purpose: “what I am doing is taking characters or themes that have a universal message....touching the great souls, the great themes, of the universe....and connecting them (to the audience and the day- to- day world)”. For him, the dance, the responsibility to the audience and the creative process are deeply interwoven: “I do deep research (on the dance subject)...they have come to share my art and I have a responsibility to give them the best I have...in the process of creation, there are times when you have to sit back and talk to yourself....to rejuvenate yourself...when you’re working on something, even when you are sleeping, the process never stops”. This sense of purpose reflects the underlying responsibility of the artist according to Indian aesthetics -to represent symbolically various aspects of life and evoke a similar sense or state of being in the recipient of the art.

As explained in the previous pages, Indian aesthetics incorporates the realm of the spirit, and the dancers all expressed this by referring to a clear intent, beyond personal expression, for their dance. This intent may be manifested in ritual and preparation. Dancer A likes “a suggestion of ritual at the beginning (of the dance)...which opens it up...and then you develop it”. Dancer D maintains “ the dance itself is a ritual and follows a program...I do exercises to prepare the body and say words and passages”. Two see an

overtly spiritual purpose : “Dance is my prayer and meditation and means of worship” (B); “ I find a spiritual element in dancing...it relieves stress...as soon as I start to dance I feel instant peace...” (D). Dancer C sees an almost transcendent purpose: “I’m a little messenger, taking the work of the great souls and offering them to the world...a transmitter....it is all energy”. The one dancer who was not raised in Hindu culture (A) had a more limited intent: “I just like doing it, that’s all...there’s no rationale. It has other dimensions, intellectual, artistic, academic, creative...there’s always another dimension, like teaching...it enriches my life”.

4.2.3 The Audience / Group

It is clear from the foregoing that the dancers themselves have a clear purpose, beyond personal expression, for their dance. But what of the audience for the dance? The principles of Indian aesthetics, as explained earlier, suggest that to experience the distinct quality of the aesthetic requires an initiated and responsive mind. What is the nature of such audience or group preparation? The Bharata Natyam dancers who were raised in Hindu culture made it clear that the audience’s cultural familiarity with or knowledge of the myths, while helpful, is not essential. Dancer B said: “there’s not really a difference (between Indian and non –Indian audiences)...some pieces are universal...some pieces require an understanding of the story, so I make a voiceover or do a little narration at the beginning...once that’s there, it doesn’t make a difference”. Dancer C

made a similar point: “..dance is a universal expression, and people are people, people have the same emotions...we portray human emotions...Indians (in the audience) might know a little bit about the mythology of the subjects, but everybody feels the same emotions...”. His comments clearly reflect the same ideas expressed by the various dance researchers referenced in the last chapter, with regard to the ability of dance to both evoke and express emotion.

Dancer D best summarized the general feeling, and the sense of the dancer's responsibility to forge a bond with the audience, “They (the audience) should be appreciative....if they are only there for socializing, to meet and greet their friends, it doesn't work...I just concentrate on the first three rows...because they're the interested ones...the dancer is responsible for bonding with the audience and the rapport is there only if the audience and the dancer are in tune...both must appreciate the dance. Even in North America, a totally non-Indian audience ...if it is appreciative...is better than an Indian crowd because Indians here tend not to appreciate what they have...In India it is better, there is cultural appreciation...”.

I can attest to this bond from my own experience as an audience member. I have been an enthusiastic spectator at several performances of Indian dance, particularly Bharata Natyam, and in an attempt to understand better have even taken a few lessons in that demanding form. On two occasions, I have been quite profoundly moved by the performance of a highly skilled dancer. One danced a very traditional performance of a

classical text, with English voiceover to explain the story, before a large audience of mixed cultural background. I felt all the emotions as she danced them - anger, joy, fear and pain, and found myself weeping copiously. The other danced, before a tiny audience of mainly Indians, a stunning performance of great emotional complexity, using Bharata Natyam technique, to a song by the pop singer Sting, whose work has little appeal for me. I was transported, becoming completely unaware of the words, the music and the surroundings, utterly absorbed in the dance and the feeling of being profoundly connected to the dancer resonating with deep emotion. It was unforgettable. Clearly, on both these occasions, the skill of the Bharata Natyam dancer was key, as Swami pointed out (see earlier). In addition, given my limited knowledge of Indian mythology, and my complete inability to relate to Sting, it must have been my openness to the experience, and my appreciation for the dancers' efforts, as mentioned by dancer D, that generated the sense of connection. This openness is a form of intent or support.

It is clear, then, that the four Bharata Natyam dancers enter an altered state of consciousness, and feel a sense of unity with something or some group, a connection which links them to something greater than themselves. This sense includes the idea of unmediated communication, whether feeling the vibrations or somehow just knowing. *Communitas* is present. To have this experience, the intent of the dancer and the audience is key. I will explore

this further later in the chapter, but first want to return to the other two dancers.

4.3 The Free Form Dancers

In contrast to the dancers from the Indian tradition, the two who performed free form dance related to Christian mythology were more loquacious in describing their experiences, and expressed wonder at their feelings associated with entering an altered state, particularly the first time as dancers: “Where did I go? ...I was in another space, another time, lifted from somewhere.....You leave your body in some sense, or maybe it is the opposite, maybe you totally integrate within the body and give that up for something greater...I don’t know how to explain it.....the whole thing exists in this other space....it is like there is no time and no space....you can’t go back to it, it exists there...it’s kind of like sleep, what is happening during that eight hours is kind of hard to define, it’s a very fuzzy thing..... it is like being hyperaware and unaware at exactly the same time...”(F). Dancer E described a dance she and a partner had performed for a small group at a liturgical gathering, a dance which turned out to be quite spontaneously different than the one they had rehearsed:“... we looked at each other and asked ‘what was that...were we possessed or what?’ ...we were in and out of a trance space...off on cloud 5587...we hadn’t planned the movements...how did we both know to do with each other what we did....now (after several

years of dancing together) that happens a lot more...it really does become transcendent...it's overwhelming...".

Their comments call to mind an example provided by Prattis. He directed the meditative experience of a company of highly skilled dancers, and requested that they visualize being under the sea playing with dolphins, and then dance it. They produced "instant choreography"(1997:163). He points out that "It was not directed or ordered, yet a perfect synchronicity between dancers resulted. They had the dance skills and sensitivity to collectively sense what everyone else was creating" (ibid.).

I suggest there was another element binding the dancers with whom Prattis worked. They were a company who had worked together, and had together strayed into the area of sacred dance and experienced some disturbing effects (ibid.:162). As a result, a certain level of trust must have been established among them. My two Christian dancers both noted the importance of this element. (E) said: "...it's about the relationship (with the partner)...we're two physically different people who move in different ways...but when we are out there (in the trance space) we move as one person...it's the trust that we've built.....the closest thing to it is sex, where you are trusting the other...you surrender, and you're moving as one....". The other dancer, (F), broadened the trust to include the movement itself: "...there is a synergy...the longer you have danced with someone, if you feel you have that synergy, you are more called to dance together, the more often

that can happen, it is not just a personal transportation, it is not just corporate, it is even a little beyond that; there is a trust that goes past that other element; there is a trust in the movement...without thinking about it or planning a movement you know you can do it because you trust that they will be there (to catch you) or that you feel connected to them at some level". It is clear that, in the absence of a highly structured dance form, trust among participants is essential to establishing a harmonious and spontaneous choreography.

4.3.1 Movement and Body

Both dancers stressed the importance of movement to their sense of functioning in the altered state and the link to the body: Dancer F described her approach : "...go to the essence of the word, the music, the theme, the emotion, the spiritual sense, the magic, the mystery, go to the essence of that, don't try to create the movement but let the movement create the theme and then go with it.....an honest, authentic response....coming from the body...". (E) also suggested the movement comes from the body: "...you have to let go so that the body, not the mind, creates the movement...we're dancing at the molecular level all the time....when there is movement there is energy...a vibration...there is a transference of something that is not material....dancing does it for me because it lets my body be first, and it feeds information into my soul and mind and integrates it".

I suggest the dancers are describing a situation in which their normal awareness is suspended and, through movement, they are drawing on the link between body and consciousness to generate feelings and emotions in the altered state. This conclusion echoes the work of Blackening, who maintains that just as thought can generate movement, movement can generate thought and feeling (1977:2-28).

