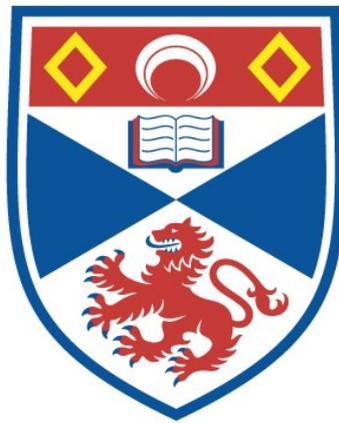


AN EXPLORATION OF THEORETICAL SPACE WITHIN
RITUAL : WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE
FUNERALS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND
THEIR IMPORTANCE IN THE GRIEF AND
BEREAVEMENT PROCESS

Rebecca E. Richardson

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of MPhil
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An Exploration Of Theoretical Space Within Ritual

With specific reference to the funerals of the Church of England and their importance
in the grief and bereavement process

R.E.Richardson

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With thanks to Dr Aguilar, Dr Serrati, and my parents for all their help and support.

This paper explores the importance of ritual space in the process of grief and bereavement. Ritual has so far been considered either in terms of Turner's processual symbolic analysis; or Shorter's / Eliade's circular understanding. In light of Grimes (2000) recent criticisms that Turner's linear paradigm can only be considered as applicable to non-western ritual activity, I will examine the potential in combining both circular and linear interpretations to suggest a new model that can be applied to contemporary western ritual life.

I transpose Shorter's psychological framework onto Turners anthropological focus. The resultant model focuses upon the theoretical space created. Focusing upon the recent liturgical developments within the funeral provisions of the Church of England I will use the model to explore the use of the funeral rite to those suffering loss. I will argue that the space within the ritual process allows one to connect with an archetypal sense of loss and grief; However, the processual nature of our ritual activity ensures we do not remain frozen in that place.

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Introduction

Ritual has thus far been investigated either in terms of the three-fold linear processual model provided by Van Gennep and Turner; or by the containing, circular notion discussed by Eliade and Shorter. My contention is that ritual can only ever be valuably investigated if one looks at the two models together. In this paper I transpose Shorter's psychological framework onto Turner's anthropological focus. Building upon this I provide a model that can apply to ritual in the contemporary western world.

Following Van Gennep Turner identified a three-phased process and developed a unique approach to ritual. He saw ritual as exemplifying the transition of an individual from one state to another¹. Turner noted that between the states the ritual subjects are in a "no longer / not yet" status, they are "neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremonial" (Turner 1969:95). He looked closely at the importance of this liminal moment and examined it in terms of its transitional role².

The model I propose, however, views the liminal moment not simply in terms of its transitional

¹ Turner throughout his work discussed the importance of the liminal intermediate phase in ritual. The Forest of Symbols (1967), The Drums of Affliction (1968) and The Ritual Process (1969) are very much the central core of Turners approach to ritual. Among these The Ritual Process, the publication of Turners Henry Moore Lectures which he delivered at the University of Rochester in April 1966 is most crucial for it is the work in which Turner discussed the concepts of liminality and communitas at some length and at the same time it was the work in which he was led away from an exclusive study of Ndembu ritual and started to focus on phenomena in complex societies.

² In The Ritual Process (1969) Turner applied this concept of the liminal to phenomenon in complex societies moving away from his primary focus upon the Ndembu rituals. He examined the Franciscan order, the hippie movement of the 1960's and the Sahajiya movement of Bengal. He realised however that liminality was different in the modern world to the liminal phase he identified in the Ndembu and thus introduced the term liminoid. The liminoid differs from the liminal in several ways (Turner 1974:84-86); Liminal phenomena are restricted to the primitive tribal societies; they are experienced collectively as the result of crisis in the social process. Liminoid phenomena however take place in the complex industrial world; they are the products of individual or particular group efforts and are generated continuously. "The liminoid originated outside of the boundaries of the economic, political, structural process and its manifestations often challenge the wider social structure by offering social critique on, or even suggestions for, a revolutionary re-ordering of the official social order" (Deflem 1991:10)

role, but as it having transformational importance. In order for it to take on this role the ritual creates a theoretical space and a conceptual freeze frame allows one to delve more deeply into the unconscious than has thus far been imagined. In terms of the funeral this enables 'grief work' to take place, to some extent, transforming the ritual participant. The processual notion within Turners model of ritual behavior remains important for it stops one from getting stuck in the liminal moment which would in turn prevent transformation³. The transformative moment only makes up one part of the ritual, it is not its entirety, and one needs to be brought through it successfully to have completed the rite.

Although ritual is not something that has agency, or dwells in any literal form, it is true to say that when ritual activity is effective its traces do remain “-in the heart, in the memory, in the mind, in texts, in photographs, in descriptions, in social values, and in the marrow, in the source of our life blood” (Grimes 2000:7). In this sense ritual can be attributed “object - like existence” (Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994:267), and thus metaphorically they can “rise up and hit us over the head with their presence with their being there for us to enact in that particular form” (Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994:267).

However, although ritual can be attributed 'object – like' status in some senses it is still important to remember that it is not a separate entity in itself. Its status is always subjective and never objective. Ritual criticism relies on the basic premise that “rites, although they may be revealed by the gods are also constructed by human beings and therefore imperfect and subject to political manipulation (Grimes 1990:9). However sacred a rite may appear to be it is still not beyond the scope of human influence, the mere fact that humans participate in ritual activity at all has the effect of changing them. Human subjectivity means that the same rite can be performed in the same place at the same time but yet have entirely different meaning and significance for people sitting next to one another. This suggests that the ritual activity that each

³ Turner (1969:107) comments “what was in tribal society principally a set of transitional qualities ‘betwixt and between’ defined states of culture and society, has itself become an institutionalized state” He goes on to comment that transition has here become a permanent condition.

person performs is slightly different, and can lead him or her to perform a slightly different rite.

A distinction can be drawn between the fact that mankind creates rites, and if they were not performed then they would not exist, and the notion that ritual can be said to have some object-like existence and a 'life' beyond that which is man-made. There is a huge difference between having the written instructions for a ritual performance and the actual enactment of the rite. In much the same way as religious icons are thought by those in the Orthodox Church to be windows into heaven, ritual action can be thought of as pathways to connect with the numinous. That with which they connect has a life beyond surface value.

In chapter one I investigate a number of different theories of ritual, examining their relevance and usefulness in terms of the psychological importance that ritual has. Using a series of different metaphors and pictures I attempt to bring the reader to a clearer understanding of what ritual is and how it works. I also examine the way the action, or exterior aspects, interact with the psychological, or interior aspects, of the ritual. I investigate that space between what one does and how one feels.

Chapter two focuses upon the function of liturgy in the funeral rite. It is my contention that liturgical input can act as if it were a spine, providing posture or shape to the ritual. The liturgy of a rite can be viewed as the tangible part of the theoretical structure explored. There is a concrete nature to the words written on the page. A brief investigation of the origins of the Church of England throws light upon its approach to liturgy, and from this point I move to look at what is required of modern day liturgies and the relevance of post-modernism.

Moving on from this discussion of the modern state, and its challenges to the Church, in chapter three I explore the human reaction to crisis and the psychological process of grief and bereavement. I then look at how funeral services are of use in this, focusing specifically upon the *Common Worship* funeral.

In my conclusions I propose a new model or way of thinking about ritual. I explore the potential to connect with grief that is either unknown or insufficiently dealt with within ritual theoretical space, arguing that within the ritual space we have the security to connect with an archetypal sense of loss. Having investigated the interplay between Turner's and Shorter's models I reaffirm the importance of both. It is important that one is allowed to remain in the liminal moment a while in order to connect with such archetypal forces and begin 'grief work', yet of equal importance that the rites processual nature carry's one through this point in order to complete its transformative function.

Turner's processual symbolic analysis is influential in my work, however Grime's interpretation also plays an equally important role in my conclusion. Whilst accepting Turners analysis of ritual as humanly meaningful cultural performances of an essentially processual nature, I agree with Grimes in arguing Turner's paradigm to only be applicable to non-Western ritual activity. My view of the liminal moment depends upon a less tangible notion of the liminal moment. Whilst Turner's model focuses upon the way ritual activity affects different states of being within a society, I focus upon different modes of thinking within a psychological / spiritual journey⁴. I aim to build upon Turner's mode of analysis, which has thus far been an important alternative for all too static structural analyses of ritual and provide a model that can apply to ritual in the western world.

⁴ Whereas Turner, as an anthropologist, looks at ritual reflecting the ways people think and feel about their external world, I focus upon the way a ritual can act as a psychological tool, connecting people more closely with their interior world and potentially a sense of the numinous.

Chapter 1

An Exploration of Theoretical Space Within Ritual

The research of cultural anthropologists like Victor Turner (1969, 1985) and Mary Douglas (1982) and of ritual theorists like Ronald Grimes (1990 and 1995), Catherine Bell (1968) and Tom Driver (1991) all investigate ritual activity in terms of the function it performs. Debate has centred around such issues as whether it ought to be described as a *practice* or as an *action* (Bell 1992), how it affects social cohesion (Cheal 1988 and Muir 1997), and whether it can be described as serving any practical purpose (Driver 1991). Current models investigate ritual in temporal terms, focussing upon the pre-ritualised person and the post-ritualised affect. Such models can therefore be described as holding a progressive sense of ritual. They examine the ways in which those who engage in ritual activity move onwards, or not, from their experiences; ritual can be described as having a transitional function (Turner 1979). However, to view the ritual process in such a way is too simplistic. To see ritual in solely *transitional* terms limits it to a spatial sense, one of before and after; however it is equally important for one to think in terms of potential *transformation* within the ritual process. The liminal moment (van Gennep 1960) can then become a room in which one stands to experience transformation, rather than just being a point the ritual 'conveyor belt' takes you through. A feeling of space is created. It is this area of transformational, liminal space that I aim to work. However before going any further it is first necessary to define the term ritual.

What is Ritual?

"The metamessage of 'You get the message don't you?' ...says that what a ritual communicates is very important yet problematic" (Schechner 1993:230). The search for an adequate definition of ritual has been compared with the search for the Holy Grail (Grimes 1990a). Formal

definitions of ritual are often confusing, they oscillate between either citing a number of different possible meanings, or isolating one or two characteristics as definitive.

The deeper we delve in search of these causes the more of them we discover, and each cause appears to us equally valid in itself and equally false by its significance compared to the magnitude of the event itself. (Tolstoy 1978)

If one reads 'definition of ritual' instead of 'causes' in this extract from *War and Peace*, it can be seen to describe the difficulty of the situation. Therefore, when trying to define ritual it is important to recognise the diversity that can be found, this prevents one from seeing a particular example of ritual as a paradigm for all.

The word 'ritual' has a wide range of uses. Ordinarily it applies to "an act that is formulaic and symbolic (culturally meaningful) and traditional"(Collins Dictionary). However, the word has also been used to refer to actions that are formulaic and meaningful but without cultural significance, for example Freud (1907). The word has also been used to describe newly invented rituals in order to suggest they are symbolic and full of meaning for participants (as in new liturgies) as well as being used to describe actions that are meaningless yet repetitive. The wide range of popular uses in the English language suggests that ritual has a number of possible interpretations.

In trying to come to some understanding of what made a ritual special or set apart from everyday actions, Wittgenstein decided that rituals had some kind of family-like resemblance. This approach is very helpful, for although there is no one essential quality, there is still a certain something that enables us to define it as ritual. Like members of a family, some events we call rituals share characteristics; others share other ones (Wittgenstein 1979). As Wittgenstein (1979) wrote in criticism of Freud "it is probable that there are many different sorts of dreams, and there is no single line of explanation for them all. Just as there are many sorts of jokes. Or just as there are many sorts of language". If one thinks in terms of ritual having family-like characteristics,

one avoids the possibility of making judgements about its genre: “We do not begin by asking, is this ritual or drama or politics? Rather, we ask, to what extent are the actions that compose the genre – whatever it is- stylised repeated, and so on? Thus we are able to explore all kinds of composite, boundary line, or anomalous activities such as ritual drama, civil ceremony, military parades, and museum openings” (Grimes 1990:15). The danger, when looking at ritual, is defining the term too narrowly, losing many other aspects of ritual that have equal importance⁵. “Just as no two family members have *all* the pool of family characteristics, so no ritual is likely to display all of these” (Grimes 1990:13).

The chart below outlines qualities that scholars believe to be indicators that appear when action moves in the direction of ritual (Grimes 1990:14). It emphasises that no quality is definitive, nor is one quality unique.

Qualities of Ritual
<i>performed, embodied, enacted, gestural (not merely said)</i>
<i>formalised, elevated, stylised, differentiated (not ordinary, unadorned, or undifferentiated)</i>
<i>repetitive, redundant, rhythmic (not singular, once-for-all)</i>
<i>collective, institutionalised, consensual (not personal or private)</i>
<i>patterned, invariant, standardised, stereotyped, ordered, rehearsed (not improvised, idiosyncratic or spontaneous)</i>
<i>traditional archaic, primordial (not invented or recent)</i>
<i>valued highly or ultimately, deeply felt, sentiment laden, meaningful, serious (not trivial or shallow)</i>
<i>condensed or multi-layered (not obvious, requiring interpretation)</i>
<i>symbolic, referential (not merely requiring technological or primarily means-end orientated)</i>
<i>perfected, idealised, pure, ideal (not conflictual or subject to criticism and failure)</i>
<i>dramatic, lucid [i.e. playlike] (not primarily discursive or explanatory: not without special framing or boundaries) paradigmatic (not ineffectual in modelling either other rites or non-ritualised action)</i>
<i>mythical, transcendent, religious, cosmic (not secular or merely empirical)</i>
<i>adaptive, functional (not obsessional, neurotic, dysfunctional)</i>
<i>conscious deliberate (not unconscious or preconscious)</i>

⁵ Victor Turners definition of ritual is a prime example of this. He describes ritual as “... formal behavior prescribed for occasions not given over to technological routine that have reference to beliefs in mystical beliefs or powers” (Turner and Turner 1978:243). Grimes (1990, 1990b) criticize this definition for being too narrow and thereby limiting ritual to be only religious ritual. “It implies that ritual is by definition related to belief – a distinctly Western preoccupation, one that ignores instances of disjunction and dissonance between ritual and belief. Ritual’s relation to belief is no more automatic than its relation to myth. Because the same rite can migrate across various eras, cultural settings, and cosmologies, one cannot infer beliefs from it. It is not at all uncommon to find people participating in rites they do not believe in (Grimes 1990a:12).

The chart has the advantage that it is fuller than any one definition. It emphasises the breadth of characteristics within the term 'ritual'. It demonstrates that no one quality is unique to ritual, every single one included in the chart could equally be used of non-ritualised activity. For example, although 'symbolic' appears on the chart, it cannot however be described as definitive of ritual since it occurs in non ritual contexts⁶, and it is also possible for an action not to contain any symbolism yet still be classified as a ritual. It is important to remember, "Ritual is not a 'what', not a 'thing'. It is a 'how', a quality..." (Grimes 1990:13).

What Does Ritual Do?

Having established what ritual *is*, or can be, it is now necessary to further examine the arguments concerning the purpose of ritual activity. There seems to be a special need attached to the conscious practice of performing activities in a ritualised manner; whether these are everyday acts, special religious ceremonies, or participation in traditional festivals, as certain value is attached to the actions performed. There is much debate as to why. Homan's (1941) holds that ritual does not produce a practical result in the external world, and Driver notes the seeming oddity that human beings have engaged in ritual when life seems to be full of challenges that require more practical types of activity (Driver 1991). There are however a number of scholars (Cheal 1988, Collins 1985, Jung 1938, Morrison 1995, Muir 1997, Stryker 1991, Sunden 1959) who believe that ritual serves a very practical purpose, both in the external world and in the internal, psychological world; they assert that to ritualise is in fact a very practical activity and not a pointless exercise.

⁶ Grimes draws attention to the fact that among many scholars there is a view that ritual consists of components analogous to building blocks. These components, being symbols, "are said to 'condense' or 'contain' that power. Some interpretations imply that a rite can be analyzed and divided into parts, with nothing left over. Others state that rites consist mainly of symbols but do have other factors too, of which the remainder is not specified. A few scholars questions whether rites are even symbols at all i.e. Sperber (1975) and Staal (1979)

Ritual as Action / Thought / Practice

Firstly it is important to look at the use of the word 'action' when referring to ritual, since it is not altogether clear-cut whether ritual ought or ought not to be referred to in such a manner.

The most influential theories of ritual belong to one of two camps; "some stress the distinctiveness of ritual, how it is clearly different from all other kinds of activity; others stress the congruity of ritual with other forms of human action, usually seeing ritual as 'the expressive, symbolical or communicative aspect of action in general' "(Bell 1992:71). The first of these groups usually sees ritual activity as opposed to technical utilitarian activity; with ritual having a rule governed, routinised, symbolic and non instrumental relationship between its means and ends, and technical activity by contrast being pragmatic and instrumentally effective (Douglas 1973:19/20). Such a distinction between ritual and instrumental action can, as Bell points out, easily collapse into a distinction between the rational and irrational or the logical and emotional (Bell 1992 and Shills 1968)⁷.

It is at this point that Bell believes it becomes useful to refer to ritual in terms of 'practice' rather than action. She asserts more can be said about ritual if one asks questions concerning the unity of 'practice' and intent rather than 'action' and intent. Following Althusser she holds that in order to understand a set of practices it is necessary to question the particular object of practice as well as the particularity of the practices relationship to the object. "In looking at someone doing something, for example, we should ask about the relationship between 'the doing' and 'the something'" (Bell 1992:86). As Althusser puts it, one puts to practice the question of specific difference between its 'self' and its 'object intent'. Bell believes there to be two questions

⁷ Hence the identification of ritual with symbolic and opposed to instrumental descriptions of ritual as cathartic performances that are responses to situation of anxiety or fear (Bell 1992 also see E. Shills 1968). The debate between Malinowski and Firth on the relationship of ritual and anxiety essentially reflected the need to account for the existence of non-utilitarian practices among people who were incredibly practical in most things Homans (1941:164-72). Rituals, as activities that have no practical result, function to reduce anxiety at times of crisis.

involved in this; the first asks what the practice 'sees' - *i.e.* the 'something' in doing something; "the questions it asks or situations it addresses" (Bell 1992:86). the second questions the 'doing' - *i.e.* to question the oversights of a practice, what a specific practice does not see, "namely the problem or situation that is only visible in so far as it is invisible"(Althusser and Balibar 1979:314). "A practice does not see itself what it actually does. This oversight does not concern the object-intent consciously sighted by the practice but the very ability to see practice itself"(Bell 1992:87). What this is trying to say is that practice can see what it does, but it cannot see how it manages to do this. "The effectiveness of practice is *not* the resolution of the problematic to which it addresses itself, but a complete change in terms of the problematic, a change it does not see itself make"(Althusser and Balibar 1979:20/21).