In contrast, the Bharata Natyam dancers did not refer specifically to any relationship between their movements and the feelings they evoke. One dancer, C, suggested “if the audience is not with you, you have to work very hard to draw them into the emotion”. One of the key features of Bharata Natyam is the exact and precise movement of the limbs, hands and feet, in fact the whole body. Thus, for the dancer, working harder implies a concern with the execution of the movements, their precision, timing, flow, etc. I conclude that for the Bharata Natyam dancers, the importance of specific and precise movements is assumed, as it is built into the structure and discipline of the dance. In fact, since the dance rests on the philosophical base of *rasa*, there is in its performance an implicit assumption that movement, precisely and carefully carried out, is key to manipulation of consciousness through the evocation of moods.

4.3.2 The *Spanda*

The psychiatrist Ramey recognized the essentiality of movement, and by extension, rhythm, in his claim that much of brain function is essentially

movement, and that the “constant activity in our brains and throughout our bodies tells us that movement is the ongoing life force without which we could not survive”(2001:155). Many centuries ago, Indian philosophers came to much the same conclusion. Those who regarded Shiva as supreme, the source and essence of the universe, as well as its destroyer, developed the philosophic system of Saivism. This system posits a “force which rules the universe,....which reproduces and destroys, and in performing one of these acts necessarily performs the other, seeing that both are but aspects of change.....” (Reyna,1971:230). Kashmiri Saivism maintains that many transformations take place within consciousness at every moment, but conscious being, the sense of self, remains the same. The world we experience consists of such transformations, which are vibrations, or *spandas*, in the being of Shiva (Raju, 1967: 510-511). The ancient teachings consider *spanda* as the throb of energy, or impulse, which arises as Shiva’s first thought of creation (Hartzell, 2000:46-47). For a practitioner of yoga, the *spanda* is an “inner spark of intent”, a throb felt in the body that is expressed by movement, or the determination to carry out a movement (Ballentine, 2001:77). At a philosophical level, this proto-movement has two directions - in one, it unfolds into manifold existence, in the other it folds back into the formless absolute, the ground of consciousness. This interplay between opposites, creation and destruction, form and formlessness, is the essence of dance. Hartzell, in a study of folk dance, maintains that “to dance... is to experience the *spanda*” (op.cit.: 48).

4.3.3 Movement and Consciousness

There is a biological basis for discerning a link between movement and consciousness. A few decades ago, Montague highlighted the work of Birdwhistell, Condon and Hall in revealing the dimension of human communication that is synchrony or rhythm (1979). Their research demonstrated that “persons involved in social interaction unconsciously move ‘in sync’ with one another through a rhythmic coordination of gestures and movements which exhibit all the characteristics of a dance” (ibid.:149). Even in the apparently disorganized activity of children on a playground, a coherent rhythmic arrangement develops to a silent beat (ibid.:152). Both the dancers’ comments and Prattis’ description of the dolphin dance, mentioned earlier, underscore the link between movement and consciousness, and especially the added effect of trust when members of the group are in an altered state.

In a discussion of the role of motor activity and the brain (op. cit.:147-181), Ramey states that our sense of self-awareness is driven by the motor neurons, and that the higher brain functions evolved from movement and still depend on it. Thus, movement is crucial to every other brain function, including perception, attention, emotion and thinking. Ramey also holds that one of the “major emerging principles of the neurology of the 1990s is the notion that feedback between the layers of levels of the brain is bidirectional; if you activate a lower level, you will be priming an upper level, and if you

activate a higher level, you will be priming a lower level. So smiling can improve your mood” (Ratey, op.cit.:164). This appears to be a neurological explanation for the empirical observation of Blackening, cited at the beginning of this chapter, regarding the close relationship between mood and movement in the context of dance. It also supports the contention of the two free form dancers that the movement and feelings originate in the body.

4.3.4 Connection and Intent in Free Form Dance

Like the Bharata Natyam dancers, the two free form dancers also find joy in the experience of dance. (E) said “...even as a child....I just thought dance was joyful...”. (F) came closer to describing the bliss or joy spoken of by the four Indian dancers: “I’ve danced all my life...I love to dance, I love to move...there’s joy...for me the movement always has to come from a personal experience... if your heart is in your space, then whatever you do (as dance movement) will be absolutely perfect....it’s an experience I’d like to give everybody because it is just something I can’t explain...”.

They also clearly experience a sense of unity, of being connected. As mentioned earlier, these two dancers do not perform for an audience. They dance with a partner, in small groups, in workshops, or alone. For them, the main connection is to the divine, but it is interwoven with a sense of unity with others. Dancer E said: “ Dancing with a group for me is about building community, about relationships. It’s not about a relationship with myself in a

group,... but about finding the sacred and divine in everyone, and how it all networks,like a web...that is so real for me, being connected...it lets me interact with them in ways we don't normally do..." . For (F), dancing is "about dancing with God, ...about dancing with the energy of the entire world... it's not just the thing of the spirit, there is an ancestral physical thing...". She described a workshop with other dancers in which they learned an ancient, somewhat structured form of sacred dance: "..... it was almost like you were giving up your body space and that...these ancestors were inhabiting it with you because you were lending it for their re-use...it wasn't just me in that body.....it grows to a whole sense of being a part of something much greater and much bigger and much more awesome than the experience itself".

At the same time, the two free form dancers were just as clear as their Bharata Natyam counterparts that their dance has a greater purpose and that their intent in doing sacred dance is key. Dancer E points out that for her, "it's a partnership (with the liturgical group)...it's reciprocal in nature, I'm not just dancing for myself-I dance to bring people along with regards to how they're working through whatever they feel is preventing them from offering a part of their inner life". Dancer F was particularly clear about her intent in dance, and included a description of ritual preparation that increased the sense of connection: " I always have this moment just before we dance and whoever is with me, kids, adults, it doesn't matter, we stop and I have

everybody put their hand on their heart andhear our hearts beating together.....Everything is sacred at some level but there are different levels...it is your intention, I think, and where you are focusing as you create that (the dance)...that creates a different experience....I look at this moment of having an absolute sense of connectiveness with the entire world....that is an awesome thing, you don't have that every minute of the day....it attaches me to the human experience....it gives you that sense of knowing what we are tuned to, knowing what I am aiming for....bringing that back to the religious experience.....for others...is nourishing to the spirit, for everybody...”.

The Bharata Natyam dancers are rooted in Hindu aesthetics and the theory of *rasa*, and so it is possible to attribute to them a certain expectation and acceptance of *bhavas* being created, feelings being evoked. The free form dancers are not backed up by such cultural theory, although, as described earlier, there is a body of dance literature based largely on empirical observation which supports their experience of the connection between sacred dance and feelings. The dance scholar Hanna implies that the sacredness of the dance depends more on the intent of the participants than on the form of the dance. She maintains that even a solo dancer is engaged in a dialogue with an audience via the superego (1979: 32). Victor Turner himself pointed out that *communitas* is not only instinctual but involves intent and will (1969) and Olaveson maintains that Durkheim saw will and intention as

necessary to collective effervescence (Olaveson,2002). These various experiences with the importance of intent suggest there is a biological substrate which supports it. In the next section I discuss a possible biological explanation for intent and its importance.

4.4 Biological Support for the Importance of Intent

Sacred dance, whether through highly structured techniques or more free flowing forms, is a type of wordless storytelling. The neurologist Damasio maintains that wordless storytelling is natural, based on imagetic representation of sequences of brain events (2000). He suggests that the brain “inherently represents the structures and states of the organism, and in the course of regulating the organism.....the brain naturally weaves wordless stories about what happens to the organism immersed in an environment” (op. cit.:189).

It is helpful to differentiate among mind, brain and consciousness. The Pocket Oxford Dictionary (1985) defines mind as “the seat of consciousness, thought, volition, and feeling...”. Brain is the “organ of convoluted nervous tissue in the skull of vertebrates; centre of sensation or thought”. Consciousness is “awareness”, derived from conscious, which is to be “awake and aware of one’s surroundings and identity”. Damasio offers a perspective on consciousness which incorporates aspects of a philosophical and phenomenal understanding of consciousness but is still grounded in biology. He recognizes the magnitude of the challenge to understanding

consciousness, and maintains that both neurobiologists and philosophers of mind face considerable barriers to understanding and are unlikely “to find a comprehensive solution anytime soon” (ibid.: 337). He defines mind to be a process, not a thing, one which encompasses both conscious and non-conscious operations, and which we know as a continuous flow of mental patterns, or images (ibid.). Brain is the organ, the tissue, but he points out there is no unanimity of view regarding its relationship to mind.