Although I agree with Bell in saying that to regard action as divorced from thought is to view it in a rather impoverished manner, I do, however, tend to side with Humphrey and Laidlaw who hold that the word action ought to remain in use when referring to ritual, as 'practice' seems to berate what actually takes place in a ritual. "Bells choice of the word 'practice' stems from her perception that ultimately the notion of ritual is constructed in the practice of anthropological theorising about it within the concerns of a particular academic era. This must be true, but it is confusing to conflate this sense of 'practice' with the practice of people from other cultures engaging in ritual. All in all it seems a pity to give up an indispensable word (action) in this way, especially since, as Bell also says to regard action as divorced from and devoid of thought is an impoverished understanding of human activity (Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994).

And so, having established that ritual is an action rather than simply a practice, and is in this sense proactive, we are forced to return to the question: Does ritual serve any *practical* purpose?

The Social Importance and Practical 'Action' of Ritual

It is true to say that ritual is a social activity, and its meaning is inherently ambiguous. In attempting to say something further than this, some scholars place greater emphasis upon the function of ritual as a form of behaviour: some view it as either as an action that creates social solidarity, or forms social identities; others focus upon ritual as a kind of communication; others see it as a collectively created performance, "a specific practice that constructs maintains, and modifies society itself"(Muir 1997:6). There are several theories that support the argument that ritual does have a very practical purpose; both in terms of the personal, psychological role; and also in terms of the ways an individual can relate to his contemporaries and society;

The Structural Functionalist, Constructionalist and Mobilisation Theories

The structural functionalist theory views ritual as activity that contributes to the stabilisation of social relationships. "Interpersonal rituals deal with the crises of individual adjustment that occur in different systems"(Cheal 1988:633). Cheal summarises these 'crises'⁸ as four situations; 1) transformation or adjustment of the structure of a relationship. 2) crises concerning one relationship to the central values of society. 3) crises necessitating selection of specific roles by individuals. 4) crises resulting from the disruption of roles in individuals or groups.

⁸ Crisis theory as outlined by Rappaport (1999:1ff) offers the advantage of more sharply defining and characterizing a state, which occurs frequently in the life cycle of the individual or family and during which the helping professions are likely to be active. The simplest definition of crisis is an upset in a steady state. This rests on the notion that an individual attempts to maintain for himself a state of equilibrium through constant adapting and problem solving. In response to many situations the individual may possess adequate adaptive or re-equilibrating mechanisms (Rappaport 1999:2), however in a state of crisis, by definition these habitual problem-solving activities are not adequate and do not result in leading the individual back to the balanced state desired. The hazardous event creates for the individual a problem in his current life situation, "the problem can be conceived of as a threat, a loss, or a challenge. W.I. Thoman, a social theorist (see Volkhart 1951 p12-14) held that crisis was a catalyst that disturbs old habits and evokes new responses and becomes a major factor in charting new developments. If one sees crisis in this way then it can be thought of as a call to new action, "the challenge it provokes may bring forth new coping mechanisms which serve to strengthen the individual's adaptive capacity and thereby in general raise his level of mental health" (Rappaport 1999:1). Rappaport (1999) holds there are three sets of inter-related factors that can produce a state of crisis; 1) a hazardous event which poses some threat; 2) a threat or an instinctual need which is symbolically linked to earlier threats that resulted in vulnerability or conflict; 3) an inability to respond with adequate coping mechanisms.

Structural functionalists view rituals as activities that provide specific knowledge and behaviour to individuals in vulnerable relationships so they can work to resolve problems and reduce any strain on relationships. In this way participation in ritual action can be a very practical activity.

However, the structural functionalist view can be regarded as limited, often rituals are not activities with which to stabilise crises. The constructionist and mobilisation theories, both of which present an altogether different view on ritual, and can be seen to compliment the structural functionalist view. The basis of these theories is that rituals are activities used in constructing and reconstructing relationships and not as activities used explicitly to solve crises and / or reduce interpersonal tension.

The constructionalist theory views ritual as providing a solid base from which people can form / consolidate relationships with one another. Rituals ensure the active construction and reconstruction of relationships as they legitimate participation in groups through identification with established roles (Cheal 1988:632-643). "In a sense the legitimation of membership is the construction of the concept of role identities"(Stryker 1991). Sunden (1959) believes that religious narratives enable role taking; in that they describe or prescribe a certain role or way of behaving in situations with which a person can identify. Sunden based this 'role theory' upon the work of Mead (1934), who held that once we have experienced social interaction with other people, it is easier for us the next time a similar situation rises - we are able to anticipate the reactions of other people and we are therefore able to adjust our reactions accordingly. In this way then ritual can be said to minimise, but not eliminate, decision making and thereby freeing individuals from some uncertainty.

Symbols are found at the centre of the constructionalism theory of Berger and Luckman (1996).

Symbols define and legitimate various patterns of behaviour in everyday situations and crises, and rituals provide methods of instituting reciprocal action in relationships of shared ideas or symbols (Cheal 1988). Constructionism is a cognitive theory, the basis of the theory is the construction of relationships that involve shared symbols, so as to reduce the cognitive load of individuals in, or entering into, a relationship - this is what ritual participation facilitates.

However, Collins mobilisation theory (1985) holds that emotions, as opposed to cognition, are the major contributing factor to social relations. In this view ritual provides a sense of common activity and membership when making and maintaining relationships. Rituals provide the group with a common focus of attention and increase the emotional energy of the group (Cheal 1988). In this way ritual could be described as glue that holds communities together. For Durkheim, society and social order was the focus of attention and he was always keen to study anything that added social cohesion. According to him, funeral or mourning rites were in a special category of their own. He named these poetry or expiatory rites, where sorrow and sadness are the dominant emotions. Rites of mourning in his opinion produce a veritable 'panic of sorrow' (Casement 1999) the function of which is to draw the group together when its solidarity is threatened by the loss of an individual. For Durkheim all ritual is, in one way or another, there to shore up social cohesion. "Religious ceremonial is the culmination of bringing together members of society in an act of self worship, the ultimate social glue"(Casement 1999:49). Driver is also a strong believer in the importance of communal gathering, performative cooperation and some kind of mystical participation, "in which the various members, although interacting with each other only in the singing and not with eyes, spoken words, or physical touch, were yet as much united as it is possible for human beings to be"(Driver 1991:153). As he points out modern society offers few opportunities for this level of mutual participation.

"The absence of ritual heralds the loss of community... From a purely individual, spiritual

perspective they may not always be necessary but from a perspective of the community they are absolutely essential because it is through ritual that individuals give up their individuality and answer to responsibilities out-side of themselves” (Cheal 1988). It is clear that, as with constructionism, mobilisation theory views ritual as facilitating participation in relationships, the main difference between the two theories is that the latter holds emotion to be the major basis of relational ties, whereas the former emphasises the foundation of a relationship with the sharing of symbols and meaning.

‘Learning’ Rituals

Morrison (1995) believes that ritual action enables a ‘learning’ process to take place. He refers to certain rituals, or certain ritual behaviours as ‘learning rituals’ for this reason, believing the teaching function of the ritual to be of utmost importance. People learn via rituals because rituals provide for role identity in a culture of practice. Ritual can be seen as a social activity, this; a) contributes to role identification; b) supports construction of emotional links in learning cultures; c) legitimates learner presence. The theory of legitimate peripheral participation further explains this view of ritual (Lave and Wenger 1994); this theory maintains that, in addition to instruction, a function of the relationship between the master and apprentice is the legitimization of the apprentice’s activity and membership in a certain culture. Lave and Wenger hold that the student, when learning, embodies the structure of the community – instead of learning in a somewhat detached manner the necessary skill, the individual becomes part of the culture and therefore acts in ways that are appropriate. Given this, it seems logical to presume that the learner must become at least a peripheral member of the culture as a precondition to using the culture’s skills and knowledge.

Stryker’s identity theory is entirely compatible with Lave and Wenger’s theory of legitimate peripheral learning (Stryker 1991). According to Stryker self and society shape one another in a

cyclic manner and social structures, such as roles in society, define the individuals conditions. Self is seen as a system of internalised role designations and learned behaviour originates in the individuals selection of the role to play in situations. Situational clues 'trigger' individuals to select and engage in an internalised role and thus we use knowledge and behaviour associated with that role (Morrison 1995). Assuming a role gives 'learners' the opportunity to identify and internalise the role, the internalisation is supported and reinforced through repeated assumptions of that role. "With each voluntary repeated participation in a ritual as a certain role, the learner constructs stronger an identity with the role. The activities of the role become familiar and the learner essentially internalises the role and the central behaviours associated with that role" (Morrison 1995).

Handelman believes that describing ritual in terms of 'models' or 'mirrors' is useful. He states that many rituals work in much the same way as models; in that they present a simplified miniature for society to follow. "When church goers exchange handshakes, they enact a model of goodwill that the ritual encourages people to carry into their daily lives. When public officials calmly walk in an ordered procession they model the behaviour expected of them in the conduct of the affairs of state"(Muir 1997:5). He contrasts this with the way a mirror works; mirrors present the world as it is understood to be. "They have a declarative character: *I* am the King in a coronation, *you* are the enemy in a challenge to a dual, *she* is my wife in a wedding"(Muir 1997:5). In effect rituals re-present something in a public way. Handelman believes however that unlike a model they do not offer an alternative for the future construction of society, they do not offer a way out, but simply present things as they are.

However, as Muir points out, describing rituals in terms of models and mirrors is useful when trying to understand the different processes going on in ritual, it is virtually impossible though to properly distinguish where a ritual leaves off being a model and becomes a mirror or vice versa.

Although even though rituals have a tendency to blur the processes, Muir believes it is exactly this that is “perhaps the very source of creative tension in rituals. the tension between the conservative mirroring of what *is* and the utopian modelling of *what might be*” (Muir 1997:5).

In this light, ritual can be seen as activity in which membership is legitimised through the subordination and identification of the individual to roles. In this way a ritual can be seen to have a very active role in both the external and the internal (psychological) worlds; making it of utmost practical use.

Nevertheless mobilisation theory introduces a major contingency to the process of role identification and learning through ritual. This theory draws attention to the motivational and emotional nature of rituals. Role identification cannot be guaranteed in recurrent ritual participation and patterned activity. If the individual does not want to participate, it is not likely that they will experience any sense of internalisation or learning through the act of ritual, no matter how many times they may be repeated. “While mobilisation theory provides some of the motivational mechanisms for the process of identification in recurrent activity are not enough for rituals to be completely effective as learning activities”(Morrison 1995); Identity theory is contingent on the individual commitment to the identity in question (Stryker 1991). Mobilisation theory reiterates this contingency.

In their basic premises constructionism and mobilisation theories are in many ways similar. Whilst they see rituals as having different bases in relationship development both theories agree that the role of ritual is one of generating and maintaining relationships. Structural functionalism, on the other hand, is a contrasting theory as it holds that rituals are mechanisms used to reduce tensions in already existing relationships. Morrison interprets the constructionism and mobilisation theories as ‘prescriptive’, in that rituals are intended to be activities that alleviate

crises. Conversely he dubbed the structural functionalist approach as 'generative', as rituals are used to aid the generation of relationships. Ritual can therefore be viewed from both a generative and a prescriptive point of view. Rituals can therefore be seen to 'do' something in the external world. In this way they cannot be described as meaningless or pointless as they apparently serve a practical end.

Durkheim's social solidarity thesis asserts that ritual exercises control through "the promotion of consensus and the psychological and cognitive ramifications of such consensus"⁹. Kertzer sees social solidarity as a "requirement of society" and ritual as "an indispensable element in the creation of that solidarity"(Kertzer 1988:62). Girard and Burkett conclude that ritualization "is the controlled displacement of chaotic and aggressive impulses. Hence ritualization is central to culture as the means to dominate nature and the natural violence within human beings"¹⁰. It is clear therefore that ritual has a hugely important social function and cannot in light of this be described as a 'pointless exercise', nor could it be described as serving no practical purpose.

Ritual as Communication

There are many scholars who see ritual as a mode of communication¹¹. "We may note that [ritual] ... facilitates - or even makes possible- the transmission of information across the boundaries of 'unlike systems' "(Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994). Such systems can be illustrated in terms of public and private, sacred and profane, internal and external¹². Huxley argues that

⁹ Outlined in Bell (1992:171).

¹⁰ Outlined in Bell (1992).

¹¹ Bloch (1974:68-71) however argues that religion and ritual are the last places to find discursive communication or explanation.

¹² There has been much criticism of the attempt to analyze ritual as communicative in any sense; Bourdieu, for example, avoids all literary or verbal analysis. He rejects the use of the terms metaphor, metonym and analogy when describing ritual action. His main affirmation is that ritual action by its very definition remains on the "hither side discourse" and this is precisely the key to know how it does what it does

ritualization between both humans and animals serves to “secure more effective communication (“signalling”) function, reduction of intra-group damage, or better intra-group bonding”(Huxley 1966:249/71). Richard Schechner also focuses upon this idea of ritual communication arising in situations where any mis-understanding or ‘mis-signalling’ would be catastrophic (Schnecher 1987). Others have said that ritual communicates by ‘modelling’ - *i.e.* it does not send messages but creates situations. Both Turner and Van Gennep see ritual as an iconic embodiment of social situations, in contrast to Gluckman’s approach which looks at how ritual acts within its social setting (Turner 1977:59/60). For Tambiah the situations modelled in ritual act in one of two ways; either like signals, which evoke certain responses, or like signs which can explain other activities in the same way that a blueprint can explain the building of a house (Tambiah 1968:175/208). Tambiah holds that ritual communication is not simply an alternative way of expressing something, but instead it is the expression of things that cannot be expressed in any other way. “Hence ritualization is simultaneously the avoidance of speech and narrative (Bell 1992:110).

Rappaport (1979) believes that the formality associated with ritual can be seen as a continuation of the formality found in all behaviour. He uses the term ritual when referring to this formal aspect of behaviour and the term rituals when referring to those ‘invariant events’ completely dominated by formality. He goes on to argue that rituals communicate by virtue of their formal features, rather than by their symbolic or expressive features. Wuthnow (1987) argues along similar lines; and Bell (1992) suggests “that symbolic and utilitarian activities can be differentiated only in terms of the degree to which they are expressive or communicative”(Bell 1992:72).

(Bourdieu 1977). “Ritual practice is always much fuzzier, avoiding the distinctive change in state that occurs when things are brought to the level of explicit discourse” (Bourdieu 1977).

Rappaport believes there to be two classes of messages transmitted in human ritual.

Firstly, those in which the participants transmit information concerning their own current physical, psychic or social states to themselves and to other participants. "Ritual serves to express the individuals status in the structural system in which he finds himself for the time being"(Leach 1954:11). Yet it is true to say that the status of groups as wholes as well as individuals, can also be communicated. Rappaport refers to this class of messages as self-referential. In some rituals there is no more, the message content of the ritual is exhausted by the information transmitted by the participants concerned with their current state. The second type of rituals is that in which the information transmitted among the participants does not fully exhaust the message content of the ritual. "Additional messages, although *transmitted* by the participants, are not *encoded* by them"(Rappaport 1999:52). These messages are found in the liturgy, already encoded. Since the participants of the ritual do not encode these messages, and since they tend towards invariance, it is clear that these messages cannot in themselves represent the performers contemporary state. Rappaport uses the example of the liturgy used in the Roman Catholic mass; the words and acts making up the mass have not changed for more than a millennium, and therefore cannot possibly represent the current state of those performing the ritual. He calls this class of message 'canonical'¹³.

"In distinguishing between the canonical and self referential we are, among other things, recognising a distinction between the significance of what is encoded in the invariant orders of liturgy on the one hand and the significance of the acts of transmitting those invariant messages on the other"(Rappaport 1999:53).

The difference between the two groups is stark in that, 'referents' of self referential messages -

¹³ Rappaport goes on to argue that even if one considers ritual to be a mode of communication this is not suggesting that it is entirely interchangeable with other modes of communication. "It is a special medium peculiarly, perhaps even uniquely suited to the transmission of certain messages and certain sorts of information" (Rappaport 1999).

e.g. the physical, psychic or social states of individual participants - are confined to the here and now, whereas the 'significata' of the canonical are never confined in the same way. "The self-referential represents the immediate, the particular vital aspects of events; the canonical, in contrast, represents the general, enduring, or even eternal aspects of universal orders"(Rappaport 1999:53).

Ritual can be seen to transmit either one or both types of information; all rituals transmit self-referential information, that which concerns the performers current states; the canonical class of information can be seen to be concerned with 'enduring aspects of nature, society or cosmos', it is encoded within apparently invariable aspects of liturgy. Whilst a self-referential message is always present within all rituals this may sometimes seem outweighed by the canonical. Rappaport again uses the example of the Roman Catholic mass, in that the grandeur of the occasion can sometimes make the self-referential message of the ritual seem trivial. What Rappaport aims to emphasise throughout is that in "all religious rituals, there is transmitted an indexical message that cannot be transmitted in any other way and, far from being trivial, it is one without which canonical messages are without force, or may even seem nonsensical" (Rappaport 1999:58). It seems that ritual is not merely a mode of communication in which two sorts of information are transmitted, but one in which these two types of information / classes of message are dependent upon one another.

Ritual can certainly be described as having an informative action to third parties, but it is also true to say that rituals transmit various information to themselves. "Participation is not only informative but also self-informative"(Rappaport 1999:104). For a ritual to inform the participant of his own state requires more than merely reflecting back one's condition, it must in some way define one's state. Rappaport believes that this must be done in terms that are very simple, ritually one must be depicted as either warrior or farmer, either boy *or* man, regardless

of whatever personal ambivalence is confusing him privately. Through informing the participants of their current states the occurrence of ritual alleviates the “uncertainty of the moment... so .. the successive occurrence of a series of rituals introduce enduring order into their days, their years, their lifetimes” (Rappaport 1999:104). It is through participation in the ritual that people open themselves up to the possibility of their condition and as such to definitions of their states.

Within the ritual process it is clear that there is some interaction / play off between an individuals private and public states. Rappaport claims, “in participating in a ritual the performer reaches out of his *private* self, so to speak, into a *public* canonical order to grasp the category that he then imposes upon his private processes”. On account of this process takes place that it is important that there be a liturgy or canonical element to the ritual. “The canonical guides, limits and, indeed defines the self-referential”(Rappaport 1999:106).

The Psychological Practical Action of Ritual

Having established that ritual can produce practical results in the external, sociological world, it is also true to say that ritual can produce practical results in the ‘internal’ or psychological world as well.

Self-Disclosure

It can be argued that ritual contains an element of self-disclosure and Erikson argues that the motivation to ritualise is the fundamental human need for validation (1979). It seems we look to find acceptance from others before we come to a point where we can accept ourselves. It is really through such validations that we humans find in our own self a profound inner sense of

which one individual may experience and work on the self in a variety of ways. Performing ritual acts enables people to perceive themselves as 'doing' something and this opens the way for alternative interpretations of the self (Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994).

There are two simultaneous actions taking place within ritual; the act of revealing and the act of confirming or establishing. "Rituals perpetually play with mirrors and masks, with the individual, what s/he is and is not at once"(Myerhoff 1990). At the same time as revealing something about himself the participant is also establishing what he already knew to be the case to himself. It is Driver who observes that "truth becomes true in the act of self disclosure"(Driver 1991:119). Thus the performing self is the same self that is to be validated. The response to a ritualised self-confession is more or less unimportant, the real issue is being able to confess oneself and thus affirm oneself in doing so. "To perform confessionally is to place oneself in the presence of others, whether human or divine" (Myerhoff 1990). In this way it is important to notice that a witness is not essential to the self-disclosure. "The rituals efficacy lies in the self-awareness of his or her deed of self-disclosure... this deed self validates the performer"(Garrick 1994). Confession is not only to take a stand subjectively, but also to articulate it. There is a certain sense, an immensely important one, in which who we are waits upon who we say we are. "We perform ourselves, we do not simply express what we already are. We perform our becoming and become our performing"(Driver 1991:114).

Ritual as Performance

Driver describes ritual as a desire to perform something absolute; he uses words from *King Lear* to demonstrate this;

I will do such things -
What they are yet I know not, but they shall be
the terrors of the earth.
(*King Lear* 280 - 82)

As Rappaport states “..unless there is a performance there is no ritual. Liturgical orders may be inscribed in books, but such records are not themselves rituals. They are merely descriptions of rituals or instructions for performing them. Liturgical orders are realised only by being performed”(Rappaport 1999). Driver holds that “although rituals forge a link between bodily activity and symbol making, and although ritualization is the earliest form of language, we do not well understand ritual unless we realise that within its frame of reference, action is primary and symbolism subordinate”(Driver 1991:91). Lives are shaped not principally by the ideas that we have in our minds but “even more by the actions we perform with our bodies”(Driver 1991:91). Driver cites Aristotle’s Poetics saying “It is by their actions that we know what [people] are”. In light of this he defines performance as a particular kind of doing¹⁵, “.. a kind of doing in which the observation of the deed is an essential part of its doing, even if the observer be invisible or is the performer herself” (Driver 1991:81).

Ritual and drama have at times been seen as closely related to one another due to the importance of the performative element of ritual¹⁶. However, an important distinction can be made between the two concerning the difference between *congregation* and *audience*. The important distinction is that the congregation participates during the ritual whilst an audience merely *watches*. While a congregation is generally required to do things in the course of a ritual, such as taking part in the proceedings, be that through singing, kneeling, reading responsively etc.; an audience is not required to do anything “and may even be required to do nothing”(Rappaport

¹⁵ This may be why ritual is best thought of in terms of action. Practice does not emphasize the importance of performance enough.

¹⁶ However, as Bell points out, whilst there are positive points to viewing ritual in such a way there are also dangers. The notion of performance as a theoretical tool for approaching certain activities comes to be used as descriptive of the fundamental nature of those activities; in other words a model of ritual activity provides the criteria for what is or is not ritual. It can be useful to see ritual as a performance but it is important to remember that performance theory rests on the slippery implications of an extended metaphor, specifically the analogy between the activities of performing and dramatizing.

1999:38). Although there can be seen to be a clear distinction between those performing a play and those watching it, the same cannot be said about a congregation and the leaders of a ritual. "Whereas a congregation joins the celebrant in performing the acts that comprise the ritual, an audience does not join the actors in the performance of a drama. The actors act on one side of the proscenium arch, the audience refrains from action on the other"(Rappaport 1999:135). The congregation can be said to have an active role in a performance of ritual whereas an audience has a more passive one. It could be argued the congregation *acts* in the performance, whereas an audience *thinks* about what they see.

However, to separate thought and action in this way takes something away from ritual performance, since it could be taken to imply that ritual action does not require, or indeed excludes, reflective thought. This is something I wish to avoid. Tambiah (1981) explicitly reacts against such separation in his formulation of performance theory with reference to ritual. Whilst the above argument seems to imply that performance theory separates the categories of thought and action, he holds the exact opposite - that any devaluation of action as opposed to thought could be redressed by focusing upon performance (Tambiah 1979). He emphasises the formal nature of ritual performance as having some kind of distancing effect that facilitates articulation and communication of emotion. In some sense then one can perceive ritual to be a physical manifestation or expression of thought. If this is the case the thought- action dichotomy can be resolved through the 'performance' of ritual. In a similar vein, Singer believes the performance process of the ritual actually enables the integration of the theorist's abstract categories and the cultural particularity of the rite. As Bell puts it "... ritual is to the symbols it dramatises as action is to thought; on a second level ritual integrates thought and action; on a third level, a focus on ritual performance integrates our thought and their action"(Bell 1992:87).

It is true to say that having the 'right' thoughts and going through the motions does not qualify as

ritual, in just the same way as thinking, or even saying the lines of Hamlet does not constitute a performance of the play (Driver 1991). What is important is the unity between inwardness and outwardness. Ritualised display is directed as much inwards, towards a human interiority, as it is outward. Comstock states “there are no isolated emotions causing ritual behaviour. What must be stressed is the synchronic interaction of feeling, thought and bodily unity”(Comstock 1981:636/637)¹⁷.

“A special characteristic of ritualised action is that the act to be performed is not just in store for us, it is also in store *in us*¹⁸. It is still we, as ourselves, who enact it and are conscious of it” (Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994:260)¹⁹. Having performed these acts they become part of our physical repertoire, and then they become what we perform then as; “they are not immutable objects but, to quote Beckett, are objects infected by our mobility”²⁰. Following this line of thinking Czikszentmihalyi (1975) has examined ‘flow’ as the state where action and awareness

¹⁷ He is following Robert Ryles argument in *The Concept of Mind* that “emotions .. are not causes of behaviour; they are rather symptoms of action or the propensity to act in a certain way”.

¹⁸ This, and the idea that objects of desire may be stored in us, comes from Samuel Beckett’s essay on Proust; “Exemption from intrinsic influx in a given object does not change the fact that it is a correlative of a subject that does not enjoy such immunity. The observer infects the observed with his own mobility” (Beckett 1965).

¹⁹ Myerhoff (1900) emphasizes the importance for performers to maintain a measure of control and awareness, it is essential they do not become utterly ‘lost’ in their own portrayal or obliterated by it. It is important that ritual behaviors remain rule generated, known, practiced and rehearsed – since if they lose this then they move away from being ritual and towards improvised self-expression. Myerhoff defines ritual as re-enactments and not original occurrences.

²⁰ There has been much discussion about the degree to which an individual is lost and carried away in their performance versus conscious, controlled awareness. Czikszentmihalyi (1975) describes ‘flow’ as the state where action and awareness merge. Myerhoff goes on to question ‘Do we forget ourselves, forget we are pretending?’ (1990). However there are those who believe that this whole process of forgetting oneself what we aim for, the very ‘height of human imagination (Myerhoff 1990); there are also those who believe that there are dangers of forgetting that we are always in a play of our own construction. Freud (1962) refers to the ‘omnipotence of thoughts’ making a world where the ideas of things are more important than actuality. Neurotics live in this “world apart where they are only affected by what is thought with intensity and pictured with emotion; whereas agreement with external reality is a matter of no importance” (Freud 1962). Rappaport, however, stresses the irrelevance of ‘authentic’ experience within rituals. Lying he holds, is common and permissible, indeed he suggests that all ritual is a type of lie, the lie of ‘as if’ – which Goffman (1974) refers to as “the frame”- in theatre this is simply the willing suspension of disbelief, in other words the “lets pretend”.

merge. This has the purpose of destroying any dualistic perspective: “a performer becomes aware of his actions but not the awareness itself” (Myerhoff 1990:247).

Schechner explores this concept further;

“During workshops- rehearsals, performers play with words, things and actions, some of which are ‘me’ and some ‘not me’. By the end of the process the ‘dance goes into the body’/ So Olivier is not Hamlet, but he is also not not Hamlet. The reverse is also true... Hamlet is not Olivier, but he is also not not Olivier” (Schechner 1985:110).

Schechner uses Winnicott’s (1971) thinking on the process of playing that begins in infancy to further describe his point. The child may have a special teddy bear, who is in their mind ‘real’. The child has in effect created the ‘real’ bear, they have invested much of themselves into its being. And yet, the bear was always there to be created. As an object it existed prior to the child realising its special-ness. “The essential feature in the concept of transitional objects and phenomena.. is the paradox and the acceptance of the paradox: the baby creates the object, but the object was waiting there to be created and to become a cathected object.. We will never challenge the baby to elicit an answer to the question : did you create that object or did you find it?”.

Ritual performance can be viewed in much the same way – it is stumbled across in its physical sense but can then effect and cause life having been discovered. In just the same way as the Velveteen Rabbit²¹ became *real* so can ones self through ritual. Thus we perform our becoming.

The ‘directedness’ that is intrinsic to ritual does not give ritual actions flexible meaning. It is a

²¹ The toy rabbit in this children’s story became *real* after receiving so much love from the little boy who owned him. The toy had always been there but the little boy did not play with it until he became very ill with tuberculosis. After having built up a close relationship with the toy rabbit and investigating so much love in it, the rabbit has to be thrown away upon the boys recovery. The rabbit however undergoes a transformation and becomes a real rabbit that plays in the garden of the little boy. From being *real* in the mind of the boy the rabbit becomes *actual* at the end of the story.

separate response that does this; "the archetypal act-to-be-performed [is] felt by those who perform them to be 'apprehensible' or recoverable. By 'meaning to mean' the ritual actor can reappropriate the ritual act and realign it with his or her intentions"(Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994:260).

However, all ritual performances require limits, rules, and preset spaces, times, gestures, words and objects; ones that it is necessary to avoid and ones that it is obligatory to do. It is important for ritual to achieve some kind of definite form and it can only do this through having some form rules established.

"In short, ritual performance requires (and makes) rules of the game, whether these be known from previous usage or come to be elaborated upon the spot. This inner necessity or "logic" of ritual performance is, then available for elaboration in the direction of religious sensibility, where it will give rise to the notion of things taboo and things permitted" (Driver 1991:100).

It is apparent through the emergence of performance theory that something is missing from the analyses of ritual already existent. "... performance theorists have explicitly aspired to transcend such conventional dichotomies as oral and written, public and private, doing and thinking, primitive and modern, sacred and secular (Kertzer 1988:95), clearly these dichotomies have contributed to the perception that theoretical analysis is failing to convey something important about how ritual activities are generated and experienced" (Bell 1992:37). Turner (1981) argues that a living quality frequently fails to emerge from our pedagogics. Lewis (1971) holds we have a tendency to be preoccupied with the intellectual aspects of ritual response, thus leading us to overlook sensory experience. If one views ritual as a performance it is easy to see it as an entity which can be placed in a box, because it has a "definitely limited time span, a set of performers, an audience, and a place and occasion of performance"(Singer 1959:xii). It is possible to believe that one has come to an adequate understanding of ritual and perhaps see it as

between the means and end in ritual is 'intrinsic' *i.e.* is it either rational or non-rational? One of the definitive features of ritual is the consistent displacement of means and ends.

Means and Ends

On the one hand it is true to say that there are things said in ritual that are also said in law books, myth or theology, but it is also true to say that there are things said in ritual that cannot be expressed in any other way; "They are in part expressed by the special relationship between the liturgical order formed and the act of performing it ... or to put it a little differently, the manner of 'saying' and 'doing' is intrinsic to what is being said and done"(Rappaport 1999:38). The medium is itself a message McLuhan and Fiore (1967). Driver uses a poem by Thomas Hardy to demonstrate this point;

"And now to God the Father" he ends,
And his voice thrills to the topmost tile:
Each listener chokes as he bows and bends,
And emotion pervades the crowded aisles.
Then the preacher glided to the vestry door.
And he shuts it, and thinks he is seen no more.
The door swings softly ajar meanwhile,
And a pupil of his in the Bible class,
Who adores him as one without gloss or guile,
Sees her idol standing with a satisfied smile
And re-enact as the vestry glass
Each pulpit gesture in deft-dumb show
That had moved the congregation so.
(In Church - Thomas Hardy)²³

What Driver brings to the fore through this poem is the naivety of the girl (and perhaps also Hardy) to suppose that any ritual is without gloss or guile. "Ritual *is* gloss insofar as it is display, which is almost the whole of it"(Driver 1991:88). Driver believes that ritual action ought not be judged according to a standard of sincerity but according to its moral results. "There is a religious as well as an aesthetic sense in which it must be said that the performance is

²³ Hardy T. Quoted from Driver and Pack (1964:201).

what counts”(Driver 1991:88).

On the other hand, it is hard to see how the actual act of lifting a cup, breaking bread, singing a hymn and so on, can facilitate such psychological ends. There still seems to be a huge gap between what one is performing and the meaning one derives from it. It is at this point the notion of space comes onto play. The action in ritual provides a framework within or against which to situate oneself. If one has no noise one cannot find silence and if one has not motion one cannot see stillness.

Within ritual activity a contrast will always be found, and is always necessary, between the way it sets about reaching psychological depths and the way in which these depths are experienced. For example, although words often play a hugely important part in ritual “the [sense of] awe seems to spring from the appeal to the senses rather than from an understanding of the text”(Muir 1997:2). Muir emphasises the importance of the emotional states that resist expression in language, “which is why they have become so desired and yet distrusted in our logo centric culture”(Muir 1997:2). The ritual noise of the words however provides a vehicle for the ritual space and silence. If one wants a pause it has to be a pause in something. As Ernst Cassirer put it “to share in a ritual ... means to live a life of emotion not of thoughts”(Cassirer 1946:24). Having marked out an area as significant it provides the space to just sit and experience ‘being’. We can remain in an “unspoken response to speech” (Leslie Kane). In this way, then, ritual can be seen to have a hugely practical purpose, in that it enables us to define ourselves both to ourselves and to society. It provides a outlet for an immensely important psychological process.

Liminal Space

As I have previously stated, it is clear liminal space is key when studying ritual, however, how to describe this space is less clear and has caused much debate. "Space is kaleidoscopic and rarely well defined – a reflection of the surging, shifting inchoate character of life"(Yi Fu Tun 1990:238). The liminal point is often thought of as one of transition; Turners use of the word liminal originally had a very specific application to the transitional phase of a rite of passage in traditional tribal societies. He later, however, uses the term liminoid to refer to transition phenomena in industrial societies²⁴. The importance of the difference between the two terms is generally thought to be the marked shift in Turners own focus from ritual specifically to transitional phenomena in general (Grimes1990: 130). Turner holds that liminality in ritual is a cultural mode of reflexivity, and an increase in ritual reflexivity helps heal a social breach (Grimes1990:176). Turner argues that ritual goes somewhere, unlike Eliade who sees ritual in circular terms. His thinking is that ritual has a 'point', and that is to transform²⁵. Schechner however holds that to view a rite of passage as simply involving ones transition from one state to another is highly simplistic. Transition may accurately describe what takes place in the objective, material world, but to describe a rite of passage in only such a way would not come close to describing the process as those individuals involved experience it. "Liminality is the process of transformation at work" (Schechner 1990:79). Schechner defines the liminal state as an 'other' condition of being that is co-existent with that state of being of which we are normally conscious (the material state of being susceptible to rational awareness and sensory perception) (1990:80). It is not possible to be aware of this liminal state if we restrict ourselves to a rational objective approach.

²⁴ He summarizes the difference between the two thus; "We might say that liminal genres put too much stress on social frames, plural reflexivity, and mass flow, shared flow, while liminoid genres emphasize idiosyncratic framing, individual reflexivity, subjective flow and see the social as problem not as datum (1979:117).

²⁵ Turners view of ritual is essentially linear and time bound.

“...As long as we take liminality to imply a transitory in between state of being we are far from the truth. In our own terms it would be better seen as a timeless state of being, of ‘holiness’, that lies parallel to our ‘normal’ state of being, or is perhaps superimposed upon it or somehow coincides and coexists with it”(Schechner 1990:80).

It appears the key difference between Turners thinking and that of Schechner, and Shorter, is that Turner thinks of the liminal space as a transition between actual, cultural states. Both Shorter and Schechner focus upon the psychological ‘otherness’ found in and of itself at this moment²⁶. This focus mirrors the trend in western culture to live within an inner psychological world, where spirit is valued above matter²⁷. Following this line of thinking the shift from an external focus to an internal one is only natural when looking at ritual behaviour. This difference adds weight to Grimes’ assertion that Turner’s paradigm is only applicable in a non-western society.

Unlike Turner who sees ritual as progressing along its linear points and “going somewhere”, both Eliade (1958) and Shorter (1996) see ritual in terms of circular imagery. Their meaning, however, is rooted in metaphysical or psychological reasoning rather than any actual state that ritual may be described as having²⁸. As a particular act of ritual becomes increasingly familiar it

²⁶ Whilst Turner argues the liminal state is of interest due to the way it present us with a ‘moment in and out of time.. and in and out of secular structure, which reveals, however fleetingly, some recognition (in symbol if not always in language) of a generalized social bond that has ceased to be and has simultaneously become fragmented into a multiplicity of structural ties” (1969:96), it is true to say that his focus remains wholly upon the moment “in and out of secular social structure”. It can be argued that the focus Shorter and Schechner choose take is “the moment in and out of time”.

²⁷ Furlong (1996:169) argues “the western world lives within the head”, placing value on spirit above matter, though in theory, in the Christian world at least, it should not – a key Christian belief is Word becoming flesh in Jesus Christ.

²⁸ Turner (1969) agreed with Wilson (1854:241) when she wrote “Rituals reveal values at their deepest level... men express in ritual what moves them most...I see in the study of rituals the key to an understanding of the essential constitution of human societies”. Turner (1969:6) holds rituals reflect the ways people think and feel about the social environment in which they live, whereas Shorter prefers to remain with the ‘thinking and feeling’ . The focus is more upon the individual and their interior world rather than the ways a ritual can affect society and the larger environment. Ritual becomes a far more

seems to circle around upon itself “... it seems less like a pathway and more like a shelter”(Corbett 1996:2). Fortes suggests that the “universal infantile experience of helpless dependency gives rise to ‘rituals of defence’ against the inescapable vulnerability of humanity”(Corbett 1996:2). The stable static nature of ritual can help to reduce uncertainty and in many ways it can be described as creating walls within which to contain emotion. “Even in a time of grief, ritual lets joy be present through the permission to cry, lets tears become laughter, if they will by making place for the fullness of the tears intensity - all this in the presence of communal assertiveness” (Driver 1991:156). The dogma and the actions of the ritual can be said to freeze (Corbett 1996:2) the emotion into literalism hence rendering it more manageable. Van Gennep holds the protective nature of rituals renders them entirely suitable to those undergoing significant life -crisis transitions (*i.e.* birth, death and marriage). “Such changes of condition do not occur without disturbing the life of society and the individual and it is the function of rites of passage to reduce their harmful effects”(van Gennep 1960:13).

Shorter holds that ritual *per se* does not ensure a safe passage from one state of being to another, but it does at least ensure that passage is marked. Ritual is described as a “container that fulfils the needs of the unconscious as well as the conscious self and within circumscribed space provides for a reciprocal exchange between ... spirit and body”(Shorter 1987:44)²⁹. Within a defined and consecrated space (*i.e.* that given through ritual) an individual is “impelled to move towards the yet-to-be-formed inside of him or herself. It works psychologically because it

personal and intimate event than Turners model could allow for.