Damasio sees consciousness in terms of two players, the organism and the object, and also in terms of the relationships between these two players. He maintains that consciousness is supported by an underlying neural architecture, and understanding the biology of consciousness is a matter of “discovering how the brain can construct neural patterns that map each of the two players and the relationships they hold”(ibid.: 133). He sees the word consciousness as “polygamously wed to far too many meanings” (op.cit.:337). For him it is the “critical biological function that allows us to know sorrow or know joy” (op.cit.:4).

Damasio separates emotions from feelings. He maintains that emotion probably preceded consciousness in evolutionary terms, and surfaces in us as a result of inducers that we often do not recognize consciously. He portrays emotions as biologically determined processes, complicated collections of chemical and neural responses, forming a pattern, which play some sort of regulatory role for body function and survival (homeostasis). Feelings are a

second order, “very concrete set of neural patterns” which arise as a result of the underlying, survival oriented emotion (op.cit.:282).

These feelings can arise not only from changes in the body state but also from changes in the cognitive state. In the “body loop” (Damasio, op.cit.:281), changes in the body state generate chemical and electrochemical messages which travel via the bloodstream or nerve pathways and are represented in the somatosensory structures in the brainstem and brain. In the “as if” loop (ibid.), the representation of body-related changes is created directly in sensory body maps under the control of other neural sites, such as the prefrontal cortices, as if the body had been changed, even though it was not, generating changes in the cognitive state, leading to changes in emotion, or feelings. I suggest that, by having intent, the dancers have somehow engaged the “as if” body loop. It can be done either through deliberate cognitive processes, for example, when dancers tell the story they are dancing, or it can be through simple openness and receptivity to both internal and external signals and triggers. As a result, feelings arise, in the dancer and in the audience.

It is clear, then, that all six dancers interviewed enter an altered state when they dance, and in that state experience *communitas*. The sense of connection or unity may be with others who are present, with mythological characters, with ancestors or with the divine. Movement and a sense of trust seem to facilitate this bond. All the dancers point to the importance of intent

to the experience of this unifying bond. There may be a biological basis for the effect of intent.

The dancers' descriptions of their states correspond to the experience of flow described by Csikszentmihalyi (1990). As Victor Turner pointed out, while the precise nature of the relationship of flow and *communitas* is unclear, *communitas* is "a sort of shared flow", and group experience may result in the selection of certain symbols to elicit flow (1979, 61-65). In the next chapter I explore the role of symbols in Social II and transformation.

Chapter 5

TRANSFORMATION

The Social II as described by Edith Turner (op.cit.) is clearly associated with a transformative ritual event. Turner attributes this transformation to the ability of a group of merged consciousnesses to access and join to an external source of knowledge, which then leads to transformation or healing. She describes the source as a reservoir:

"It is from this reservoir, transmitted over an 'ether – consciousness', that healing flows... .. This source is not really the 'collective unconscious' in Jung's (1928) sense, which somehow implies clanking hordes of European and Classic archetypes. Jung's archetypes issue, ironically, from a very strongly individual and personal source, and have links with archaic symbols as through an individual. What I am talking about is what all may feel together-a rather different thing" (op.cit.:51).

Turner offers some speculation on the nature of this source, but it is both confusing and unconvincing, as I will demonstrate. I maintain that the transformation associated with Social II can more satisfactorily be explained

by referring to an internal source - precisely those archetypes that Turner dismisses. In the altered state of consciousness, when a sense of unity is present, the presence of symbol triggers the activation of unconscious material leading to transformation.

To support this position, I explore the extent to which the dancers I interviewed experience transformation. I then demonstrate that Edith Turner's speculation on the nature of the external source is an inadequate explanation. I look to scholars with Jungian, neurophysiological and philosophical/phenomenological perspectives to discuss the effect of symbols on consciousness in order to explain the transformative aspects of sacred dance.

5.1 The Dance Context

In her discussion of Social II (op.cit.), Turner describes several situations in which a group of people came together intentionally to merge consciousnesses, for purposes of worship (the Tibetan State Oracle ritual), of healing (the Ihamba ritual), of connection (the ritual of the forest pygmies) or simply of communication with each other (the Dene Tha). In a similar vein, although none of the dancers I interviewed referred specifically to transformation as a reason for their dance, five of the six described a mixture of background experience and current motivation that I suggest is transformative.

Dancer D developed an interest in dance as a child, although she did not come from a traditional Indian family. She discovered that the total concentration of dance seemed to stave off her childhood asthma attacks. Eventually she pursued dance as a path to learning more about her culture and its philosophy, and found a “spiritual element” in it. Today she once more turns to dance for purposes of healing. This dancer has a very stressful day job in the technology industry, and finds that dancing relieves her stress. “As soon as I start to dance, I find instant peace”. The dance itself is a ritual, and when it is combined with her preparatory ritual of “exercises to prepare the body” and recitation of “words and passages” to prepare the mind, she becomes “fully there” and very calm.

Dancer F also associates dance with healing, both her own and others’. Many years ago, as a young health care professional, she developed a serious and potentially crippling disease. An older and “much wiser” colleague advised her to “make a friend” of her internal energy by pursuing transcendental meditation. She took this advice, and then turned to dance as a form of meditation. Her disease went into remission, and remains so today. She has also learned to use her dance to support her ability to be “fully present” for the very ill people she cares for in her professional capacity. For her, “dance is healing” and it helps her “to bring a sense of the transcendent” to her work with the ill and her other relationships. It “fits into my whole life”.

For Dancer E, dance is healing because it “nourishes the spirit” and “is probably what gives me energy...you are tired until you start to do (dance) and then you are energized...”. At the same time, throughout the interview this dancer stressed the importance of dance to her as a way of connecting with the divine, sometimes by connecting with others. It is this connection that seems to be nourishing, “therapeutic”. It provides “...that whole sense of being a part of something much greater and much bigger and much more awesome than the experience itself”. Dance “certainly has deepened my experience in a church environment.....it gives a sense of knowing what we are tuned to. Knowing what I am aiming for...”. For this dancer, the healing effect is clearly spiritual, and is associated with connection to and worship of the divine.

Dancer B also finds dance is “very refreshing and energizing after a full day of teaching”. As a child in India, she developed “a passion for dance,” and realized it was her “calling”. She learned that the mind governs the body. Dance for her became a “means of worshipping,.... a prayer and meditation”, and it is this worship that seems to refresh and energize her.

Dancer C has a slightly different perspective. He has been dancing since the age of four, and performing since the age of nine. During much of his adult life, his professional dance was conducted as a complement to his other work as the owner and director of art galleries. He feels keenly the responsibilities of an artist: “ it is a total commitment.....they (the audience) have come to share my art and I have a responsibility to give them the best I

can.....sharing is the great joy of art...". Over the last few years, the balance in his life has shifted, with his art, dance, now taking more prominence than his interests in the business of art. As a dancer, he sees himself as something of a transmitter, or completing an "energy circuit", connecting individuals with "the great themes of the universe" Over the last decade he has been researching his Indian roots, trying to find themes that have universal application to the human condition but that have never been danced before. He had wanted to dance a particular Indian sacred chant, the Gayatri mantra, but in discussion with other dancers, felt it was almost impossible to present in dance form, because it is not a story but a very abstract concept. A few years ago, "the message came, a message from the universe, that I should dance it". After much research, he had not yet been able to develop an approach that was appropriate. Then, one day, alone in his studio, he chanted the mantra, imagining himself in a temple. He found himself moving to the right, as is customary : "...in temples, you always walk the right side to the main shrine....you never offer anything to the gods, or anybody, with the left hand, it's always the right...". He subsequently developed the dance "with the entire choreography to the right. People don't know that, sometimes the dancers don't realize it, but the effect has been the same everywhere....people who see it....ordinary people (as well as scholars) say it is very moving...". By respecting the sanctity of the chant, he found a way to bring its message - "about light, life and creation"- to audiences of all cultural backgrounds. Yet he suggests the dance is able only to relay the

“tiniest drop” of the complete message, which is “about the universe”. I sense that for this dancer, the transformation occurs when he takes on his role as dancer of sacred themes. Sacred dance for him is less about healing, and much more about connecting, communicating and worshipping.

These dancers all seem to experience some transformative effect of sacred dance, whether it is as specific as healing or the more subtle transformation of worship and connection. Edith Turner speculates that an external source accessed in ritual leads to the transformation participants experience. My dancers did not suggest a specific kind of greater external source of knowledge, other than a general sense of God or the universe. All but one implied that, while the connection was with something or someone outside their immediate selves, they actually felt a part of the greater whole, the divine. I had the sense that the drive to dance and to connect with this greater whole came from within themselves. So what is the nature of Turner’s source?