²⁹ Bion used the term ‘containment’ in the context of therapeutic work. Winnicott called the same phenomenon ‘emotional holding’. Bion defined the concept in the following way: “When an infant feels he cannot manage, he has phantasies of evacuating them into his primary object- his mother. If she is capable of understanding these feelings without her balance being too disturbed, she can ‘contain’ the feelings and behave in a way towards her infant that makes the difficult feelings more acceptable to him. He can then take them back into himself in a form that he can manage (Anderson 1992). The ritual process in some sense can be seen to take on the role of the primary object. Ritual provides a container for the difficult feelings – its very nature means it balance will not be disturbed by them.

relieves, releases and carries the attendant psychic tension during periods of transformation”(Shorter 1996:110). Shorter describes ritual events as ‘impressive’ because there we experience the ‘Other’ directly. It is this that accounts for the rigid structure and formality of the rite. “It exists in liminal space between worship and abandon, being and making. It must be sufficiently strong to withstand the force of that which is numinous and become the crucible for personal transformation”(Shorter 1996:111). The ritual process is ‘soul shattering’ - she believes that during the ritual process “ the defensive husk and shell of the personality are broken and the ego is impregnated with an awareness of its sacred nature. Consciously or not the image of a previous person lets go in communication with a stronger and more relevant summons. Personhood and its meaning are altered” (Shorter 1996:111).

Ritual can be seen to have an entirely practical purpose it “can render malleable seemingly inexorable procedures and bridges between the opposites of what someone has been and what he or she can become ... “ (Shorter 1996:118). Without ritual there may be individuality but there can be no individuation for there is no longer a meeting point between the real and not-yet-realised in ourselves. When someone has emerged from a ritual happening and has recovered his or her bearings one can know better the proportions of both God and oneself. “For the power with which one has wrestled convey more than a sense of physical power; there is also a communicated sense of verification and confirmation of who one is and what one is about”(Shorter 1996:111). This can only be described as having great ‘practical’ importance.

The fear of chaos is a perennial fear and Jung believes that humans developed rituals in an attempt to ward off the negative aspects of such chaos. Ritual as such has a protective role³⁰. Jung

³⁰ Wieland –Burston (1989) believes that man is currently in a very dangerous place psychologically speaking. “We have forgotten the age old traditions for dealing with chaos... most adults living in contemporary society have never had the opportunity of observing how their parents and their grandparents dealt with chaos. Instead the pretence of order and harmony dominates our images of the world. Chaos and

views the Protestant church as being in a very dangerous place; "Protestantism, having pulled down many a wall which had been carefully erected by the church, began immediately to experience the disintegrating and schismatic effect of individual revelation. As soon as the dogmatic fence was broken down and as soon a ritual had lost the authority of its efficacy, man was confronted with an inner experience, without the protection and guidance of a dogma and a ritual which are the unparalleled quintessence of Christian as well as of pagan religious experience" (Jung 1938). Jung works on the premise that "an overwhelming majority of educated people are fragmentary personalities and have a lot of substitutes instead of the genuine goods..."(Jung 1938). By 'substitution' he means that such people replace immediate experience by a choice of suitable symbols "invested in a solidly organised dogma and ritual"(Jung 1938). Through ritual, which acts as a substitute, people are defended and shielded from immediate experience (Jung 1938).

Jung goes on to point out that to a certain number of people "intellectual mediocrity, characterised by enlightened rationalism, a scientific theory that simplifies matters is a very good means of defence"(Jung 1938). He puts this down to the faith modern man has in the word scientific. To Jung's mind, no scientific theory, no matter how subtle has, less value from the standpoint of psychological truth than from religious dogma, for the simple reason that "a theory is necessarily highly abstract and exclusively rational whereas the dogma expresses an irrational entity through the image. This method guarantees a much better rendering of an irrational fact, such as the psyche"(Jung 1938). Jung pictures the process thus³¹; "Before people learned to produce thoughts the thought came to them. They did not think but perceived their mental

is conscious experience are avoided. This is the root of our desperate clinging to order and or modern humanity's helplessness and panic in the face of chaos"(Weiland Burston 1989). It is clear that Weiland Burston, unlike Jung, see avoidance of chaos as a bad thing and ritual as being the only real way of facing up to the chaos.

³¹ Jung's use of the word dogma appears to be interchangeable with the term ritual, as the two processes are similar.

function. The dogma is like a dream, reflecting the spontaneous and autonomous activity of the objective psyche, the unconscious. Such an expression of the unconscious is a much more efficient means of defence against further immediate experiences than a scientific theory. The theory has to disregard the emotional values of the experience. The dogma on the contrary is most expressive in the respect. Another soon supersedes one scientific theory. The dogma lasts untold for centuries”(Jung 1938). Jung held that dogma presents the soul more completely; I believe the same can be said for ritual. Scientific theory, as Jung points out, only expresses the conscious mind; it can only formulate a living thing by an abstract notion. The dogma / ritual by contrast “expresses aptly the living process of the unconscious in the form of the drama of repentance, sacrifice and redemption”(Jung 1938). Ritual then has enormous importance in the mind of Jung, in terms of its protective action, as he puts it “I am amply aware of the extraordinary importance of dogma and ritual, at least as methods of mental hygiene”(Jung 1938).

Freud also sees ritualised action as a being a protective measure for the psyche. One of the most well known features of Freud’s theories of religion is a universal collective neurosis, which saves the person the task of forming their own private neurosis. Freud has suggested that religious ritual has many features of an obsessive- compulsive disorder. He compared a woman with a compulsion to wash her hands and scour out the basin with religious ritual (Freud 1907:24), drawing these comparisons;

(a) the person feels guilty if the action is not carried out. Performing the action brings relief but that relief is only temporary. There is a further build up of anxiety, relieved again by carrying out the ritual. Thus a self -perpetuating cycle is enacted.

(b) the person does not normally perceive the symbolic significance of their actions

(c) However, religious and private neurotic rituals differ in that the former are publicly taught

In conclusion, ritual activity can be seen to have a clear psychological purpose, whether that be from an entirely secular perspective, as in the case of Freud, or from the perspective of a believer. Ritual can be said to have a practical purpose both in internal psychological terms as well as external sociological terms.

The Importance of Space and Silence Within Ritual Action

It was stated at the beginning of the chapter that ritual has generally been studied in terms of its progressive or forward moving function, and that current models of ritual focus upon the pre-ritualised person and the post-ritualised affect. It is evident from the approach above that ritual activity is not always clear-cut and the change between the pre-liminal and post-liminal moment are not always glaringly obvious. For this reason in this section I intend to look more closely at the actual liminal moment. It is the key to ritual activity, as it is here that any transition takes place, the point upon which all depends. This liminal moment can be envisaged as a frozen frame of a film, or perhaps even the eye of a hurricane, a point within which all is still. A space has been created in the middle of the ritual process that is of utmost importance. In many senses it is not the actual activity of the ritual action that is of interest here, but the intrinsic space and silence. People have placed too much store upon what is done in a ritual context, focusing solely upon the correct way of going about things. The performance of the ritual seems to have taken precedence. I aim to shift this focus towards that which is internal, rather than fixating upon the external characteristics of the ritual process.

“Ritual expresses something more than it seems to... it represents something other than it is”(Muir 1997). However it is true to say that the expressiveness of ritual does not lie purely in the emotional lives of its participants. “A ritual of mourning is not expressive of grief purely because those participating must necessarily feel sad to play their part in it, nor because it arouses sadness in those who watch it” (Muir 1997). The ritual action is not always necessarily

a symptom of the participant's mental state as they may be unaware of any such state from the beginning. In the words of T.S. Elliot, it is "Not known because not looked for, But heard, Half heard, in the stillness Between two waves of the sea" (*Four Quartets*).

Drane (2000) draws attention to the thought that we may attempt to name things in an attempt to 'own' them³³. It is almost as if we are able to name a thing, we are also able to be in control of it. I have, however, been wondering about the actual necessity of articulating everything we feel fully. It is possible to just be aware of a 'something', to feel it rather than articulate it or 'own' it. It is my belief that ritual is an ideal medium of communication, but in a different sense of the word; because of rituals unique power to convey feeling coupled with its cognitive capacity, nothing is said, but everything is said. We are able to respond to the implicit or latent content of the communication as well as the explicit message or words, as well as the actions used. The ritual becomes a facilitating environment in which these communications can be understood.

McGlashan (1987) whilst exploring music as a symbolic process states that "reason and language are inadequate vehicles to express the creatures total response to the ground and goal of being..". He cites Augustine in support of this; "If you cannot talk about [God] and it is improper just to keep silent, why, what is there left for you do but jubilate - with your heart rejoicing without words, and the immense breadth of your joy not rationed out in syllables?"[my emphasis]. This concept of emotion being expressed in such a way - i.e. rationed out in syllables is hugely important when thinking about ritual.

³³ Drane (2000:1/2) discusses this with reference to cultural analysis – He questions whether there is any objective sense at all or whether we are merely deluding ourselves to think that if we name the 'era' we are experiencing then it becomes less of a threat to our lifestyles. He highlights the fact that many dismiss the possibility of objective knowledge of anything at all, claiming that this is in itself another sign of the emergence of a new way of understanding. For an overview of this see H. Lawson and L. Appignanesi (1989) and also Aguilar, M. (2001).

Wagner, the composer, refers to music as expressing "the eternal, infinite and ideal; it does not express the passion, love or longing of such and such an individual on such and such an occasion; but passion love and longing in itself"(quoted in Langer 1951). Music is not so much an expression of the 'Ow!' but as a reflective 'that hurt'. The same can be said for ritual. The function of ritual is to enable one to communicate with, and to come to some form of self-realisation of, valuable spiritual insights. Ritual becomes a language of feeling, one that relies heavily, as music does, upon the notion of 'psychical distance' (Bullough 1992). This means the ritual makes its content fathomable only because it holds it at a distance. In order to own the emotional material contained within the ritual it is important, not purely to articulate it, but to see distance between oneself and such a state. Hildesheimer, in his study of Mozart, writes of music as 'objectified feeling'. "Music reflects the distance from its object; defines it and in doing so lays it open to our evaluation" (Hildesheimer 1983:294). Although following this line of argument ritual cannot be said to have any fixed meaning, it does not necessarily follow that it has no meaning at all. It can be described as a "vehicle of meanings which cannot be expressed in any other way"(McGlashan 1987). It is this that makes ritual essentially ambiguous and therefore capable of great subtlety, so that the individual participant is allowed a wide measure of freedom in his response.

If one labels ritual to be merely an action one loses a sense of this feeling, experiencing and yet not articulating. Although it is important on some levels to articulate and therefore own or gain mastery over emotion and feeling, much can be said for the ability of ritual to enable one to sit within a space and be aware of the emotion, while not feeling the need to articulate it. How far do we need to say "that hurt" to know that it did? Therefore we may conclude that inaction, space and silence are all important parts of ritual.

Much can be said through silence, although there needs to be noise or words or action at some

point in order to draw a contrast. Leslie Kane has encapsulated this contrast in verse;

The Language of Silence
The dumb silence of apathy
The sober silence of solemnity
The fertile silence of awareness
The active silence of perception
The baffled silence of confusion
The uneasy silence of impasse
The muzzled silence of outrage
The expectant silence of waiting
The reproachful silence of censure
The tacit silence of approval
The vituperative silence of accusation
The eloquent silence of awe
The unnerving silence of menace
The peaceful silence of communion
The irrevocable silence of death

Illustrate by their unspoken response to speech that experiences exist for which we lack the words

Ritual can be said to provide an opportunity to rest in the “fertile silence of awareness”. “...[ritual] involves an ever more attentive listening, a listening that examines as it listens and before it responds” (Heidegger 1950:123), a listening which is not running away, but whereby the silence is heard to be resounding, “and the world, the gods, person and all things have only to be looked upon with a new eye” (Campbell 1986:80). Shorter (1996) refers to a dream of one of her patients; whilst this dream had entirely different significance for both herself and her patient, it would appear to present an interesting view, one which we can use in order to come closer to understanding ritual and its workings.

“Last night I was in a small theatre. I stood at the entrance to the auditorium, by a door located about half way back. In the front row I could see my mother, my father, my brother and my husband. Before them was an empty stage. They sat there expectantly waiting for the show to begin. But I knew it wasn’t going to happen there. I tried as hard as I could to get their attention. I tried as hard as I could but they just wouldn’t turn or listen to me. I wanted to tell that the play wouldn’t be on the stage. The real show was a mime show and it was taking place in the shadows at the back” (Shorter 1996:39).

Having emphasised the importance of silence and space in ritual, it is possible to see ritual as a

type of mime “taking place in the shadows at the back”. Mime shadows are inarticulate, their silence is rich with intuitions of knowing, but it is left to the observer to give voice to the unspoken words. “Gaps in communication ask to be filled by our individual perceptions and imagination”(Shorter 1996).

Using mime as a metaphor for ritual it is interesting to note the importance and relevance of action again. The main difference between ritual and mime is that in the former actually lifts a cup, in the latter one pretends too. No matter how convincing a mime is the acts are not actualities³⁴. In this way then we are led onto the need in the metaphor for some kind of link to the actual. This connection with dance has been made before. It can perhaps be more useful than mime because one is actually dancing rather than pretending to dance. The important aspect in this metaphor is that dancing presupposes the accompaniment afforded by music. Music is in some senses the piece of paper on which the dance is written. Although the dancing can be seen to inform upon the music, it is also true to say that the music informs upon the dance. In mime there is nothing that acts as a backdrop, all the focus is upon the actor and his performance. In dance much is focused upon how the dancer uses the music to put across the emotion / action that is depicted.

In light of this, having described ritual in terms of dance, it would be useful to go one stage further and describe ritual in terms of a particular kind of dance. Although the importance of space within ritual for expression has been previously emphasised, it should be noted that limits, preset words, objects and so on are also very important within ritual performance. It is because of this I picture ritual to be much like a ceilidh. In a ceilidh (and the same is true in other types of

³⁴ John Drane (2000) holds that actually using mime within worship would revitalize the church. I have been careful here however to use mime as a metaphor and not attempt to go beyond that. Drane confuses symbolized performance of reality with reality. Life-like is not life. To use mime as a metaphor is extremely useful- to go beyond that and use it in the way in which Drane suggests could be highly contentious.

formal dance *i.e.* ball room dancing) there are set moves, and timings. Nevertheless there is usually time in the ceilidh dance where one does not have a set move and there is time to 'spin' or dance down the middle of the group in a manner that is not preset. One is allowed the space to feel the music - at this stage one can be described as having one's heart in one's toe's rather than one's ear.

McGlashan (1987), when discussing the importance of music, refers to experimental evidence that suggests that the human fetus can hear, and that subsequently it can remember what it hears, and that predominant sounds in the uterine environment are the mothers cardiovascular system (Drife1985). McGlashan points out that the beating of the mother's heart may not be melody but it is certainly rhythmic. "The basic element of music is impressed upon the human mind at the dawning of its perceptive awareness and inseparably accompanies it through every stage of its embodied life"(McGlashan 1987:327). As we approach the realm of music we enter the realm of the archetypes and may expect to experience their power in undiluted form. "Where there more appropriate to dance.. an attempt to work out through action the importance of ones self against a background of the waters of the womb, the heartbeat of numinous / the world" (McGlashan 1987: 328).

The constant and steady beat of the music that to which one dances provides a constant and contained stage upon which to perform. The music can be likened to liturgy - a piece of music lasts for a set period of time, it has even a measured form, and it does not restrict in any way. In other words it too allows the space to dance. Although music can be seen to provide the tempo for the dance it offers no further impositions. It does not stipulate how or why the dance should be done. All of that is left entirely at the discession of the dancer himself. "The dancer has his ear in his toes"(Nietzsche 1956:224). In the same way, liturgy provides the space and the arena

for the ritual performer to find their feet.

Ritual as Art

Thus far the focus has been on either the seen actions or the unseen psychological dimension of the ritual process - the internal and the external. It is also relevant to look at the transitional space between the two, it is here that we may find the “magic of ritual” (Turner 1991).

Christianity has been accused of having become congealed into formalised actions, its focuses solely upon externals (Jung 1938 and Fordham 1968)³⁵, due to a modern focus on consciousness, rationalism and realism; many people would claim the same could be said of ritual practice. It is the purpose of this thesis however, to shift such a viewpoint towards a more unified approach to ritual practice, in which a move is made away from the notion that ritual action is solely something that one does, instead viewing ritual activity as something that one feels³⁶. Ritual action is therefore at the exact juncture between the physical and the emotional realm, and acts as a transitional space.

Winnicott believes the breast – an endless counterpoint between external reality and what is inside of us, represents such a transitional space most clearly. The external actions of ritual endlessly inform upon the internal psychological processes and vice versa. Another way that this dialogue between the internal and external can be envisaged is as if it were a painting by Picasso. The faces in his pictures have been totally dismembered and disintegrated and then reintegrated

³⁵ Jung held that organized religion has always tried to provide satisfying forms for those deep human needs, the deepest of which he believed is the desire to relate to inner and outer man in equal degree. The Western world has a tendency to fixate upon externalities and objects and as a result has fixated upon Christ as an outward aspect. In projecting everything onto externalities, such as God and the Devil, the psyche is robbed of its value and meaning. Such an overvaluation of consciousness leads to a deprived relation to inner man.

³⁶ The double meaning of the word ‘feel’ should here be emphasized as it incorporates both its literal and emotional definition.

at will, giving the painting coherence and yet none at the same time. In other words the features in a Picasso work are all that is external and yet he represents this in such a manner that is expressing all that is internal.



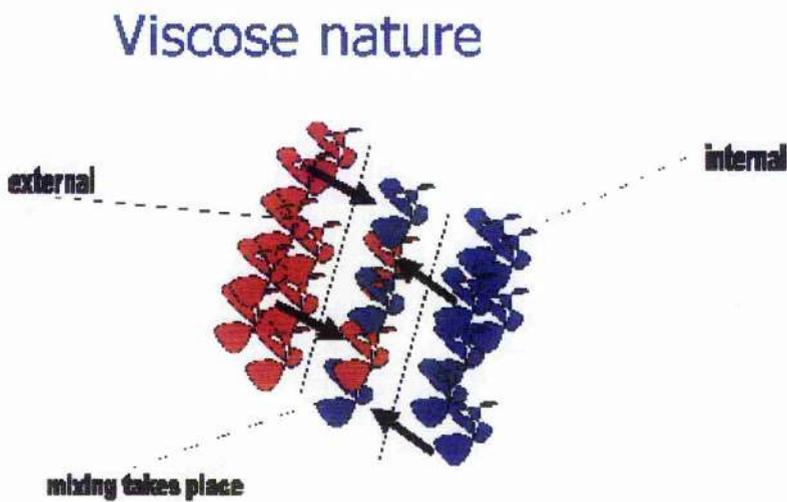
Picasso - The Weeping Woman 1937 Oil on Canvas

.Bower (1970) suggests that many early picture texts were in some way connected with magic, ritual, religion and superstition. He holds that “at first one sees a curious picture, then a difficult conundrum is solved as the words are finally understood”(Bower 1970). This suggests that the meaning is only revealed through contemplation of the text and the reader’s visual experience is initially one of confusion. This is very similar to the way in which the ritual process works. Bower goes on to suggest that “new poetry” is characterised by a vocabulary without boundaries, untranslatable because it is in its immediate and total state. Implicit in Bowers reading of concrete poetry is the claim that it has an immediate accessibility, appealing primarily to the visual and the public realm. Similarities can be drawn between this idea and the ritual process. Whilst ritual action is immediately accessible, in that one can see tangible happenings, one can join in without necessarily knowing the exact significance of all the elements; it cannot, however, be said to be untranslatable because of its immediate state in the way that “new poetry” can. Ritual contains the boundaries and therefore this leads it to be translatable even though it is in an “immediate and total state” (Bower 1970).