5.2 *The Source*

In trying to describe her idea of the source, Edith Turner appears to blend different perspectives on consciousness. On the one hand, she looks to very modern and controversial research in the area of consciousness and quantum physics, which leads to a mystical quagmire; on the other, she relies -

on a somewhat inaccurate understanding of ancient Eastern philosophical concepts.

Turner suggests her 'source' has two main attributes. It is a pool of individual consciousnesses which have escaped the individual bodies and merged into one, and it can persist beyond the individual's lifetime- a "fluid sea" which may act as a "reservoir" or "nutrient soup" (op.cit.:51). In this she echoes the views of generations of researchers who have remarked on the "space-time independence of anomalous mental events" (Dossey,1996: 401). Modern scholars who write of the unrestricted nature of consciousness refer to "non-local aspects of mind" (ibid.). Laughlin explores this idea in a discussion linking Jung's archetypes to quantum events (1996). Building on his biogenetic structuralist view that archetypes are neural structures of cognition that evolved with humans, he nevertheless stresses Jung's view that "archetypes are to be considered as the confluence of spirit and matter" (ibid.:387). Drawing on both findings of modern quantum physics and the experiences of individuals expert in contemplation, Laughlin suggests that the neurocognitive processes that mediate consciousness may "also influence and be influenced by events in the quantum sea" (ibid.:390). The quantum sea is a "structure of underlying 'zero-point' energy that permeates the universe, even...the most complete vacuum" (ibid.). In other words, "...information exchange ...may be occurring between the conscious brain and the quantum sea" (ibid.:393). I suggest that Turner's nutrient rich

reservoir or fluid sea, and in fact her source, correspond to Laughlin's quantum sea. It may well be an interesting concept, but it is not yet sufficiently empirical or concrete to be an illuminating one.

5.2.1 *Manas*

Turner also likens her concept of the source to the "Hindu idea of man, *manas* in Sanskrit,.... meaning mind that is also heart and soul as well... that is not confined by the individual brain but is a collective consciousness ...which may be pooled as one 'soul-mind'....." (op. cit. 51). This is confusing because she seems to misunderstand the meaning of *manas*.

Raju points out that, from the time of the Upanishads, "the different levels of man's inward being have been demarcated by Indian thinkers, and the stages are not regarded as functions of mind but as levels of inward being, mind itself being the lowest level.on the whole, the levels are three: mind (*manas*), ego (*ahamkara*) and reason (*buddhi*)."(1967:202). He suggests the function of mind is to analyze and synthesize impressions and cognize pain and pleasures, and carry them to ego. Datta suggests that it is a peculiarity of Indian thought to consider mind as knower, called *atman* or *purusa*, and mind as the internal sense and organ of attention, called *manas* (1967:122). It would seem, then, that *manas* is very much confined to the individual being. On the other hand, Reyna explains that Indian philosophy inherits from its ancient Vedic past the idea that there is an eternal unity of existence which is

the unchanging reality behind the universe, and which is called *Brahman* (1971:49). She maintains that “ the chief aim of Indian philosophy is to unveil and to integrate into consciousness what is hidden by the forces of life, not to explore and describe the outer world , but to discover and set forth the basis upon which the inner and outer world may be understood. The supreme and characteristic achievement of Indian philosophy is its discovery of the Self (*Atman*) as an independent, indestructible entity underlying the conscious personality and bodily frame.....Through the vicissitudes of phenomenal life a spiritual footing is maintained in the peaceful-blissful ground of *Atman*-eternal, timeless, imperishable Being” (ibid.:7). Man intuitively feels that he has somehow sprung from the eternal Ground of Being (*Brahman*) and can return to it- that he is ultimately of it , not separate from it or joined to it. *Atman* is *Brahman* (ibid.: 49).

Hanh presents an explanation from the Buddhist perspective (2001). He describes the mind as having eight aspects, or consciousnesses. The first five are based in the physical senses. The sixth is mind consciousness and arises when the mind contacts an object of perception. The seventh is *manas*, the substrate for mind consciousness, and the eighth is store consciousness, which is the ground or base for the other seven. Store consciousness both stores and is the total of all our experiences.

Manas arises from store consciousness and takes a part of it as a separate entity, a self. Thus “*manas* hinders the functioning of store

consciousness and gets in the way of transformation of the seeds”(ibid.:88). *Manas* is energy and its function is “thinking, measuring, conserving and grasping”(ibid.). *Manas* has a false perception of the world, and especially of the self, to which it clings. The attachment of *manas* to self serves as a survival instinct but by blocking transformation of the seeds of experience it can also destroy the self.

Manas, then, does not appear in Eastern thought to be the “collective consciousness” or pooled “soul-mind” escaped from individual brains that Edith Turner seems to think (1999:51). So it would seem to be an inadequate explanation for her source. I suggest that Turner’s concept of the source is closer to the concepts of *Brahman-Atman* and of store consciousness than it is to *manas*.

Authors rooted in the Western perspective see consciousness as a product of the brain’s evolution (Damasio, op. cit., Mithen, 1996). Wilber (1996) and Grof (1998) have pointed out that over the centuries most of the spiritual philosophies and mystical traditions have maintained that consciousness is not a product of the brain but a primary principle of existence which plays a critical role in the creation of the phenomenal world, and that, ultimately our individual “psyches are commensurate” with it (Grof, op.cit.:3). It would seem then, that in rejecting the link between Jung’s archetypes and her source, Turner opts for speculations about its nature which appear to adhere not to the Western biological tradition, but to a more

philosophical or religious approach. Unfortunately, the somewhat muddled mysticism that results is not particularly helpful to understanding the nature of transformation.

5.3 Symbols and the Unconscious

In earlier discussions in both this and the last chapter, it was obvious that in sacred dance the dancers experienced a sense of no time and no space, of being part of a greater whole. Henry (1992) refers to this sensation as the classical archetypal experience in which the numinous or sense of awe is aroused as that of the Self, or wholeness, an experience in which there is no sense of time or space. He suggests it is identical with certain religious or mystical experiences, and postulates that it may be related to unconscious aspects of the reticular activating system (in the brainstem) when this area is, at least momentarily, functionally isolated from the rest of the brain. He points out that several religious and philosophical traditions have developed techniques that, in effect, manipulate brain activity and encourage release of this archetype. By extension, other archetypes, associated with other aspects of unconscious brain physiology, can also be released (op.cit.). How are these archetypes released?

In Chapter 3 I argued that Shiva and Christ, symbols of the Divine, the Universe, God, are always present for the dancers when they engage in sacred dance, even if virtually, in memory. In a discussion of instinct,

archetype and meaning (op.cit.), Henry recalls ethological studies which demonstrate that social cooperation in the animal world depends on the fact that certain stimuli can serve to trigger or release instinctual behaviour patterns. The basic response of the individual animal is elaborated by learning in the social context. Jung suggested that humans also have a number of inherited dispositions, which he located in the archetypes. Henry suggests symbols in human society are a parallel to the releasers of the animal world. He points out that the word symbol has various shades of meaning. He opts to follow Jung in reserving the word symbol to be associated with an “emotionally toned evocative event” (op.cit.:55). He suggests a stimulus may be considered symbolic if it not only conveys abstract information but also “arouses emotions as a result of serving as a releaser for instinctual patterns”(ibid.). The extent to which a stimulus is evocative depends on the “congruence” between it and the “constitution” of the individual (ibid.).

In very broad terms, Henry suggests that some of the brain’s response systems have to do with reason, and reason is the typical feature of consciousness. Other brain response systems have to do with emotion, and emotion is the most characteristic aspect of the unconscious, whether collective or personal. He holds that symbol provides the functional connection between the two response systems, between emotion and reason. Thus symbols have both a rational component or aspect, and a “sensuous, figurative component that cannot be grasped by the intellect”(op.cit.:152).

Following Neumann, Henry suggests that the numinous experience of the basic archetype is overwhelming. In consequence, successive generations of societies have developed ritual to manipulate the approach to the basic archetype, fragmenting it into different aspects represented by symbols, projected into mythology. The process of fragmentation is neither conscious nor deliberate, yet results in a “de-emotionalization and fragmentation into familiar aspects as the conscious end of the symbol is built up”(ibid.:151). Symbols, then, may be thought of as rooted in the collective unconscious but extruding into the conscious mind. According to Henry, when a symbol is perceived and the control systems associated with normal consciousness are disengaged, the symbol can release archetypal material into conscious awareness for processing. In chapter 3, I discussed the work of Chodorow who made a similar point with the respect to dance therapy. I suggest that when my dancers enter into the altered state, as all demonstrably do, their normal control systems are disengaged, and the symbols of Shiva and Christ act to release archetypal material, in the form of a sense of unity, of being connected to a greater whole.