McKenna (2000), who draws distinction between solid poetry, which he believes theology to create; and concrete thinking which uses the realms of literal realism and psychological realism. In his opinion, solid poetry can never be thought of as concrete, since the former can engender growth whilst the latter cannot. In much the same way the solid poetry of the entire ritual process – meaning the internal and external being in exact syzygy- can be seen to engender growth whilst the concrete thinking or external activity of the ritual action cannot. Too much store has been placed upon what we perceive to be concrete in our modern day lives, we place too much value upon what we can see. The unseen is equally as important.

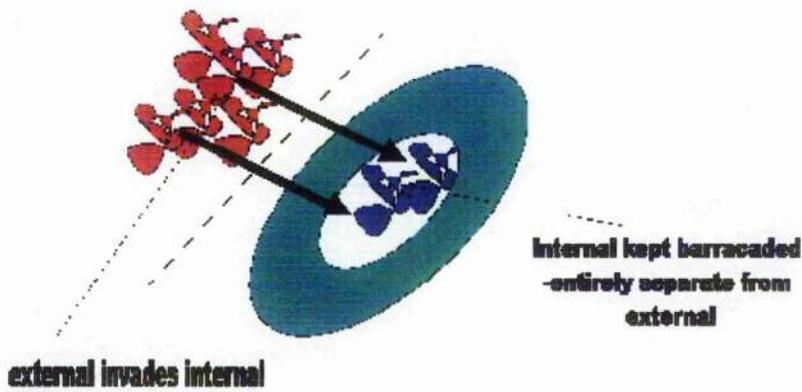
It is precisely because ritual is a physical manifestation, in terms of words, actions, and so on, of a deeper spiritual sensation or emotion that it can be seen to be so valuable. It is an embodied

thought process in itself, seen on the one hand as having spiritual efficacy and on the other as having psychological importance. Ritual can be described as the conductor of two voices. If one uses a ritual process at the point where the internal and the external collide, it can be seen to work in much the same way as a viscose material would. On the one hand one can clearly see that there are two different substances, yet on the other at the point of contact with the viscose material it is not entirely clear where one substance starts and the other ends. Mixing takes place in and through the viscose material. This can be pictured thus:



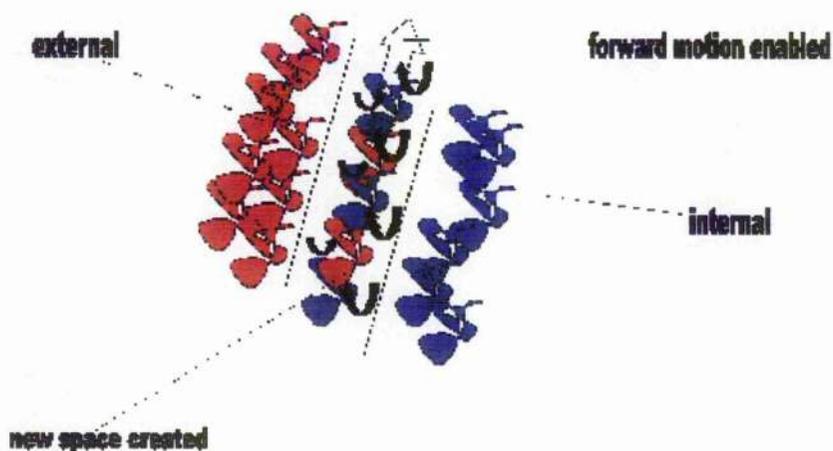
If one focuses simply upon the external actions of a ritual rather than looking for syzygy between the external and internal then one is left with an impoverished sense of the way in which ritual action can work. People may find it difficult to connect with their spiritual side when participating in ritual because they are too involved in purely external activities, and are not allowing their internal emotions a foot in the door; this can be pictured thus:

Internal and external entirely separate from one another



It is the space that ritual creates that is key however, it is the space permitted between the actions rather than the actions themselves, which enables the all-important psychological work to be done. Thus there is a more fluid line of communication between the internal and the external than is pictured above;

Input from both sides into ritual space



Rather than one informing upon the other the space that ritual creates allows both to input into a

separate space.

This is not to say that the words or actions of ritual are secondary or unimportant; they create the atmosphere found in the space. The process is fairly circular when attempting to understand the way the two elements work; we need to locate ourselves within the space to understand the actions but equally we need to situate ourselves in the action to come to some appreciation of the significance of the space.

This premise is congruent with thinking at the heart of Christian mysticism; there lies the conviction that at the moment we see God we will also see ourselves – even though we are not God. 1 John 3:2 reinforces such thinking “Dear friends, we are now Gods children; what we shall become has not yet been disclosed, but we know that when Christ appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is”. The internal and the external are in exact syzygy³⁷. Christian mystics hold that the God they encounter is not the “God of the customary image of the old man enthroned above in the clouds” (Bomford 2000) – an external sense of God – nor is it the more philosophically sophisticated concept of the ‘Mind behind the Universe’- an internal sense of God. What they encounter has been described as beyond being and non-being, nothingness and yet absolute fullness of being. The intention is not to reach strange states of consciousness, but to attain perfect stillness of thought and feeling, to think nothing and to feel nothing, while remaining wholly attentive. The transitional space enabled by ritual acts in much the same way; it provides an arena in which one can attain this perfect stillness and silence, yet one remains fully attentive. The ritual process allows one to explore the depths of the

³⁷ Lear, in his study of love, is saying much the same thing also. He has shown that we cannot stand outside of love, pretending to be objective and scientific about it. The same can be argued of the internal and the external self in relation to ritual. Lear holds that we are brought into being as autonomous thinking subjects precisely by receiving the loving attention of others. Modern neuroscience confirms this thinking for the brain, which we now know, develops its fine laden structure not from patterning determined by solely by genes but in response to emotion laden interactions, especially in the first weeks and months of life. The word does indeed become flesh.

unconscious whilst remaining wholly conscious³⁸.

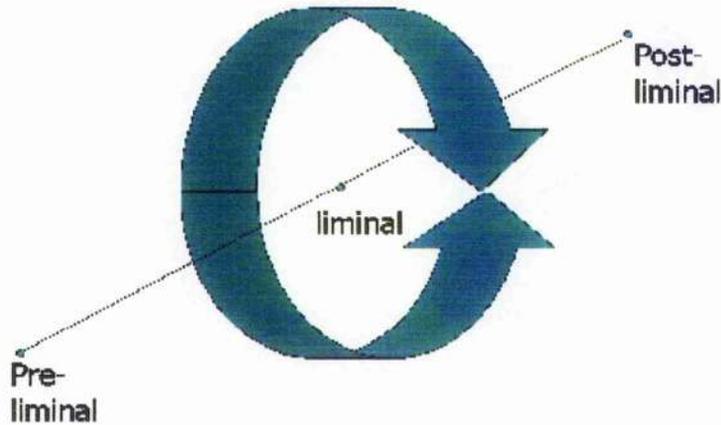
Conclusion

In conclusion, it is my contention that we ought to see ritual as something we feel rather than do. The liminal moment becomes one of transformation rather than transition when one looks to the psychological instead of the physical. Instead of looking to ritual as the key to understanding the ways we think and feel about economic, political and social relationships, we should instead focus upon the internal, more personal, psychological and spiritual importance that ritual has. Ritual gives us the opportunity to look inside ourselves rather than looking towards the outside world. If one focuses upon the transitional space within ritual it is possible to appreciate, in much the same way as the Christian mystics do, a contemplation of the Unconscious, whilst being at one and the same time wholly conscious. One can reach a womb like status inside of which one can examine the issues surrounding loss, grief and bereavement in the particular case of the funeral. People may reach out for ritual activity in times of crisis because they know subconsciously that it offers the chance for such unity between the internal and the external; enabling them to feel whole at a time when they may feel entirely fragmented. God is then no longer the other, for the other or external have become entirely integrated with the internal, in this way communion is achieved. God becomes the Alpha and the Omega at the same time within this ritual space. If the space were not enabled by ritual then this process of wholeness would be difficult to achieve. Ritual provides an arena in which unity can materialise.

³⁸ Bomford (2000) believes the God of the mystics is substantially the same as the Unconscious of depth psychology. This, he holds, is substantially the same claim that Indian religion has debated for centuries – that the Atman is Brahman – the individual soul is at one in its depths with the numinous absolute beyond the created world.

A New Model of Ritual

My interpretation of the structure of ritual action is a combination of both van Gennepe's linear and Shorter's circular constructions. Ritual can be pictured thus;



The linear progression of ritual passes through the middle of the circular nature of ritual³⁹. The pivotal moment of my model is the liminal moment, the moment of transformation. It is at this point that we are led to redefine ourselves and therefore experience the most anguish and insecurity. At this point however the sheltering nature of ritual can be seen to ark over head and act as a container, thus enabling one to experience emotion yet keeping it at a manageable level. In acting in a protective manner the ritual facilitates deeper self re-interpretation than is possible outside the realms of ritual experience. My model allows space to surround the transformative moment, the protective outer layer a small distance away. This space then allows one to explore the depth and breadth of the emotions one is confronted with. Having established the importance of this space, in part two of this thesis I will further enlarge upon the activity that takes place within this theoretical space once it has been enabled through the ritual practice.

³⁹ By the linear nature I mean the three phases van Gennepe outlines, and by circular I mean the way in which ritual is described by Shorter (1996) as having containing and protective boundaries within which to experience emotion.

Chapter 2

That which has been is that which shall be,
And that which has been done is that which shall be done;
And there is nothing new under the sun.
(Ecclesiastes 1:9)

One could say that the basic human emotional problems have not changed since the existence of mankind, however, the way we deal with them is in a constant process of change. This is clearly demonstrated by the ritual development of the Church of England. The events that are dealt with through ritual have remained constant; births and deaths have always been marked, but the liturgy that has been used to express the experience has changed throughout the course of the Church's history.

The Church of England

The existence of the Church of England, as opposed to the church in England, resulted from marital difficulties experienced by Henry VIII. There are few historians who would now contend that the English reformation was an inevitable popular protest against the corruption of the late medieval church; the split with the Church in Rome was not the result of a Protestant feeling in the country, although there had always been a desire for the repudiation of papal authority by the English Church, Henry took up the matter for purely personal reasons, namely his wife's inability to produce him a son.

The English Reformation was the creation of the English monarchy, more that an act of state in any other part of Europe: the result of one man's obsessive quest for a male heir, rather than a nation's search for the way back to the Church of the Apostles. If Henry VIII had not sought a divorce from his first wife at the wrong moment for the Papacy it is unlikely that he would have been propelled away from Rome, and it is unlikely that anyone else in England would have had the strength to force a break against his will or the will of his successors" (MacCulloch:1992:166).

However, the role of Anne Boleyn in the development of events is often underrated. Anne Boleyn was not merely a catalyst for Henry's efforts, but "she emerged during her brief spell as

Queen Consort from 1533 to 1536 as a major player in her own right” (MacCulloch 1992:167)⁴⁰. It may well have been as a result of her efforts, or at least those of her family, that Thomas Cranmer became Archbishop of Canterbury. His production of the Book of Common Prayer can be thought of as one of the most influential moments in the Church of England. It was his belief that there should be “but one use” (Phillips 1998:1). He held this for a number of reasons;

- 1) a strong common core protects the congregation against the individual style and preference of the worship leader.
- 2) worshipper’s are reminded that they belong to something larger than their local fellowship
- 3) common liturgy is more portable. Visiting laity find it less threatening in a church where they can follow a service they feel they know, and more importantly Bishops and other clergy find it easier to lead worships in other Churches
- 4) if there is no common prayer there is a danger that common doctrine will be lost

There are those who argue that this represents a commonality of text that has to some extent been abandoned in modern day liturgies. Perham (2000:10) argues that there is a tendency to look back to a uniformity in past days that simply did not exist. However, in saying this it is also important not to place too much store upon smaller elements within worship, although it is true to say that music, choice of hymn book and so on all make a huge difference to worship, to say there was a total lack of communality seems to be taking the argument too far. People experienced essentially the same services all over the country.

“despite the architecture, the ordering of the building, the vestments, the ceremonial and the singing.. you knew where you were, very definitely Church of England - and you could say much of the service off by heart” (Perham 2000:10).

Perham (2000:10) argues there was a substantial body of text and an order from which it was

⁴⁰ Significantly, it is entirely possible that her “masterfulness” was what “sealed her doom, as Henry found the qualities which had been fascinating in a mistress increasingly irksome in a wife”(MacCulloch 1772:167).

hard to deviate. Although in our modern day society this 'imposition' of liturgy seems to be somehow controlling of our spirituality, it was not always perceived as such, indeed there was a time when people positively embraced such rigid boundaries to their religious experience.

It appears following the iconoclasm of the Reformation, people were left feeling spiritually insecure⁴¹. Whiting (1997) asserts that although the old religion fairly rapidly lost its emotional hold on people, the void it left was filled with confusion and cynicism⁴². Instead of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers having a positive and enriching effect upon the spiritual lives of the nation, it resulted in close attention to the written word of the *Book of Common Prayer* and an almost obsessive focus upon the order of service. Instead of people discovering a religious freedom and more personal faith, worship took on an altogether more communal nature. Following the destruction of major icons and religious relics the nation experienced the loss of much of its symbolic sense. "The sacramental universe of late medieval Catholicism was from such a perspective, totally opaque, a bewildering and meaningless world of dumb objects and vapid gestures, hindering communication" (Duffy 1997:199). "Behind the repudiation of ceremonial by the reformers lay a radically different conceptual world, a world in which text was everything, sign nothing" (Duffy 1997:199). The psychological impact of this left people unimaginative⁴³ in terms of their spirituality.

Maltby refers to Prayer -Book Protestants⁴⁴; those who were so focused upon the importance of the *Book of Common Prayer* that they were prepared to go to the law courts to discipline their minister if they felt that he was not performing his duty properly. A huge number of parishioners

⁴¹ Aston (in Marshall 1997:167-192) addresses the psychological impact of iconoclasm on those who witnessed it.

⁴² Whiting believes that popular reactions to reform were characterized typically by passivity and conformity in the face of a powerful Tudor state. Marshall (1997:118) points out that his thesis allows for the paradox of a thriving and popular pre-Reformation piety, which appears to have done little to attempt to preserve itself in the face of official hostility.

⁴³ By unimaginative I do not mean 'made up' but instead the ability to access that part of one's mind that enables us to use and understand symbolism.

⁴⁴ Haigh (in Marshall 1997:235-257) prefers the term Parish Anglicans, he sees these as being the 'spiritual left-over's of Elizabethan England. They amount to much the same thing however.

wanted to ensure that the set order of prayers was observed. Some laity did not only know what the order of service was, or should be, but brought their own books so as to ensure the services were being conducted properly. In 1590 Thomas Daynes, the vicar of Flixton in Suffolk accused his parish of being “papists and atheists” for bringing their Prayer Books to the services to see that he was observing the lawful services. Daynes declared his parishioners “would rather hear mass than hear the word of God truly preached”(Maltby 1997:260).

This insecurity and desire for adhesion to the order of service is most noticeably reflected in the attitudes towards the funeral services of Reformation England. Although Keith Thomas (1971) describes a growing indifference to towards the dead at this time⁴⁵, this is not strictly true. “Whereas Catholics had believed that God would let souls linger in purgatory if no masses were said for them, the Protestant doctrine meant that each generation could be indifferent to the fate of its predecessor” (Thomas 1997:266). However, rather than indifference to the dead it seems much importance was placed upon a correct ‘sending off’ of the newly deceased. The Protestant doctrine of election seems to have had a huge impact upon people attitudes towards the ritual provision for their friends and relatives upon their passing on. Because a belief in purgatory was not a part of Protestantism⁴⁶, people were no longer allowed to continue their expressions of grief

⁴⁵ Keith Thomas (in Maltby 1997:266) held that “whereas Catholics had believed that God would let souls linger in purgatory if no masses were said for them, the Protestant doctrine meant that each generation could be indifferent to the spiritual fate of its predecessor... This implied an altogether more atomistic conception of the relationship which members of society stood to each other”.

⁴⁶ Belief in purgatory, for example, did not just disappear overnight. Pre-Reformation worshippers at Exeter Cathedral were bidden to pray “for all the souls [that] biddeth the mercy of God in the bitter pains of Purgatory: that God of his mercy, the sooner deliver them through your devoted prayers”(DC 2864 Bederoll late 15th Century). Prayers began within hours of the death itself, further prayers were said at the burial, but these were only really the initial stages of a highly organized intercessory process which “might continue for months, years or even generations after the body had been laid to rest” (Whiting 1997: 122). As Whiting points out “Wills, Churchwardens’ accounts and the chantry certificated leave no doubt that on the very eve of the Reformation, an overwhelming multiplicity of ‘masses’, ‘diriges’, ‘tretals’, ‘obits’, ‘mind-days’, ‘anniversaries’, and similar rites were still being celebrated” (Whiting 1997:122). Thomas Benet reportedly complained to the clergy at Exeter 1531 “but ye say divers masses for souls feigned in purgatory” (Foxe:1583:1039). However, the Henrican Reformation can be said to have an impact upon these intercessions, in that investments in such intercessions took a marked downturn. Whiting’s analysis of intercessory investment shows that prayer and masses had been arranged in 21 of the 30 wills from 1520-29 (of those surviving West Country wills) which adds up to 70%, however of the 40 wills still existent from 1530 - 39 they were endowed in only 21 or 51%, and of the 69 wills from 1540 -6 on no more than 23 or 33%. The reasons for this are probably related to the official assault following the accession of Edward VI to the throne. By the Act of 1547 all properties rents and annuities providing stipends for chantry priests were transferred to the Crown, along with parish guilds and fraternities assigned to ‘superstitious’ purposes. (Whiting 1997:130).

in ritual form for a long time after the death of the person. Thus demonstrations of love and respect for the dead, and prayers for their soul could not take place beyond the graveside, so the actual funeral service and burial took on a more marked importance.

As Maltby (1997:264) states "Prayer Book Protestants wanted their dead buried properly, reverently and with the rites authorized by the established Church". She cites uproar following John Swan's, the vicar of Bunbury, refusal to meet the corpse at the churchyard gate, or use the Prayer book rite.

"Neither did you meet the said corpse [and bring it] into the churchyard and church, nor read the usual prayers and service (appointed for the burial of the dead) when you went to accompany the same grave but only carried the service book under your arm" (Maltby 1997: 265).

It is clear that the focus is upon the written word rather than any symbolic action. It became increasingly apparent that the Church of England had the job on its hands of re-educating the lay people to understand and benefit from the ceremonies in the Church, so they could experience a more greatly enriched / enhanced imaginative spirituality through a strong liturgical provision. Its recovery is not an easy task. "... the whole language of traditional symbolism has gone somewhat dead on people. In church they do things, they enact rituals. Yet not only do they not know their meaning, but also it does not occur to them that there is meaning to be found. They are simply "what we do" or more likely "what we have always done". (Perham 2000:47/48)⁴⁷.

In an attempt to move towards a more individualistic spiritual sense, one that was then celebrated communally, rather than only every experienced communally, it became common practice for service leaders to go to other sources in order to enrich the authorized text. This tendency towards textual variety seems to imply that there was an increased sense of variety to people's spiritual experience.

⁴⁷ To teach people this 'language' is easier said than done, "if the symbol and the gesture express what cannot be put into words the teaching will neatly always narrow down the meaning , always take the power of the symbol by explaining it away, we should be wary of explaining away what is beyond words (Perham 2000:48).

The Church was called upon to be more responsive to the needs of the people in terms of its liturgical provision. For example, during the First World War many clergy were sent to the front lines in order to provide spiritual support for the men there, however, the experience of those in the trenches was so awful and entirely unprecedented the words in the funeral service had little bearing on their encounters with death. *The Church in the Furnace* contains the experiences of chaplains at that time, including a collection of the funeral services used by a number of priests during wartime. Through these accounts it is apparent that the official provision by the Church had little bearing upon what was actually taking place.

The 1662 Burial Service in official use at the time was reported to have failed the people badly. Its provision was quite some distance away from the requirements both physically and emotionally of those grieving at the time. As a result the clergy involved took it upon themselves to change and adapt the service so that there was more variety; the concluding prayers are one and all different... the result has been an office no less beautiful, but far more human, with not less but more true and ancient divinity to it; and thereby suitability, honesty and comfort. After the war the Church took all this on board and the 1928 Deposited Book included many of the additions suggested by a number of war chaplains⁴⁸.

The attempt at a 1928 *Prayer Book*, a revision of Cranmer's 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* further demonstrates that people were beginning to develop a more personal sense to their spirituality. It appears they were beginning to feel more in touch with their own spiritual needs and more able to state these to the Church. Although the 1928 *Prayer Book* itself was never approved by the House of Lords, it seems that Christians were beginning to have the confidence to say that the liturgical provision of Cranmer no longer met their spiritual needs. Diversity of

⁴⁸ for example three readings were added and a number of prayers, including an alternative Prayer of Committal, reflecting their call for a prayer for the dead and for mourners.

personal religious experience can be seen to have become an accepted element of worship⁴⁹, one that required a broader liturgical provision.

The mere introduction through the 1960's and 1970's of the *Alternative Service Book* and its Series 1,2 and 3 meant a greater diversity in worship. Although in themselves they were "tightly constructed rites" (Perham 2000:11) their very existence introduced diversity. They contained the beginnings of the permissive 'may' and 'or' in the rubric thus articulating that common prayer was no longer so uniform. The *Alternative Service Book* of 1980 had far more options and local decision became an established part of the liturgical picture. "The local Minister and to some extent the local congregation owned the liturgy in a new way by deciding what was right in that

community and on that particular occasion" (Perham 2000:11). "Other suitable words"⁵⁰ were permitted that were alternative to the text provided. Clergy began to push this permission to the limits and started to devise other services, writing or formulating their own in an attempt to engage new people. This was not always a good thing though. In 1989 *Patterns for Worship* attempted to deal with some of the criticisms leveled against such permissibility by the report of the Archbishops Commission on the Church in Urban Priority Areas entitled *Faith in the City*. The report tried to show that shape and order are both crucial to good liturgy and that certain things are required if the worship is to be recognized as Anglican. The Church needs a common prayer and a common shape to its worship. "In the end the liturgy of the Church cannot be about congregational preference, for, with all its broad freedom's and encouragement to creativity, the liturgy holds the church together and safeguards what the church believes" (Perham 2000:16). The Church of England is a confessional church, it reveals what it believes through its liturgy,

⁴⁹ Perham argues, however, that the Church of England has gone to far when trying to achieve an atmosphere in which worship is a celebration of ones personal relationship with God. He comments that it is difficult to see the Anglican liturgical path as anything but a resolute march away from any commonality in worship. In his opinion this cannot be considered as something that is altogether positive.

⁵⁰ "Altar missals for the more catholic parts of the Church introduced all sorts of additional words, quite a lot of them from what was euphemistically called 'the Western Church' which simply meant Rome. Parishes all over the land, with the goodwill of bishops used material from the failed prayer book of 1928. ... Almost every priest and Reader had a collection of prayers for use 'after the third collect' at Morning and Evening Prayer" (Perham 2000:10).

and therefore its liturgy cannot become fully local.

“Contemporary language liturgy is seen by many as essential to ensure that the Church appears meaningful and relevant in the modern world” (Churchman 1998:112/2). Most recently the Church of England has introduced *Common Worship* to replace the old Alternative Service Book⁵¹. “In producing *Common Worship* the Liturgical Commission has faced the task of allowing diversity of local practice and preference whilst reinforcing and promoting unity” (Churchman 1998). Their concern was to build a strong “and evolving common core” in Anglican worship that leaves room for variety of practice, experiment and local decision (Perham 1993)⁵².

Delap (1999) argues that the watershed for the development of the *Common Worship* funeral provision was the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales in September 1997. Her death resonated with a large sector of the population and there was a very real sense that the public needed to mourn. It is interesting to note that the service that took place bore very little relation to the one outlined in the ASB. The funeral “did not submit well to a severely liturgical critique ... apart from the opening sentence the rite had no connection with any Church of England service seen so far (Buchanan 1997). The important thing to note, however, is that the service seemed to meet public demand and it was received well. “Diana’s funeral simply highlighted the disparity between authorized liturgy and parochial practice” (Delap 1999). Diana’s, the Princess of the People, own service did not follow the ASB it made it clear that the funeral liturgy as it stood

⁵¹ The ASB services were originally authorized for just ten years, until December 1990, they have however ended up lasting twice that long and “over the course of the last two decades its services and prayers have entered the life blood of the Church at a profound level” (Delap and Lloyd 2000:15).

⁵² Each *Common Worship* service aims to have a clear structure and a ‘clean text’; wherever possible alternatives and options are not in the main body of the text. The rubrics contained within the text of the ASB made it difficult to follow, the *Common Worship* tries to avoid this. In general the *Common Worship* text has more opening notes. Furthermore it is thought that in order to avoid the content turning to different parts of the book, individual congregations will print their own versions of the services as they use them. Computer technology will play an active role in this. “It remains to be seen if the ‘evolving common core’ approach will work, many will see the freedom to swap texts as a freedom to change the core. ... It should also be a concern that clergy will spend more and more time in mixing and printing services, to the neglect of other aspects of ministry”(Churchman 1998:112/2).

was not meeting the needs of the people.

It is the job of the Church to change with the times and revise the liturgy in order that it can withstand the emotional challenges thrown at it by today's society⁵³. The production of the *Common Worship* services hopes to act as the melting pot in which notions of individual influence and local choice can come together with the doctrinal assertions of the Church of England. *Common Worship* tries to ask where the freedoms in worship are useful valuable and necessary, however it also has a stronger shape and structure to its services.

“The Church needs common prayer. The witness of the early centuries and the wisdom of the present age is that principally we need common shape. But we do also need common words: perhaps not many, just a core, that can change slowly, but words nevertheless” (Perham 2000:15).

Common Worship has one clear preferred structure to the service and it is clear where the authorized texts are to be used, and clear where there is freedom. “...for those ready to follow there is a clear message: common prayer is good, liturgical diversity is good, finding the proper balance is important.” (Perham 2000:16). In the *Common Worship* services the Church has recognized the value of a “both.. and” approach rather than an “either .. or” approach (Perham 2000:63), and as a result it has embraced texts both old and new. The *Common Worship* services draw together all of the liturgical input from the time of Cranmer to the present day, providing a much enriched liturgy. “For liturgy is an evolving art, where the old and new can be expected to be found cheek by jowl in a perfectly natural kind of way” (Perham 2000:63).

Religious Language

The new liturgy of *Common Worship* is emerging against a post-modern background, one where issues of language are particularly important. “Language has immense, pervasive and subtle power. Because it is the vehicle of all human construction of meaning, it has great power to

⁵³ Grimes (2000:4) argues that rites survive precisely because they are re-invented and re-imagined; “there is no other option”. He goes on to argue that “rites are not givens; they are hand-me-downs, quilts we continue to patch” (2000:12). The important thing is recognizing that rites are flowing processes and not just rigid structures, immovable, unchangeable.

shape our conscious and unconscious images of ourselves and the world around us” (Ramshaw 1987:109). Language is not neutral and never can be. It is clear that there is a certain type of language that one uses in and of religion, a mode of speech that enables one to express religious belief and experience. However, Gomme (1980) argues if one sees religious language solely in this way, one is led to question whether a belief or idea can be said to exist until it has found expression, since it cannot identify itself outside of some language. Therefore, if religious language can be said to define our religious experience, and therefore lead us to understanding, one is faced with the problem that experience is in principle separable from its expression.

In the ritual context, however, I hold that experience and expression are one and the same. Emotions can be experienced because of the space created by the ritual. They have not been fully articulated, just allowed to *be*. Thus, the words expression and experience only really skim the surface. It is a chicken and egg situation; one begins to articulate an experience as one encounters it, but there still remains a whole unarticulated level, one cannot deny that this is there though. These are the *thoughts that lie too deep for tears* (Wordsworth)⁵⁴. To articulate something, or even to begin to articulate something is only to lift off the manhole cover and reveal the torrent or trickle of the water that flows beneath. The water is always there, always flowing by, but we remain largely unaware of the depth, strength and force of it the majority of the time.

Having looked at religious language in general, we need now to look at the liturgy in particular. Before one can address whether there is a shortfall in the liturgical provision of the Church one ought first look at why we have liturgy at all; what purpose does it serve, and what role does it have?

⁵⁴ This can be likened to the name of God. In saying ‘God’ one only begins to hint at what one means. The word ‘God’ does not neatly encompass what He is / does / stands for / represents. It is a scratch on the surface - we fill in the rest. Religious practitioners still feel it is possible to experience the rest without being able to fully articulate what God means. In the Jewish torah it is not allowed to write the word God for writing it seems to imply that God can be described and thereby comprehended - something that Jews wish to avoid. The notion that He can be comprehended is totally abhorrent. They write G-d instead.

Why does the Church have liturgy?

The simplest answer is that there has always been liturgy. The concept of having no communal meeting is alien to the Christian mindset, the apostles received the Holy Spirit together and acted together, it would be contrary to this to have no communal worship. Community feelings and support networks are something that the Church prides itself on. It is hugely important in Church life to have a Mothers Union, Sunday School, family picnics and so on. So, once one has conceded this communality (not withstanding personal prayer and devotions) there has to be some means of running it. Paul states "Let all things be done decently and in order" (Corinthians), this requires some form, whether the form is set is the question of to adopt liturgy or not.

Another main argument for liturgy is familiarity. When one looks at non-liturgical churches, one does not find total freedom, but rather a pattern peculiar to that church⁵⁵. Part of the security to be found within the Church is that it is not uncharted territory. Many people have had some experience of Church, be that in the form of a wedding or a baptism, they know the basic format. This takes some of the uncertainty out of their attendance. For those who are regular attendees and know the form, the familiarity of the service can provide an anchor, metaphorically speaking, for their faith experience. It enables them to use the liturgy as a springboard because it is a known and established base from which to work.

One of the concepts close to hearts of many Anglicans is the notion of *lex orandi, lex credendi*, this states that the law of prayer is the law of belief. Church-go-ers will unknowingly have memorized vast quantities of liturgical material; this will be floating around in their minds when they consider questions of theology. One cannot have a true orthodoxy without orthopraxis; right belief and right action go together. Ramshaw (1987:93) holds that liturgy holds much of its power in its memory. "Liturgical remembrance is a unique sort of memory: a memory which does not just reminisce but re-presents, makes present; a memory which by recalling the

⁵⁵ It has been said that the difference between an Anglican service and a Charismatic one is that in the former the liturgy is written and approved, in the latter it is invented and memorized.

promises of the past also recalls our future hope”⁵⁶.

There is also a third reason for liturgy, one that is often overlooked. In today’s very personal and private emotional climate the liturgy can represent a shift from the private language of the individual to a language members of the social group can understand. “There has to be room for the words of another to find place in me, so I will have to suspend thought, feeling and order that I see what is being said” (Maxwell 1998). Our society today is very internally focused thus making liturgy all the more important within the Church. The space created within the ritual process is helped by liturgical provision. Within a liturgical context the individual is encouraged, metaphorically speaking, to look up and appreciate their emotional state from the outside. Because one does not have to think up the words and attempt to articulate the emotions oneself, one can experience them more deeply. There is a resonating to what is being said at the center of ones being, yet one does not have to analyze what this resonating is. One sees and hears reflections of what is within being shown in the words of others; written by others, spoken by others. There is a sense in which there have been people making the same cries before and there will be those in the future who will make the same cries again. Liturgy is an attempt to direct the cry beyond the circumstances of the moment (Shorter 1996:21). This enables a complete immersion in the ritual experience.

Returning to my image of a pregnant woman, outlined in section one, liturgy can perhaps be thought of as an ultra-sound picture of the fetus. The mother is very aware of her baby, she can listen to its heartbeat, she can feel it moving around, but seeing the baby on screen gives another dimension. It does not bring into existence an baby that was not already there, but articulates, in a sense, the child more fully. The liturgy can be said to ‘freeze’ the emotion into literalism rendering it more manageable (Corbett 1996:2).

⁵⁶ Ramshaw (1987:93) holds the paradigmatic act of liturgical memory is the Lords prayer - the historical acts and future promises of God are recalled and represented, in the recollection we are able to locate ourselves in the present.

Where does new liturgy come from?

Having said that it was generally recognized that the liturgy needed to change, it is important to examine where new liturgy comes from. Liturgy expresses what Christians believe; to change the liturgy therefore runs the risk of changing doctrine. One is forced to question whether the Church is simply changing the way it is saying things in order to make them more accessible, or whether it is actually compromising or even changing what its message purely in an attempt to become modern?⁵⁷ The loss of doctrinal purity is of huge concern to those involved in the Church⁵⁸.

Delap (1999) lists four potential sources for new liturgy;

- 1) **The doctrine of the Church of England** - "Liturgy with this source reflects current thought within academic and 'thinking' communities in the Church, and seeks to inform the belief of the Church" (Delap 1999).
- 2) Words that reflect the **ecumenical community** in which the Church finds itself.
- 3) **Previous liturgy** - for *Common Worship* this is primarily the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* and the *Alternative Service Book*.
- 4) **Pastoral Needs** of the people that the Church serves - "this liturgy takes authorized material, supplements and refines it, and in the process creates worship that meets the perceived needs of the people of God⁵⁹."

The *Common Worship* has probably focused more upon the pastoral needs of the people in its

⁵⁷ Brian Morris questions whether there is such a thing as 'modern' English. "There is no such thing as 'modern' English, or if there is it is beyond the wit of scholars of language to define it or isolate it. The language currently in use in speech to writing by native speakers of our tongue is so complex and multifarious, so perpetually developing and shifting, that no one person or group can justly claim to comprehend or command it" (Morris 1980).

⁵⁸ For many the biggest concern in the liturgical revision embodied in *Common Worship* is the drift away from traditional Protestant beliefs. These concerns are not as high profile as they once were because 1) in an era of reader - response arguments over words and phrases if thought less important than the overall mood of the service. 2) Shape is considered more important than wording. Gregory Dix taught that the liturgy is essentially a series of actions, which are interpreted by words. In light of this Stevenson (1993:10) comments that Church of England could benefit from this insight by worrying less about "getting the words right" and concentrate more on the inner meaning [of the Eucharist].

⁵⁹ *Common Worship* liturgy has developed from a variety of sources but the most apparent one is that of pastoral consideration. Parish clergy have responded to the needs of their parish and created their own versions of the various rites, which are now being absorbed in to the liturgy, where appropriate.

production. The problem that faces most liturgies is retaining their relevance, things date so quickly in our disposable society and it is important that the liturgy that is produced does not date too quickly.

How does liturgy work?

There are two ways of viewing liturgy; one is as a framework imposed upon the ritual process, the other as an organic unity, which grows with the ritual process, alongside it, developing as the ritual does. In an ideal state liturgy should be a mixture of both, providing a framework to the ritual, but not a framework that is so immovable as to act as an obstruction to what is taking place⁶⁰. There is a fine line between liturgy acting as a framework and it becoming a cage. Equally, however, the fluidity of the liturgy should not be so great that it does not provide any sense of solidarity or security. The liturgy should be a growing, organic unity but one that is constantly pruned and tended to; by this I mean it should move with the Church, but not take it over. Liturgy should be allowed to live and develop, thus requiring flexibility, but not weakness⁶¹.

It is important to remember that etymologically 'liturgy' means the work of the people, rather than the performance of the pastor. "A good presider is one who draws her congregation into the ancient dance with a new song" (Ramshaw 1987:22). Liturgy should always engage with the congregation and seem near to their personal experience, rather than a far away thing performed by the pastor, at the front of the church that is difficult to understand or access.

⁶⁰ There are those who would argue that the *Common Worship* revisions are artificial rather than organic, believing them to have been passed down from liturgists rather than having grown up within the ritual situation. This view, however, can only be considered to be a hasty judgment - the *Common Worship* revisions are still in an experimental state and the liturgies are by no means set. The experimental stage requires feed back from the Churches and this will then be taken on board.

⁶¹ Dom Gregory Dix suggested that the Prayer Book be printed with blank pages opposite each printed one thus allowing a record to be kept of any deviations made from the text. This has much to be said for it but there is the danger that the deviations could begin to take over from the text, or the Church could become too permissive in its deviations since it seems to be given free license to all to deviate from the set text. The *Common Worship* has tried to incorporate such an idea by encouraging vicars to produce their own order of services for each service by downloading the relevant sections from the Internet and then reproducing them in photocopied form. This has much to be said for it as it gives a personal feel to every service and yet does not allow for too great a deviation from the text provided.