5.3.1 Symbolic Penetration

How can symbols act on the physiology of the body to release archetypes? A more recent and more fundamental exploration of the workings of symbols is found in the work of Winkelman, who builds on the perspective of the biogenetic structuralists (2000). He maintains that

symbolic actions cause physiological responses, because socialization processes “canalize physiological development by habitualizing and automatizing physiological responses to symbolic meanings”(op.cit.:26). Quoting Laughlin et al., he refers to the initial organization of the neural network that provides the basis for the universal aspects of mind as neurognosis. Neurognostic structures are the inherent knowledge structures of the organism. In other words, using Damasio’s model referred to in chapter 4, they correspond to the neural networks that are genetically programmed at birth. The archetypes are the “primordial organizing principles structuring the basic patterns of the collective unconscious” and reflect the neurognostic structures (ibid.). These neurognostic structures predispose or shape the structure of our experiences of our cognized world. The cognized world is the enculturated processing of the neural model of the environment that our mind forms. At the same time, socialization processes channel or shape physiological development by habitualizing physiological responses (via the formation and entrainment of neural networks) to symbols and their meanings.

The key to understanding how symbols work, from this perspective, is the concept of symbolic penetration. In biological development, networks of neurons are repeatedly stimulated in response to specific environmental conditions. These networks are entrained, and form what is, in effect, a neurological channel as a result of repeated response to, and modeling of, specific stimuli. A symbol may evoke any neurological network with which it

has been entrained, whether in the autonomic and endocrine systems, brains structures, emotions or abstract ideas. In other words, symbolic penetration is the effect of neural systems mediating a symbolic command on associated physiological systems (Winkelman, op.cit., Laughlin,1992). Symbolic penetration associated with, or created by, ritual can evoke networks outside of normal conscious awareness and operate on them to transform them outside normal awareness. Entry into an altered state of consciousness facilitates this symbolic penetration because it disengages the normal inhibitory process associated with consciousness and ego, which is a specific neural network that maintains organization of the concept of self (Winkelman, op. cit.).

5.3.2 Symbols, Breath and Energy

Prattis offers a somewhat different model of how unconscious structures are brought forward, one anchored in an even more fundamental perspective, which also incorporates aspects of Eastern philosophy (1997). Like Winkelman and the biogenetic structuralists, he sees that in ritual the symbol system becomes physically owned by persons who are raised in the culture, and that such ownership brings about transformation and (behavioural) change. It is in understanding the manner of that ownership that he goes beyond other perspectives in his depiction of ritual transformation. He suggests that “the transformative aspect of a symbolic system creates

order at different levels”, and that the coercive and controlling aspects of symbol systems cannot be understood without understanding how transformation and order are achieved (op.cit.:206). He argues that, since “symbols that are loaded with archetypal meanings have a similar impact on different people”, they are not intellectual constructs but must “be experienced and engaged with in an almost visceral manner for their meanings to surface”(ibid. :206-7). Echoing Jung and Henry, he holds that “symbols begin deep in the human mind and are then projected into mythology”(ibid.). Ritual enactment of the mythology, provides a mechanism whereby individuals can engage with universal structures in the unconscious and bring them to the level of personal experience (ibid.:207).

In a discussion of meditation and rituals of transformation, Prattis refers to the properties, meanings and qualities assigned (by the cultural process) to symbols as metaphor (op. cit.:212). The ritual provides a context in which the metaphor can be felt in the body as vibration or energy circulation. Prattis points out that various ritual drivers which induce altered states of consciousness are often used in combination, and include repetitive motor activity such as dancing, use of symbolic imagery, and control of breath(1997). He references the yogic traditions’ use of breath to still the mind and enable the individual to turn inward. These traditions consider breath to be “the great connector between body, mind and soul and the ultimate force of redirection and transformation” (ibid.: 181).

Because of the use of breath, the effect is much deeper than neural entrainment. It is at the level of the molecules in the cells, and requires that the individual be in a non-normal energy state, that is, an altered state of consciousness. Prattis invokes the concept of resonance when he suggests that symbols be thought of as musical tones, which, at least in a meditative state, can strike a tonal chord (that is, resonate) with structures in the unconscious and the cells. In the altered state, time and space are suspended, and so no (intellectual) projections accompany the physical experience of the metaphor. Thus the qualities inherent in the metaphor can be given form (ibid.:214), in effect through a mirroring of the energy pattern of the symbol through release of energy in the structures of the unconscious and the cells. The metaphor “is an external mental form which corresponds to a latent internal symbolic structure that is not yet known through personal experience” (ibid.:213). Once the metaphor is physically experienced, (via an altered state of consciousness), it can be integrated into conscious awareness and direct behavioural change, particularly when supported socially by “repeated ritual enactment” (ibid.:213).

Prattis applies his ideas regarding the important link between breath and spiritual states to an examination of sacred dance (1997). He suggests that

“ there are particular body postures that create the shape of a symbol, and when breath is drawn with awareness into this created symbol it ‘electrifies’ the body because it has hit upon a

corresponding symbolic structure deep in the unconscious, and this is felt physically due to cellular memory. From this perspective sacred dance is simply an extended choreography of symbols provided by the sequential postures of the body.This is why all traditions of sacred dance pay such meticulous attention to body posture and the precision of choreographic sequence, as well as to ritual preparation and breath control” (ibid.: 160).

This explanation holds for the experiences of Bharata Natyam dancers, who indicated in earlier quotations that they prepare ritually for their dance. In addition, by definition, as explained earlier, Bharata Natyam requires the meticulous attention and precision that Prattis refers to. None of the dancers referred to breath work, but it is possible that it is such an integral part of their highly disciplined approach that they do not see it as worthy of separate attention or mention.

In contrast, one of the free form dancers did refer specifically to the importance of breath: “It is important to take the moment of breath, that corporate breathing where we all take a deep breath together...there is something that happens in the breath and in the synchronization of breath....” (Dancer E). The other free form dancer, (F), was very aware of energy and vibration in the body: “...there is a vibration, an energy ,in the cosmic soup....”. For her, dance lets her body “emit energy to someone else, that affects them at the level of body and soul...”. Yet, both of these dancers practise a form of spontaneous movement as dance, quite the opposite of the

precise and meticulous formation of symbols via the body that is characteristic of Bharata Natyam. For these two dancers at least, Prattis' explanation for the effect of symbol can only be partial. On the other hand, a further look at Winkelman's work is helpful to understanding how symbol facilitates transformation.

5.3.3 Integrative Altered States of Consciousness

Winkelman sees consciousness as fundamentally concerned with systems of knowing, and therefore with information processing. The four different modes of consciousness- waking, sleep, dream and integrative consciousness- "differentially entrain biological, personal, social and cultural information-processing functions." (op cit.:118). Modes of consciousness emerge out of the biology of the body/brain, and their functions are related to the needs of the organism and the drive to maintain homeostatic balance.

According to Winkelman (op.cit.), the integrative mode of consciousness has a number of states (such as possession, or samadhi) that are collectively called altered states (ASCs). These have three primary characteristics. First, they involve hierarchical integration of brain mechanisms, manifested particularly in limbic system driving of the frontal cortex, increased hemispheric synchronization, and increased coherence between the two frontal hemispheres. This represents the integration of preconscious or unconscious functions and material into self-conscious awareness.

A second trait of integrative ASCs is their ability to act on the structures of previous levels of consciousness, enabling the mind to manipulate the self, ego and other aspects of the psyche from a higher level of awareness and self organization. This results in changes in the processes supporting consciousness and the sense of self, such as the integration of unconscious or repressed material.

A third characteristic involves significant variability in the options for activating physical and mental systems. "The autonomic nervous system may show activation or deactivation of either subsystem; somatic and skeletal muscles may be inactive or highly active,.....attention and awareness may range from omniscience to total void; aspects of conscious and unconscious identify may be manifested or repressed; programming and learning may be accelerated; and different brain systems may be activated or deactivated."(ibid.:129).

The hypothalamus regulates the balance between the sympathetic and the parasympathetic divisions of the autonomic nervous system, maintaining an interactive balance of activation and deactivation of body functions.

Activation of the sympathetic nervous system results in an orienting response and the waking mode of consciousness, preparing the body for action.

Activation of the parasympathetic leads to decreased cortical excitation, an increase in hemispheric synchronization, and invoking of the restorative functions of the body. Increases in parasympathetic dominance lead to the relaxation response, sleep and ultimately to coma and death. Parasympathetic

dominant states normally occur only during sleep, but Winkelman (op.cit.) highlights Lex's (1979) suggestion that ritually induced ASCs share common physiological features of right hemisphere dominance, cortical synchronization and parasympathetic dominance.

D'Aquili (1983), building on the work of Lex and others, suggested that strong rhythmic stimuli could simultaneously drive both the ergotropic system (the sympathetic subsystem plus other energy-expanding processes in the central nervous system) and the tropotropic system (the parasympathetic subsystem plus other central nervous systems which operate to conserve energy and maintain the baseline stability of the organism). The ergotropic and tropotropic systems extend to the dominant and non-dominant cerebral hemispheres, respectively. The latter control the perception of wholeness or unity. When both systems (ranging from the lower or limbic levels to the higher or cerebral levels) are intensely stimulated to near maximum levels, a positive, ineffable feeling, a sense of union of opposites and harmony with the universe, results. This, then, may be the physiological substrate for the feeling of *communitas* in the Turnerian model.

Winkelman's work is based on his studies of shamanistic healing rituals. Taken together, his three primary characteristics of altered states – hierarchical integration of brain mechanisms, the ability to act on structures of previous levels of consciousness, and activating of physical and mental systems-when combined with the concept of symbolic penetration, constitute

a model of transformation through ritual which requires the participant(s) to enter an altered state of consciousness. They describe a set of biological mechanisms whereby unconscious material is brought into conscious awareness and processed in the presence of a feeling of unity or *communitas*. By extension, the processed material will lead to change in behaviour when it is reinforced by the social and cultural setting to which the individual returns in the normal state of consciousness. This model, like that of Prattis, does not require the existence of an external source, but, instead, assumes the archetypes, and the ritual manipulation of them and of physiological systems, are the source of healing, knowledge and transformation.

It is apparent, then, that the transformation associated with Social II is more readily explained by consideration of an internal source, the archetypes. Both philosophical/phenomenological and neurophysiological perspectives offer potential explanations for the nature of this transformation and the role of symbol.

Chapter 6

AMPLIFICATION

In Chapter 2 I discussed the first main feature of Social II: that it is not separate from, but rooted in, the work of Durkheim. I demonstrated that his concept of collective effervescence is the basis for Victor Turner's concept of *communitas*, which in turn is the basis for Edith Turner's Social II. In Chapters 3, 4 and 5 I used a case study of sacred dance to explore the second main feature of Social II: that individuals in an altered state of consciousness intentionally develop a sense of unity which is the fulcrum for operation of a transformative process. I demonstrated that the change is facilitated by symbolic activation of archetypes rather than accessing the external source suggested by Edith Turner.

It remains to explore my identification of the third main feature of Social II: that it is essentially an amplification of the liminal phase described by Victor Turner in his processual model. In this chapter, I outline the evolution of Victor Turner's model, and then examine the similarities of Edith Turner's approach using the concept of Social II.

6.1 Victor Turner's Model

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Victor Turner developed a model of ritual as a process, moving from structure to antistructure and back to structure, in effect mirroring the process of change in societies (Turner, 1974). In ritual an

individual moves from normal life (structure) to a liminal phase in which his situation is ambiguous . He “passes through a symbolic domain” in which transformation is effected and then is reintegrated into normal life, in the transformed state (Turner, 1974:232). Within the liminal phase of ritual, *communitas* can develop (op.cit.).

With time and experience, Turner’s view of the ritual process, and particularly his understanding of the liminal and *communitas*, gradually evolved to take into account new understanding of the nature of consciousness. Dunn traces his explorations of ritual through four thematic periods: social structural, psychological, religious and ecological (2000). By his latest period, Turner’s understanding of *communitas* had expanded from seeing it in social terms, to a mystical understanding of it as direct and personal experience with an underlying and unifying cosmological principle. Subsequently he adopted a neurobiological perspective based on Jung’s concepts of archetypes and modern discoveries in neuroscience. He saw a relationship between the biological basis for archetypes as a movement toward wholeness and integration of the personality, and *communitas* as an experience of wholeness (Dunn, op.cit.; Henry, op.cit., Turner, 1983). By the time of his last work, Turner seemed to see *communitas* as the microcosmic expression of the wholeness characteristic of the cosmological macrocosm (op.cit.:1983).

6.2 Edith Turner's Approach

In trying to explain the Social II, Edith Turner suggests humans are probably genetically predisposed to connect to each other, to enter altered states of consciousness and to experience *communitas* (1999). They may possess some sort of “prepositional plugs”(ibid.:51) which provide the basis for human interaction. On certain “great spirit occasions” (ibid.:46), groups of people who know one another well purposefully use the rhythm, movement and symbol of ritual to disinhibit their psyches and together enter an altered state of consciousness. In this state the individual consciousness has escaped the body and joined to others. Participants experience the Social II, an intense social bond associated with the sense of powerful union and communion that is *communitas*. The group works together to access normally unavailable knowledge, to “pull into existence the works and doings of the alternative level of consciousness” (ibid.:51). This new, shared, knowledge and understanding derives not from any individual consciousness, and not from the collective unconscious, but from a greater source. This source is an “impalpable element”, a “kind of integument in common”, a reservoir which is both joined to and greater than the web of predispositions to connect that exists among people. From this source ideas come, healing flows, gods and spirits manifest. It may be where “souls after death take the paths where they have to go”, the “sphere of reincarnation” (ibid.:51). This model is presented

in figure 2.

Figure 2

This approach builds on Victor Turner's understanding in three key ways. The first is the clear recognition that in the liminal phase one experiences an altered state of consciousness, and that it is this state that is essential to the ritual transformation.

The second is the attribution of the knowledge gained in the altered state not to the collective unconscious but to an external source. Edith Turner seems to consider archetypes as more expressive of individual than collective experience. As I mentioned in the last chapter, she suggests they "...issue...from a very strongly individual and personal source, and have links with archaic symbols as through an individual" (1999:51).

This statement reflects Victor Turner's understanding of archetypes as inherited behaviour patterns which are primarily processed by the right brain

hemisphere, but which, “constantly come under left hemisphere processing in the form of words, concepts and language. ..when this happens, ...the archetypesare, so to speak, superficially denatured and clothed in the vestments provided by individual memory and cultural conditioning” (Turner, 1983:239).

The third reflection of Victor Turner’s understanding is in the idea of disembodied individual consciousnesses merging. Edith Turner refers to “consciousness-escaped-from- the-body-and-become-a-fluid-sea-joining-to-others”(ibid.). In his late work, Victor Turner envisaged “....a global population of brains inhabiting an entire world of inanimate and animate entities, a population whose members are incessantly communicating with one another through every physical and mental instrumentality” (1983:243).

It is clear then, that Edith Turner’s depiction of the Social II is an attempt to expand even further Victor Turner’s constantly evolving understanding of the liminal. She reflects his final understanding of *communitas* as an expression of cosmological wholeness. She also goes beyond it, by incorporating the external source and current understanding of altered states of consciousness. She points out that we are limited in our ability to understand Social II because our framework for understanding the nature of consciousness is inadequate (1999).

Midgley made a similar point in a discussion of attempts by various researchers to deepen our understanding of consciousness by linking it with

quantum mechanics. She called for a new “conceptual plumbing” which integrates learning from various areas of study (1993:6). Such a new conceptual framework may be starting to emerge, gradually being constructed through work on consciousness and the body. Elements of the framework are visible in a number of current approaches to understanding consciousness. These include perspectives growing out of new understandings of various sciences that are shedding light on how we know and learn, such as evolutionary biology; neuro-anatomy and chemistry; neuro – and cognitive psychology; and genetics. In addition, as Johnson points out, for over a century, some Western thinkers have echoed Eastern thought and made direct links between body practices and the shaping of consciousness (2000). They have seen a relationship between shifts in bodily practices and changes in abstract ideas.