Liturgy is expected to express man's deepest thoughts and feelings, it uses rich and powerful vocabulary. We rely on liturgy to say how we feel in words more powerful than we can ourselves. "True expressions of emotion are hard, as we British are, unused to modes of passionate speech, know well. In such a case, any voicing of emotion may come out mawkish, mushy maudlin, like the sentiments on greetings cards. The language spoken by the unconscious mind often comes across in this overblown way, requiring conscious refinement" (Tatham 1999). We rely therefore on the liturgy to express the enormity of a situation, or the hugeness of an emotion; something our brain seems incapable of doing when we really need it to.

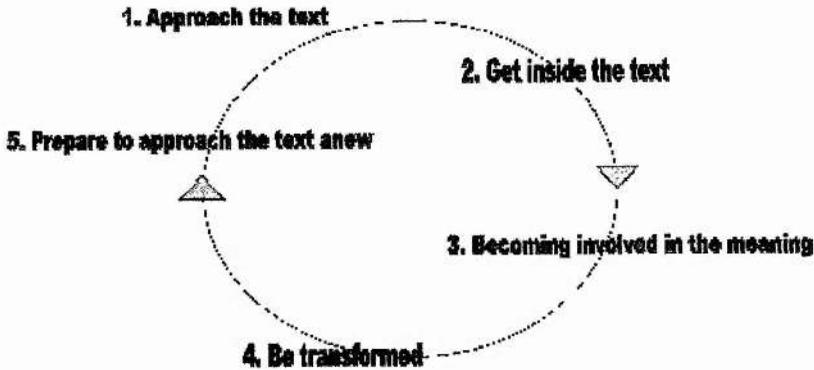
"As I read the Scripture from Lamentations in the memorial service, I was able to look at him. When I read the strong language of the lament, I saw the lights come on in his eyes. It was as if I were mirroring him to his feelings that he had held inside... His face and eyes began to mirror the emotions expressed in the Scripture" (Jones 1999:338).

It is clear the interchange between the text and those undergoing the rite is the issue in hand⁶². Often the simplest seeming liturgical texts are the most powerful. The participant brings together their psychological capabilities and the contents of the text; the interplay between the two is what brings a rite alive. Carr (1997:24) refers to the hermeneutical circle⁶³ when describing this interaction;

⁶² The chief problem with reader response is "our texts now have their eyes not on God but on the congregation" This is inevitable because the model requires that focus be on the individual and how they perceive the truth, rather than on the objective truth of God.

⁶³ The phrase hermeneutical circle, although widely used, has no set norm or definition (Thistleton 1980:104ff).

Hermeneutical Circle



It is better thought of as a spiral rather than simply a circular process since one does not return to the same place time and time again - there is a forward movement, "by engaging in the process the reader furthers his or her understanding and moves to a new plane from which to take another step by repeating the process" (Carr 1997:23).

Liturgy is written for the masses, the vast majority of which find it hard to write expressively, they come to the liturgy expecting it to be able to start to express how they feel without it sounding glib. The whole problem with expressing emotion is that it can sometimes feel it has been reduced in some way simply by articulating it. The words can never really say what we want them to. By naming it we have attempted to own it and this has cheapened it in some way.

Everyone is caught in the decay of our speech, and the Church can only say what it has to say through language it has made its own. It was one of the great conquests of sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that the Church commanded a language at once profound and familiar. Now, after immense deliberations, it injects trashy and un-meaningful speech even into the liturgy. There is no such thing as passing on profound truths in superficial speech.

(CH Sisson)

What is required from modern day liturgy?

Above all it is clear that elasticity is required from modern day liturgy, not simply a modern sounding vocabulary. In our pick and mix culture there is an increasing demand for flexibility in worship. "Where Iona worship and Greek Orthodoxy meet and rub shoulders liturgically there needs to be sufficient flexibility in the core texts to contain such pressures" (Delap and Lloyd 2000:20). It is so important that the tone of the service is right and therefore flexibility and choice are of utmost importance. The rites ought to be adjustable to people's powers of comprehension, to people's depths of understanding. The cultural gap or even sub-cultural gap between some of those using the liturgy and those writing it is a very important issue to be taken into account. "The language which one person finds to be dignified and uplifting tends to be someone else's 'gobbledegook'" (Fenwick and Spinks 1995). Liturgy ought always be there to enable an encounter with God, it is important the tone ought never end up being an obstruction. "For some the text has become empty, cerebral and desacralized. Poetic, evocative and awe-inspiring language has been replaced by flat bourgeois phrase. Everything has been reduced to the lowest common denominator. The obsession with intelligibility has driven out the glory, mystery and holiness" (Fenwick and Spinks 1995). Clearly experience of God will vary from individual to individual and the hardest thing is to create a liturgy that enables such an encounter for all those attending services, from all walks of life, customs and cultures.

The Relevance of Postmodernism

I use the term postmodernism to refer to the situation that those in the Western world find themselves. As outlined in LaMothe (1999:255) this situation is characterized at least in part by (a) the disbelief in any ultimate reliability in knowledge to truth; (b) the disbelief in being able to 'discover' the essential nature of an object; and (c) the denial of the transcendence of norms and values.

It seems we are now moving away from a society concerned with systems and efficiency⁶⁴, we

⁶⁴ George Ritzer has coined the term McDonaldization, to describe the dehumanizing effects of a process he claims has invaded every area of human life. It is characterized by four features; efficiency, calculability,

are in a climate now more concerned with individuality, flare and personal input⁶⁵. Post-Enlightenment discourse can be said to have had a 'de-personalizing effect'⁶⁶, the constant division between thought and action, internal and external, body and mind, lead to a lack of emotional contact with ones surrounds. Young (1989) argues, "The subject has been de-ontologised at the expense of the ontologisation of the signifier". However, society now seems to be moving in the opposite direction with individuality and subjectivity having become the focus. "After being - doing and being done to. But first, being"(Winnicott 1971:85). Grimes (1990) holds that the post-modern climate offers more fertile and receptive ground to ritual.

Whereas the post-enlightenment discourse had resulted in a transferal of the center of gravity of consciousness from the kernel to the shell (Winnicott 1971) people are not looking to relocate their focus of attention to the individual⁶⁷. The focus had shifted from how we do things to the person performing them. As a result many people do not see ritual action as a way to achieve such a re-personalized effect. Although Grimes (1990:27) holds that people view ritual as a primary means in the search for a reintegrated selfhood, it is also the case that people sometimes feel that ritual signifies empty conformity (Barnes 1990:127). Mary Douglas (1982:1-8) observed a lack of commitment to common symbols and an "explicit rejection of rituals as such". Richard Sennet (1977:259) looks more closely at this trend referring to it as an "ideology of intimacy". He argues that people value things in terms of personal feelings of closeness and predictability and control.

⁶⁵ I would say that we are closer to a 'Jamie Oliver-ized' state in our post-modern culture than a McDonaldized one. Whilst McDonalds promise uniform food, quality and service world-wide, people are coming increasingly to prefer a greater choice, and one into which they get to put their own input. Although there is some freedom in many fast food chains to make your *meal deal* slightly individual, this usually boils down to now having pickle on your burger, and a different type of drink. In this way I would argue that a Jamie Oliverized society comes closer to describing our post modern state. People are more willing to give it a go themselves; no longer is the focus on efficiency and cost. There is a unifying enthusiasm and interest in the actual cooking and creating side; the production of something personal is of utmost importance.

⁶⁶ Winnicott (1949 and 1952) uses the term 'de-personalization' to describe a lack of relationship between the psyche and soma

⁶⁷ Lear's (1983) argues that the yearning for intense, authentic experience is linked to the transition from a producing to a consuming culture. It is possible to argue that ritual has become an alternative means of therapeutic attention for the individual.

instant familiarity today. In today's climate the formal and communal nature of ritual is not appreciated or valued (Karecki 1997). It can be argued that we have come to a point where we are too acceptant of the term subjective - perhaps we have lost sight of any form of objectivity on knowledge. We have become complacent in our acceptance on subjectivity and not really ever knowing anything. Everything is now based on personal experience. Schechner (1980) suggests that in the post-modern consciousness experience is not something that merely happens to us, but is something that can be manipulated. Grimes (1990) lists reflexivity as a characteristic of the post-modern age. Ritual is not just the self-focusing upon itself, but an experience of that reflection as 'other' (Schechner 1980). "The post-modern self seems at once to actively shape experience and to undergo it. It is at once the center and the edge. And it is collective, yet focused upon the self"(Grimes 1990:23). In the attempt to move away from the de-personalized state, what has been achieved is an over-personalized state.

Schechner (1980:22) proposes that the modern era is rational, intellectual and humanistic, whereas the post-modern era can be described as "the religious, the synthetic, the holistic, the ritualized, the uniform". The impact of postmodernism has led to a different way of perceiving oneself and society, "It has led to a differently understood - if not constituted - self" (Grimes 1990:25). It is not what we are experiencing that has changed, hence *there is nothing new under the sun*, (Ecclesiastes 1:9) but how we experience it that is different.

The Crisis of Individualism

As stated above, one of the features of our modern western society is the increasing emphasis placed upon the individual and the personal. "Philosophically it could be argued that such atomization is the logical outworking of Renaissance Individualism" (Fenwick and Spinks 1995). This has led to a condition in which it is not easy to share ones problems with others. "The emergence of globalization ... and the unbearable herding of people has produced a combustible cocktail of mass independence which renders people unstable and insecure and suggestible" (Kutek 2000). It can be argued that individualism creates in people an existential loneliness, compounded by a sense of the absurd. Emphasis is now placed upon self reliance, self-

sufficiency and not asking others for help. There is a general expectation felt that one ought to be able to cope with ones problems on ones own. This results in a huge stress placed on the individual, added to the stress created by the crisis-situation being experience. "One of the dominant features of individualism is its recognition of and respect for individuals' physical and psychological space" (Laungani 1987) ⁶⁸.

⁶⁸ Psychological space is concerned with defining boundaries, which separate the psychological space from others. It is an idea of immense value in the west, respected in all social situations. It comes into play in all social encounters, from the most casual to the most intimate. One hears of people being threatened, upset or angry when they feel that their subjectively defined space is invaded.

Chapter 3

Mourning and Loss

Before examining the funeral it is perhaps useful to look at the emotional state of those coming to the funeral;

The tendency in our modern Western world is that the funeral and the period of mourning is a private affair. We live in a society that operates in a cognitive mode, with an emphasis placed upon rationality, logic and control. Public expression of emotion is usually frowned upon because it does not fit into this mould. Mathers (1970) likens our attitude to death to the Victorian attitude to sex - it is necessary but as long as all the decencies are observed, the less said the better. Traditionally, death was faced up to, a funeral was a solemn and public occasion, and member's of the community would stop what they were doing and reflect upon that particular death and also the inevitability of death in general. People took time to get used to the idea of it. They made time to make real for themselves John Donne's thought that "any mans death diminishes me because I am involved in mankind"⁶⁹.

Moltmann (1994) holds that people no longer mourn not because they do not want to but because they do not know how too. A 1991 Gallop poll indicated that most Americans do not think about death, this is probably true for most of the western world. Today at least 75% of persons die in hospitals with the effect that fewer people see death. There are fewer people dying at home, death is much less a public fact (unlike in the war for example). The mere fact that funeral parlors take care of all the details of the funeral says a lot about society's attitude to mourning and death in general. Funeral directors are generally not accepted as part of society in the same way as, say, doctors are. It is true to say there is a certain stigma attached to the occupation. Furthermore, cemeteries are placed outside of towns now, whereas previously people were buried in churchyards in the center of the local community; people were then

⁶⁹ Quoted in Mather's (1970)

confronted with the notion of mortality on a daily basis⁷⁰. As Moltmann points out the overriding sense in today's society that life must go on. Culture as a whole denies the importance or the reality of death and as a result alienates the dying and the bereaved from society. This happened most dramatically after the Second World War. There was a reaction against being faced with death every day, death became a taboo subject, which in turn resulted in it becoming fearful and unknown. The mourner has no special status within the community and it is as if society has neither time, nor psychological space for those grieving. "Dying and death have been extremely privatized and pushed out of public life.." (Moltmann 1995).

Part of the reason for this could be that modern man has not found it easy to hold life dear and yet at the same time recognize its mortality. Death reminds us too much of our own mortality and has the potential to break through the brisk and brittle facade of our own self assurance (Gardiner 1997). Death is a slap in the face of the great dream that time and money can remove all obstacles to human enjoyment (Morgan 1998). William James wrote that the word 'good' fundamentally meant 'destined to survive' (James 1959), therefore when an individual describes something as good they are implicitly suggesting that the thing ought to exist. The effect of this is "I am. I am good. Yet I shall die". This awareness is, in James' own words "the worm at the core of our pretentious to happiness" (Becker 1973). Death is ultimately the proof that no matter what powers humans have or develop, they are still not God (Morgan 1998). It appears that we do not want to accept the fragility of our own existence believing if we face up to it then it may take something away from our present lives. Freud refers to some of his patients who once have accepted their personal mortality began to treat life with the same resignation. "Death is accepted, either through an asceticism, which withdraws our attachment to life or through a cynicism, which withdraws all value from life and encourages our pleasures whilst it trivializes

⁷⁰ Although the main reason for this relocation is more closely linked to legalistical practicalities than anything else, I still believe it makes a strong theological statement - albeit subconsciously - at the time of the funeral if one holds the service in the center of the community and the body is then banished and along with it any sense of the right to grieve within the city walls. It is as if a certain amount of time is allowed in which the people are allowed to grieve and then once the body is taken away an out of sight out of mind attitude must prevail. Mourners must go away to experience any further upset, as it inappropriate within the context of everyday life.

them" (Nachman 1982).

An important element in the western view of life is that life and death are entirely different and unrelated states. The major question that society ought face up to is whether death ought be considered as within or outside of human life (Callaghan 1993:74). We have come to see death as a wall rather than a doorway (Feifel 1990). For those who see death as a door it is a transformation of life meanings (Morgan 1998). For those who see death as a wall, death itself entails self-annihilation, loss of self fulfillment, and loss of identity, a final ending (Florian and Mikulincer 1992-3). Though it is hard, often impossible to articulate the experience of bereavement, the destruction by death of a close, deep and crucial relationship can seem to strike a deadly blow against the very idea that human existence has meaning.

When lives are so intimately interwoven ... when we have invested to much of ourselves, our love, our hopes, our dreams, in a relationship, then the shattering of that relationship knocks away one of the pillars on which our world stands and we are left all at sea, adrift on the waters of chaos" (Gardiner 1997:122).

"I dreamt of you again last night. And when I woke up it was as if you had died afresh. Everyday I find it harder to bear. For what point is there in life now? ... I look at our favorites, I try and read them, but without you they give me no pleasure. I only remember the evenings when you read them to me aloud and then I cry. I feel as if we had collected all our wheat into a barn to make bread and beer for the rest of our lives and now our barn has been burnt down and we stand on a cold wintry morning looking at the charred ruins... It is impossible to think that I shall never sit with you again and hear your laugh, that everyday for the rest of my life you will be away" (Carrington Diaries 12/17 Feb 1932).

It is the fundamental experience of human insecurity and reminds us of all the experiences of being left behind ever feared of since being a child. From it there springs a sense of existential dread, the fear that in the end nothing is solid, all will let us down; that at the last we shall be left totally alone with the darkness (Psalm 88:18). "Death is an abyss of nothingness into which everything falls" (Gardiner 1997:120).

For most people the experience of bereavement is one of chaos (Carr 1985:99). Ritual provides

a focus for ones emotions, enabling us to direct them in a more useful manner. Eliade's (1959:32/3) discussion of the Achilpa tribe demonstrates the importance that ritual action can have in terms of providing order and making sense of the world;

According to the traditions of the Arunta tribe, the divine being Numbakula made a sacred pole (kauwa-auwa), and after anointing it with blood, climbed it and disappeared into the sky. Eliade argues the pole represents a cosmic axis, as it was believed that only the area around the pole was habitable. It in effect transformed an ordinary area of land into a sacred space, a world in which the Arunta people could live. During their wanderings the Achilpa people would always carry the pole with them and travel only in the direction towards which it bent. Thus, allowing them to always inhabit 'their world'/ their own sacred space, whilst continually being on the move. The pole came to represent their communication with Numbakula (or the numinous). "For the pole to break denotes catastrophe. One day this happened and the entire clan were in consternation; they wandered about aimlessly for a time and finally lay down on the ground and waited for death to overtake them" (Spencer and Gillen 1926:388).

Just as the Achilpa people looked to their sacred pole to find order in the world, people look to the funeral to find some order in their world. In their attempts to make sense of what has happened many people look to find a contact with the transcendent. The ritualized actions of the funeral act as the Kaua- Auwa, linking them to the numinous, acting as a guide. As Eliade points out there is nothing to suggest that the stick had any more special power than just lifting ones arms into the air, but it appears the tribe felt imbued with a greater spiritual sense. Just as ritual activity can, the stick offered a chance of connection with something spiritual, a semblance or order.

Grief can become such a huge and amorphous mass may be necessary for one to have something on which to focus. This can be thought of as an attempt at order and a step towards coping. Ritual is a way to take a small sample of our chaos so as attempt to order and process that sample in our own time. By doing this we get to know our grief and chaos a little bit at a

time. If we do not get to know it in some way, the chances are that the pressure of the chaos will spew forth at whatever time and in whichever manner it desires. Doing the sampling work will not stop the grief from coming forth unpredictably but it does dissipate the pressure, much as a release valve in a steam engine does. "Grief rituals give us a way to release the chaos within our system a bit at a time using the powerful resource of our own consciousness" (Golden 1998:32).

Moltmann (1995) describes grief as the reverse side to love. "*Only those who are capable of loving strongly can also suffer great sorrow*" (Tolstoy). This relates to the theological distinction between the love of ones neighbor and love of oneself. One cannot begin to love ones neighbor if one first does not know what love is at all. In this way love can be described as a reciprocal event. Genuine love is more than an alliance for mutual benefit, it is a giving of oneself to another. Thus in many ways when a loved one dies then part of oneself dies - that original seed of knowing love, the archetypal ego. In as much as experiencing love teaches us what love is, experiencing the death of a loved one teaches us what death is. Moltmann explains it thus "It seems to me that with the death of a so-called 'object- of-love' those who do love die psychologically to an extent along with the beloved object...". In grief people come to appreciate that the dead had become integrated into their own life story and a part of themselves had died along with them. People can be said to mourn that part of themselves when remembering the dead. The death is both within ourselves and outside of ourselves, the loss we experience is both of another and of a part of ourselves, because part of us will never live in the same way again.

Klein (1940) holds that the poignancy of the loss of a loved one is greatly increased by this unconscious sense of having lost *internal* good objects as well. She links the loss we experience at that moment to all the loss we have experienced, in this way there could be said to be an archetypal sense of loss present. Toni Morrison (1987:274) in *Beloved* refers to a "loneliness that can be rocked. Arms crossed, knees drawn up; holding on, this motion, unlike a ships smooth can contains the rocker. It is an inside kind - wrapping tight like skin. Then there is the loneliness that roams, No rocking can hold it down. It is alive on its own. A dry and spreading thing that makes the sound of ones own feet seem to come from a far off place". This loneliness,

I believe, can be likened in many ways to the sense of loss one experiences when one is bereaved. It is so physical one can almost rock it and it feels as if it can be held, yet I also hold that it has this archetypal sense of being so bottomless that it can be related to all loss everywhere at every time. "Archetypes begin to operate when individuals are confronted with situations that cannot be dealt with in any familiar or rational way" (Kutek 2000:102). It is clear that the crisis of bereavement is exactly one of these times, therefore the archetypal sense of loss, that amorphous mass that floats around and attaches itself to various situations, can be sensed in a very real way.