In describing the nature of Social II, Edith Turner seems to have drawn on work from various fields to develop an explanation- Midgely’s “new conceptual plumbing” (ibid.)- for the “support of the community in using the powers of consciousness”(1999:49). She maintains that researchers are “becoming able to follow” how Social II operates, “sometimes under the aegis of biology, sometimes religion”(ibid.). At the same time, she suggests that “Many people who are not academics know these matters perfectly well, they perform these acts because they work”(ibid.:51). This, along with her postulate of an external source, suggests that, while her explanation of Social II attempts to draw on biology or the scientific approach to understanding

unusual phenomena, her orientation is essentially more toward the religious or spiritual perspective.

In making this claim, I draw on the work of Young and Goulet, who point out that there has been considerable discussion in the Western tradition about the boundary between the real and the imaginary (1994: 316). They highlight William James' argument that "what is real is whatever excites and stimulates our interest"(ibid.). Shutz built on the work of James, Max Weber and Edmund Husserl to explain why many of the world's peoples believe we live in a world of multiple realities (Young and Goulet, op.cit.; Laughlin et al.,1992). Access to these realities is through discrete phases of consciousness, separate from our normal waking state.

The vast majority of the world's cultures consider altered states of consciousness "normal" and have institutionalized processes for accessing them (Bourguignon, 1976;Laughlin et al., 1992; Winkelman, 2000; Lumpkin, 2001). Winkelman looks at altered states of consciousness from a neurophenomenological perspective, and suggests they provide "different types of information processing than that associated with waking consciousness"(op. cit. :7). He cites various researchers to suggest that the "desire to alter consciousness is an innate, human, biologically based drive with adaptive significance" (ibid.). Edith Turner, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, prefers to see it as a "genetic predisposition to unity" (op.cit.:51). As Young and Goulet point out, a neurological approach (such as Winkelman's) to understanding consciousness, or at least

extraordinary experience, is at one end of the interpretive spectrum, while Edith Turner's approach is at the other (op.cit. :10). In amplifying Victor Turner's ritual model by rejecting archetypes and postulating an external source accessed through *communitas*, Edith Turner has opted to position herself at the spiritualist end of the explanatory spectrum.

CONCLUSIONS

In the century since Durkheim described collective effervescence, researchers have developed a broad understanding of ritual- its stages and structure, its importance to human social life, its transformative effects, and its biological underpinnings and physiological substrates. Nevertheless, complete understanding, from a Western perspective, awaits a more fully developed grasp of the nature of consciousness.

Community can unlock the transformative power of ritual. Malidoma Somé is an African healer and diviner who was raised in a tribal village. He was educated in the West and holds several degrees from the Sorbonne and Brandeis. With his unique understanding of ritual and community, he suggests that "People in the West are just beginning to retrieve ritual from the pits of their ancestral consciousness" (1993:40). He maintains that social responsibilities are inseparable from rituals, which incorporate both individual duty and community duty. In a discussion of power, healing and community, he suggests that we are individually and communally responsible for maintenance of the cosmic order, and "it is important to know that ritual is a work of unification, of oneness with the gods and with each other" (ibid.:43). Community is a place of self-definition, from where we draw our

strength to effect changes in ourselves, and to acknowledge the possibility of “doing together what it is impossible to do alone” (ibid.:49).

Edith Turner has suggested that the presence of the support group or community is a neglected aspect of the study of ritual. She explores changes of consciousness in the milieu of groups, through her introduction and description of Social II, which includes the presence of *communitas*. As I have demonstrated, this reflects Durkheim’s thinking; Social II is rooted in his work. While he was not able to articulate the existence of altered states of consciousness, he saw that the power of collective effervescence in communal ritual could affect the participants’ state of mind and transform their behaviour. Victor Turner’s *communitas* is an extension of the concept of collective effervescence, via the work of van Gennep on stages of rites of passage and Gluckman on conflict and social structure.

Sacred dance is an example of ancient ritual which has evolved to meet modern needs, and I have used it to explore Social II. I have discussed my interviews with six dancers and drawn on the work of a range of scholars to demonstrate that the *communitas*, the sense of unity that is pivotal to Social II, is based on intent and trust, and permits symbol to trigger release of archetypal material, leading to transformation.

While Edith Turner's Social II is rooted in Durkheim through *communitas*, it is more than *communitas*. It is a ritual space of manipulated consciousness which uses *communitas* and symbol to trigger transformation. Thus, it corresponds to Victor Turner's liminal phase of ritual, because his understanding of the liminal continued to expand over time to incorporate the idea of altered states of consciousness. As I argued, the Social II amplifies Victor Turner's ritual model, and especially the liminal phase, by assuming that the altered state, which he recognized, makes it possible to merge consciousnesses in order to access an external source for the knowledge which is essential to transformation. I have rejected the idea of an external source in Social II, and argued that the transformation is due to what is seen, from a biological perspective, as an internal, not external, source of knowledge, the archetypes. As implied by the work of Young and Goulet (op.cit.), whether the archetypes are limited to a biological source, or seen as manifestations of a more fundamental ordering principle in the universe remains to be resolved as the understanding of nature of consciousness evolves.

7.1 Edith Turner's Contribution

To characterize the idea of the Social II not as a major new direction but as an amplification of an existing concept is not to diminish its value. In playing with ideas to explain Social II, Turner wrestles with concepts such as genetic predisposition for human connections, merged consciousness, and

manas. In effect, she is dealing ultimately with concepts of meaning and reality. She is groping for an explanation of how consciousness works, trying to incorporate both the Western, biological perspective and the Eastern, mystical view. I have followed her lead in using both biologically and philosophically oriented sources to support the three elements of my thesis. As Edith Turner acknowledges, there is not yet a fully satisfactory model of consciousness. Her perception of the importance of the support group in ritual has, however, pointed future researchers to the importance of recognizing the existence of alternate realities and of blending eastern and western concepts to understand them.

A paradigm is emerging for the understanding of consciousness, one which melds eastern and western, philosophical and biological perspectives (Hanh, Laughlin, Prattis, Wilber,). It includes a recognition of the essential unity of the mind-brain-body (Damasio, Johnson, Laughlin, Prattis). It accepts that the universe consists of multiple realities and that entering those realities requires the dissolution of the sense of self, that there be “no boundaries” between our body-mind-brain and the environment (Wilber, 1985). Those realities are key to transformation of understanding because they provide access to a source of normally unavailable knowledge, perhaps through surfacing of archetypes, perhaps through a window onto the quantum sea.

Edith Turner has drawn our attention to the importance of ritual and of community. Humans continue to need ritual. Individually, we are transformed by ritual, whose conditions help to integrate the physiological systems that govern our cognition and emotion. Ritual helps us to manipulate our consciousness so that we can grow and transform by attending to material that must be processed by conscious awareness but is normally outside it. Collectively, we commune through ritual, linking ourselves to each other, to our ancestors, to the cosmos, absorbing an understanding of enduring principles to guide our lives. Through ritual we understand that we are not alone in the world.

Threading through this discussion of the Social II is a sense of the play of opposites. Elements of both science and eastern and western philosophy are blended to deepen understanding. The existence of normal reality and other realities is contemplated. Biological foundations of both ordinary consciousness and altered states of consciousness are explored. The ephemeral nature of physical movement, as well as the creative and destructive impulses of the philosophical *spanda*, are essential aspects of consciousness and so of ritual transformation. The sacred dance space of Nataraja and the six dancers contrasts with the profane reality of quotidian existence. The purposefulness of Social II is rooted in the trust and familiarity of Social I, yet the Social II is not the same as Social I. Individuals

experience unmediated communication in *communitas*, yet continue to maintain separate existences.

Perhaps, in the end, it is human consciousness that is reflected. At the base, it sees the world as a relationship between self and object (Domasio, Hanh). It integrates cognitive and emotive physiological systems (Henry, Winkelman) to synthesize understanding by interweaving processing routines from both sides of each of the coronal, sagittal and axial planes (Chevalier). Victor Turner's processual model of transformation included the interplay of structure and anti-structure around the liminal space of ritual. Edith Turner's amplification of the liminal into the Social II and the importance of communal support continues this pattern.

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APPENDIX I

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS

1. 820 A

- Does this as way of life, with teaching, performance, writing
- Very pragmatic approach, did not start out as spiritual
- Danced about 30 years, started out as child/teen studying dance
- As you do it , becomes more spiritual
- Music, costumes, etc like part of language, important for mood and feelings.
- Doing with audience (or students?)- highly alert, totally focussed, like a total meditation, is a stillness inside
- Get to this state through structure of classical dance, discipline
- Less knowledgeable audience-more attentive, not big effect
- Can feel if crowd enjoying it
- Need to care about the audience- they want both entertainment and a spiritual experience
- Motivation-multi dimensional, enriches life, partner with spouse, likes dance.

2. 830 B

- Danced over 50 years, started as very young child, drawn to it
- Does this as way of life, teaching, performance
- Doesn't matter who is there-brings joy and meditation
- When dancing alone, creates all the characters so is never really alone
- Technique become second nature
- Re audience composition- their understanding of stories key, so voiceover helpful
- Dancing, even teaching, takes one into meditative state, energizing, refreshing
- With others, getting into the state eventually becomes easy, but not at first. All get on same wavelength
- Motivation-means of worshipping, prayer
- In studies , learned mind governed body
- Wants to integrate dance functions to maximize use of body-fuse styles

3. 831 C

- Danced since childhood, about 50 years
- Art, teaching, performing is way of life
- Dancing brings joy
- Use of human body fascinates
- Performance is offering to audience
- If audience not with you, need to bring them along, work harder to draw them into the emotion
- Little difference between audiences
- Emotion is universal, giving, sharing is key to performance
- If alone dancing, concentrates, a lot of things "fall away"
- Last few years, has been exploring roots, trying to find themes not danced before, universal themes
- Sees dancer as completing energy circuit, transmitter between "great things" and rest of us.

4. 926 D

- Danced since child
- Day job different, teaches and performs (less now) dance
- When dancing, joy, total concentration, technique automatic
- You feel the person in myth, become it
- When music is heavenly, get carried away
- NB, live singer and drummer are key, read each other's moods
- If small, appreciative audience (even without live music) dancer wants to convey message
- If larger audience and taped music, dancer concentrates on performance areas aspects of dance, not so much on message
- Rapport only there if dancer and audience are in tune, totally appreciate. Even an audience with little cultural background is better than one which is culturally similar but there largely to socialize.
- Finds a spiritual element in dancing, path to philosophy and culture
- As child, dancing helped combat illness
- When starts to dance, instant peace, fully there
- The structure of the dance, and the initial preps- warm up exercises, etc – all a ritual

5. 98 E

- danced as child, got into liturgical dance in late teens
- not professional dancer
- Sees dance as parallel to liturgical art
- Joyful, now more private act first, lets body create movement by letting go, clearing breath, eventually turns it into liturgical piece

- Useful to have a witness, to go quicker, be safe, don't have to engage cognitive function
- Dancing with a group is not about relationship so much as about community, connection, web, communication
- Communication is at a level not usually done
- Positive experience in dancing encourages risk taking in other areas of life
- Dancing in a group very different than alone
- If in group, in front of audience, is a service, offering to audience. Is a partnership with all the players in the liturgy- (voice, reading etc). Is reciprocal in nature, bringing people along
- Is NOT a performance, but an offering, want to bring people in
- Sense all of congregation are doing it together, facilitates worship
- Sometimes get into the same "headspace" as when do it privately with partner
- Headspace- surrender to transcendent, sense of connection, ownership of dance becomes bigger than each one individually
- When dance with someone whose soul you can touch- is relationship of trust, and the movement is about trust and surrender
- Environmental factors, like music, become irrelevant. If dance is authentic, and your intention clear, it produces energy and becomes what you want it to be despite music
- Dancing enables body to be first, not mind, and feed energy and info to soul and mind and integrate; there is a relational transference of something that is not material; lets body emit energy to someone else that affects them at level of body and soul
- Dancing helps to become very present for others, gives them energy, a gift to them
- does dance as meditation, on advice of wise older person many years ago when illness diagnosed
- dance is healing, sense of transcendent, fits with the rest of life (work), is embodying being an entity on this planet

6. 823 F

- Danced since childhood, moving the key, not performance
- Has a main dance partner but others
- When dancing, let movement create itself in you to express the poem, text, thought
- Challenge in sacred dance-how to be expressive in spite of structural part or training
- If start to notice technique, the energy is not there
- When in group in front of audience, as soon as give up control and make commitment to connect to God, can do no wrong in dance- sense of transported to somewhere else, "where was I?"
- Different types of experiences: in corporate dance, something integral to breath when physically close, connects people, is spiritual experience; when personal, alone, often motivated by a specific issue; when in performance, not a spiritual experience
- The important thing is the intention

- In corporate dance, something happens in synchronization of breath (NB), marks a clear beginning of the sense of corporateness.; not necessarily a clear ending; is a “no time, no space” place
- Are hyper aware and unaware at the same time
- When utterly transported in corporate dance, what you practiced may change, sense that you are doing what you are meant to do
- Happens the more you dance with the group- familiarity + synergy/trust/connection
- Some people in group can’t depart from patterned movement-if even one person in group like that, others will not go into transcendent space as a group, but may go into themselves
- Intention and belief in the sacred is the key, can’t plan too much
- In group, even if all intentionality there, may still be hampered by different backgrounds eg other faith group. Need to find way to translate it(eg text) into meaning for each individual to achieve connection
- Commonality of faith and understanding of symbols doesn’t necessarily facilitate the process, matters more where individual is at
- Motivation- movement is ancestral, connects to the human condition and experience- others have done these same movements before, sense of being a part of something much bigger
- Movement reconnects body and mind; NA culture has separated the two, need to bring it back, can enhance worship in liturgical setting

7. 026 G

- no difference between religion- based and other dance
- dance is always a total experience, is being in the moment
- if it’s successful it is because you are in it completely, in the moment
- takes a while to know the choreography and then to be one with it, to have that total experience
- no longer performs, but teaches and guides movement
- can readily put self in appropriate mental state, may do warm ups,
- experience counts; maybe readiness to go into state is natural, stemming from natural flexibility(ie of attitude); is not necessarily learned, but can cultivate it and build on it
- fascinated by bringing things together and deepening one’s own identity and bridging to other communities
- religious background not important, in fact can generally cause problems in life; dancers not into theology, but may find inspiration in their own religious tradition, as a source for the deeper identity and for bridging to others

APPENDIX II

INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

- Thanks for agreeing to do this; very helpful for thesis, etc.
- Review from previous letter/conversation/consent form: time to be taken(about 1.5-2hours); format; presence of tape recorder as well as notes; confidentiality; reason for the interview; access to results

1.The Dance

I am interested in exploring your experience with _(type)_ sacred dance.

- How long have you been involved with this type of dance?
- Have you done other types of sacred dance?
- What made you choose this type?
- How often do you do this type of dancing?
- How do you get ready to do it-do you have any special preparations to make?(clothing, little rituals, readings, meditations, change of location, etc)
- How do you decide which steps to do-the choreography- is it the same pattern with some variation? Do you vary the steps each time you do it? Spontaneously?
- Is the dance based on a text, for example, sacred scriptures (written myths)?
- How do you decide which extract or piece to choose for the dance?
- What kind of mood might you be in when you start to dance?
- Does your mood change when you are dancing? After?
- How do you feel when you are dancing? Is it the same feeling each time you dance?
- Does the feeling change during the course of the dance?
- Can you describe your state of mind when you are dancing? Is it different from normal?
- Has it always been like that? Did you have to work up to it? Did it just start to happen spontaneously, or did you intend it to happen? How long did it take to get to this point?

2.The Group

- What are you aware of when you are dancing-do you think about the steps, the people around you, things happening in your life?
- Is it the same at the beginning of the dance as during the dance?

- How do you react to the rhythm of the music? Can it be too loud or too soft? What does that do to your concentration/mood?
- What about the people –is dancing with a group different from dancing on your own? How?
- What about dancing in front of an audience –as part of a group or solo? How does that affect you?
- (if described altered state earlier) Do you find it easier or harder to go there if an audience is present? Can you describe why?
- Do you feel you have any sort of responsibility to the audience/group? Can you describe it? Why do you think you have this responsibility?
- What about the size of the group-how does that affect you?
- Is the effect different if the audience is predominantly _____ (Indian, Hindu, Jewish etc.)? Can you describe how, why?

3. The Motivation

- What got you interested in sacred dance in the first place?
- Had you tried other paths (to achieve their goal)?
- How has doing the dance affected you? Do you feel you have changed as a result of doing it? In what way?
- Do you get the sense the dance affects others in the group (or audience)? In what way? What gives you that sense? Do you think this is a long term effect?
- Does doing the dance take a lot of your energy? How does it pay off? What do you think you are getting out of it?

CLOSURE

- Short summary of what I have understood
- Possibility of follow up?
- Express thanks and appreciation
- Will contact them when thesis ready, re access.