Klein (1940) holds, in such a situation, the mourner can feel his internal bad objects predominate and sense his inner world is therefore in danger of disruption. Freud argues one way to deal with such potentially overwhelming sensations is to 'test reality' - "Reality passes its verdict - that the object no longer exists - upon each single one of the memories and hopes through which the libido was attached to the lost object, and the ego confronted with a decision whether it will share this fate, is persuaded by the sum of its narcissistic satisfactions in being alive to sever its attachment to the non-existent object". He believes that the withdrawal of the emotional attachment from the deceased person is the most important factor in grief work.

I prefer to take the notion of testing realities one step further in the light of Klein's notion of reintegrating. Instead of following Freud and thinking in terms of rejection of memories of the lost one, Klein believed that the mourner takes into himself the person who had just been lost, this then enables the reinstatement of the internalized good objects which had been felt to have gone under. "Just as the frightened child has to set up a permanent mother inside himself, the adult mourner has to internalize his loved object so that he will never lose it. Klein uses the example of Mrs A, who in the first few days after the loss of her son, who died suddenly whilst at school, took to sorting out letters, keeping his and throwing the others away. She was thus attempting to restore him and keep him safe inside herself and throwing out what she felt to be indifferent or rather hostile - that is to say the 'bad' objects and feelings.

Parkes (1972) described human beings as multi-cellular organisms i.e. they are groups of living organisms which are closely linked together to form a structure. "Some of the nerve cells receive signals from the rest of the organism but they also receive them from the rest of the world, forming links by which a person is able to make predictions, not only about the behavior of other people, but also about the behavior of themselves (1972:114-5). By observing our own organism and comparing it with others, we come to understand what we ourselves are. Thus when a loved one dies our picture of our self changes, we then experience difficulty in acting appropriately in our relationship with the outside world. Parkes holds that "if I lose my ability to act appropriately, my world begins to crumble, and since my view of myself is too inextricably bound up with my view of the world, that too will crumble. If I have relied on another person to predict and act in many ways as an extension to myself, then the loss of that person can be expected to have the same effect upon my view of the world and my view of myself as if I had lost myself .. external objects may change but it will be a long time before the corresponding changings have taken place in the plans and assumptions which are their internal equivalents" (1972: 114). Thus it can be said that there is obviously an important link between the inner self and the outside world; there is an interrelationship and dependency between the two. Parkes continues ".. identification with the lost person is not just another way of postponing the realization of the loss; it is the necessary condition without which grief cannot end and a new identity be developed. The object is never truly given up; it is made into part of the self" (1972:119).

In my view the processes - that of separation and that of internalization or integration - are important in the grieving process, however I would argue that a lost loved one could not be incorporated without the mourner first testing the reality of their absence, or in a sense giving the object up. This process enables one to mentally accept ones new position in life without the other person. The self changes to adapt to the gap rather than just leaving the wound raw.

"Through tears which in the unconscious mind are equated to excrement, the mourner not only expresses his feelings and thus eases tension, but also expels his bad feelings and bad objects, and this adds to the relief obtained by crying.

This greater freedom in the inner world implies that the internalized objects being less controlled by the ego, are also allowed more freedom: that these objects themselves are allowed, in particular, greater freedom of feeling” (Klein 1940: 125-153).

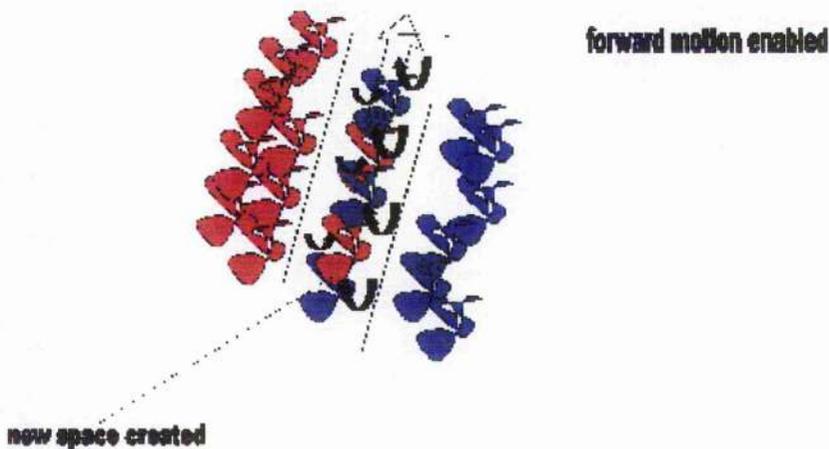
Having pushed the memories to an external place and metaphorically walked around them, surveying them from all angles it is possible to reincorporate them, yet internalize them in a different way.

As I write my Labrador, as large as a brown bear, as soft as a rug, lies at my feet. She is mine. Until five years ago she was my fathers, but I took her when he died. For a long time she was still my ‘fathers dog’ and I tried to care for her with the sale routine as he did, but it was impossible. She and I now have our own unique relationship exercising on footpaths my father had never walked, playing out own games with our own special brand of biscuits. Everyone in the village recognizes her as my dog. However yesterday as she lay by the fire snoring, I suddenly recalled her as ‘fathers dog’, sitting at his feet and a sadness welled up inside me - it was only momentary - we then reverted to our current relationship. It was as if for those few seconds I had placed my father outside myself and looked at him separately - immediately I thought of the dog as ‘mine’ it was as if I internalized both him and her and the hurt of my fathers absence became almost non-existent.” (Daphne Brown).

Instead of them being infused as part of ones internal self they can perhaps be kept slightly separate yet able to inform upon ones thoughts.

This can be pictured thus;

Input from both sides



The children's fairy story of the princess and the pea comes to mind at this point; even with seven mattresses on top of the pea she could still feel the hard round pea. Although there was a great distance between her and the pea, she was still very aware of it, although not entire in touch with what the 'it' was. The princess could be said to have internalized the pea through the bruises she received from it. In much the same way many people once bereaved function in their every day lives in some way aware of the 'pea' in their lives. Although they may have experienced distance, in terms of time, from the loss it is still there informing upon their lives, from within. The bruises they internalized as a result of the loss are still tender to the touch and will always remain so.

Another way of describing this process is through applying the metaphor of the unborn baby⁷¹ in the womb, an image I have used previously;

This image can be used in two ways:

- 1) the baby (or memories / sense of loss) is separate from the amniotic fluid (or mourner)

⁷¹ For Jung death and rebirth are two sides of the same archetype or psychic reality at work in an individual- and in the collective - throughout life.

and yet informs upon it. The amniotic fluid is not merely something the baby floats in, it is the baby's entire world, one which influences it - through the hormonal changes of the mother- and one which it influences through excreting into to, swallowing it and ingesting it. The two are very involved, one cannot know whether the baby appreciates it is different from the amniotic fluid or whether it is so absorbed in its world as to become one with it.

2) the baby is entirely separate from the mother and yet linked by the umbilical chord. The baby (or memory/ sense of loss) is entirely dependant on the mother (or mourner) for its existence, she provides the input to keep it alive. If one looks at a pregnant woman there is no denying the huge affect being pregnant has on a woman - Pregnancy changes women both physically i.e. morning sickness, weight gain and so on, but it also has psychological ramifications; in that from the first day a woman knows that she is pregnant she will begin to picture her child in her minds eye and all of her subsequent decisions will be affected as a result.

The image of pregnancy in itself can also be useful when trying to conceptualize the way we deal with memories of the deceased and how we cope with the loss of a loved one;

Preganancy - Physical	Bereavement - Psychological
- moment of conception; baby informs upon the decisions made by the woman from that day forward.	- moment of crisis; death / loss informs upon the bereaved person from that day forward
- baby kicks in womb and begins to assert its independence.	- 'testing of reality' can be likened to the kick. Mourner starts the slow process of separating themselves out from their loved one, defining in many ways that they themselves are still alive
- birth, once the umbilical cord is cut the mother and baby are entirely separate but the baby id entirely dependent upon the mother for its physical existence.	- memories after a while have become entirely separate from the mourners persona. However they can be likened to the baby in that memoried are entirely dependant upon the mourner to keep them alive.
- the process of birth itself changes both mother and baby pysicaly forever.	- the grief and bereavement process changes the mourner in psychological terms forever.

Bowlby speaks of “reshaping internal representational models” so as to align them with the changes that have occurred in the bereaved life situation⁷². This idea links to a certain extent with Klein, “representational models” are internal images which have developed throughout life and have been affected by a loved ones death. Bowlby however sees a need to *adjust* the “representational models” whereas Klein feels it is necessary to completely disintegrate these internal objects and *re-build* them. I believe, in light of both of these arguments, that it is necessary to not dis-integrate but *externalize* these internal objects and then adjust oneself without them, before one then moves to internalize them again, having gained a new understanding.

How does a funeral help?

Driver argues that “ritual controls emotion while releasing it, guides it while letting it run” (1991:156). The ritual scenario can be used to guide emotions so they remain manageable.

“..the thunderous beauty of the funeral; it was like a street tragedy with spontaneity tucked softly into the corners of a highly formal structure. The deceased was the tragic hero, the survivors the innocent victims; there was the omnipresence of the deity, strophe and antistrophe of the chorus of mourners led by the preacher. There was grief over the waste of life, the stunned wonder at the ways of God, and the restoration of order in nature at the graveyard... [and afterwards they experienced] the exaltation, the harmony, the acceptance of physical frailty, joy in the termination of misery” (Morrison 1970).

The funeral is often seen as the point from which one can move on from after the death of a loved one. There is an definite ‘before’ and ‘after’ sense to the funeral. I spoke above of the importance of externalization, transition and internalization in terms of the memories one has of the deceased, how if this process is enacted then important grief work can be done; it is my opinion that the funeral is of utmost importance because it in someway performs a mini-encapsulation of this process. Van Gennep refers to the three phases present in ritual, the separation, transition and incorporation, these I believe correspond to the three phases outlined

⁷² Bowlby, J. “Attachment and Loss” Vol. 3 Loss Penguin Books Ltd.p94

above.

It is true to say that the funeral is a vital part of the process of separation from, or externalization of, the dead. The funeral is the point when this work can begin, "it is almost invariably a landmark of significance" (Wilcock 1997). The period between the death and the funeral is often experienced as a kind of limbo time, with the funeral being the point at which one can formalize goodbyes and begin to move forward in terms of grief work. "And when it comes the funeral is a milestone of parting"(Speck 1997). Speck points out the importance that the bereaved allow the dead to die, and then to let them be dead. There is, therefore, a need to declare the deceased to be dead through the rituals performed. It is necessary that the dead are laid to rest not only physically but psychologically. Those mourning recognize the irreversibility of the situation in order to move on and in this way having a funeral or memorial service marks this passing away of the old order of things in a very tangent way. This then allows for / enables the externalization process to begin. The funeral service helps us to focus upon the event of our loss, something that is of huge importance if one is to begin to move on. To be able to acknowledge the loss enables one to externalize it. One cannot externalize something if one is not able to accept that it is present in the first place. Rappaport refers to correct cognitive perception of the situation in the process of recovering from a crisis. The funeral can facilitate such. It identifies and isolates the problem. The funeral service is a very tangent 'end', a specific point from which to move on from, a point from which to begin to define the self. In this way rituals surrounding death can be described as internal rites of passage, they help us to focus on what is and what can be rather than only upon what was.

However far the death of a loved one was prepared for, in the case of terminal illness, the time of that death still comes as a shock. It is my opinion that at the funeral those present in effect conjure up the deceased again through their memories, they rebuild them at the front of the church in such a way that they can then lay them to rest at a time over which they at least feel they had some control. The timing of the end can be anticipated, i.e. one can see through the turning of pages that the end of the service is coming, that final goodbyes must be said. It is

almost as if a metaphorical hologram of the deceased was set up, the memories of the congregation are all pooled, each person present in a said or unsaid way places their memories of the deceased at the front, perhaps in the coffin with the body (metaphorically speaking). The deceased could then be described as sitting amongst them as if he were one of the congregation. The memories metaphorically take on a solid form and during the service and as people hear the readings and hymns and they hear people talk about what the deceased was like they can survey them and walk around them. They externalize the deceased. Thus the process of emotional relocation can begin.

The funeral represents a shift from the private language of the individual to a language members of the social group can understand. "There has to be room for the words of another to find place in me, so I will have to suspend thought feeling and order that I see what is being said" (Bowlby). It is important to remember that often the strength of emotion experienced at the time of a loved ones death can make it hard to listen, we can become very internally focused. The loss is at the center of our lives and how we are reacting, however this event is not separate from our lives. Within the group context the person conducting the funeral reminds those experiencing loss to look up and appreciate the 'outside' of their grief. There is a resonating to what is being said, but it is at the center of ones being, as one hears and sees reflections of what is within being shown in the words of others. This can be of huge comfort, and can be the start to seeing ones grief as part of being able to see the loss in a larger context.

Grief work is not just the capacity for facing up to the loss and accepting it, it is more a "saying yes to the shocks of existence, as a necessary way of realizing ones nature as a human being"(Maxwell 1998). This capacity means the development of an ability to see the loss within a larger context, to experience the freedom to act in the light of other possibilities. Many people when they experience loss tend to surrender themselves to the situation and go over and over the circumstances again and again in the hope they find some key to reducing the pain. Thus their world is limited to one of loss -"rather like concentrating upon the bare patch on the lawn instead of cultivating the surrounding area so that what is healthy becomes more healthy and encroaches

on the area which requires attention”(Maxwell 1998). At a funeral bereavement is the central focus, not death itself. Thus the funeral ritual is an attempt to put the need to embrace life at center stage. They do not attempt to change loss into non-loss, they attempt however to get people to lift their heads from the depths of a very personal grief and refocus their center point. Even if this only lasts for an hour or so it can greatly help the individual, to see that there is an outside is often the first step in looking towards the externalization process, which as we have seen is the first step towards the processes of transition and internalization.

Features that need to be prominent in a Christian funeral rite today

- 1) to proclaim the Christian faith confidently and sensitively
- 2) to give space to remember
- 3) to articulate the sense of sin, guilt and failure
- 4) to recognize that actions speak louder than words
- 5) to identify a moment of farewell or committal

(Jupp and Rogers 1997)

If a funerary rite is to be relevant and aid the normal process of grief then it should meet needs on three levels(Ainsworth-Smith and Speck 1982);

- 1) a psychological level - by giving a framework in order to reduce anxiety
- 2) a theological / philosophical level - by which we make some sense and therefore gain some meaning from what has just happened
- 3) the sociological level - through sharing the experience with others and being re-accepted into society with their new status

“The churches liturgy through its pastoral and funeral services gives a faith context to death, whether it be sudden or as the result of illness. The various church services and prayers bring to those who worship through them an increasing understanding of how, as Christians, they might think, feel, act and grow through these particular life crises. In worship all our emotions surrounding death - grief, shock, anger, disbelief, doubt and so on - are brought face to face with Almighty God, and are, in his grace and mercy, and in time, transformed. The ultimate theological test of funeral services is whether they have the power to enable all of this, in the many and varied circumstances in

which they are used”(Horton 2000).

The Liturgical Commission published a new introduction to the new service in Series 2, in 1965, outlining what ought happen at a burial service. It believes we should be aiming to;

- 1) secure the reverent disposal of the corpse
- 2) commend the deceased to the care of our heavenly father
- 3) proclaim the glory of our risen life in Christ here and hereafter
- 4) remind us of the awful certainty of our own coming death and judgment
- 5) make plain the eternal until of Christian people, living and departed, in the risen and ascended Christ”⁷³

Much more is known and understood about the grieving process these days than previously and this therefore places a greater responsibility upon the church to respond these needs now they are known;

The funerary rites provide a formal structure for the unexpected behavior of the bereaved and aims to fulfill many of their needs, it is for this reason that the liturgy needs to be strong - more than just words. It has to be able to withstand the tumultuous nature of emotion in its presence and not collapse under the emotional strain put upon it by the bereaved. It has to be both holding and guiding. Providing a way through the pain and upset whilst also sitting with the bereaved, alongside them in their grief, allowing a time in which to just ‘be’. The funeral provides an opportunity for the death to be publicly expressed. Accepting this finality with the body nearby (perhaps on display) brings an end to people’s lives with the deceased. They formally end a period in their lives and begin to accept the finality of the death. During the funeral the bereaved begin to sever the ties between themselves and the deceased, it is perhaps their first public appearance without the other present. It marks the beginning of the period of adjustment to life without him/her and their movement towards a new state of existence. They gradually become part of a changed social group and at the funeral they are declaring this change publicly. It is clear that emotionally speaking the funeral serves a number of different purposes;

⁷³ Alternative Services, Series 2 1965

- To acknowledge that someone special has died
- To help confirm the finality of death
- To provide a time and a place for people to talk about the death
- To encourage people to express the painful feelings of loss
- To affirm the importance of the relationship shared and now lost
- To begin social support through the grief journey
- To provide a ritual transition between life as it was and as it is now
- To enable survivors to ritualize their feelings - enables us to 'do' something
- To validate the beginning of our search for meaning⁷⁴

It can also;

- Provide a social support system for the bereaved
- Help the bereaved understand that death is final and reinforce the fact that death is part of life
- Help integrate the bereaved back into the community and make the transition of establishing a new life after the death of a loved one easier
- Reaffirm ones relationship with the person who died
- Offer a time to remember the person who died through the sharing of memories with others
- Offer a time and a place to talk about the life and death of the deceased
- Stimulate the search for meaning of life and death
- Provide a time to say goodbye

“Although within the long and varied process of bereavement the funeral occupies only a little time, its significance is disproportionate to its length”(Carr 1994). The funeral can be seen to crystallize the ‘immediate realities’ that surround the death of a loved one. It can also be seen to provide a reference point for the bereaved from which they can work out the sense of their bereavement. It becomes “one of the sets of spectacles through which the dead person is remembered. What shape those spectacles take is important for the lives of those re-integrating themselves into everyday life”(Carr 1994).

⁷⁴ Internet article by Bill Webster *The Purpose of a Meaningful Funeral*

This point is reaffirmed by the *Common Worship* service, as it is very apparent from the liturgical provision, the commended texts included, that the funeral is for the bereaved and not for the corpse. "Bereavement is the focal issue in a funeral, not death"(Carr 1994). An important feature of the *Common Worship* is therefore not only its 'containing' nature, but the fact that the ritual is more or less created by those concerned. Although the liturgy can be seen to provide a framework which may help people see some shape to human existence at a time when it is perhaps difficult to do so, it is still important to remember that those bereaved must be able to make it their own somehow if it is to perform such a function.

How do the *Common Worship* Services Address the Grieving Process?

Sanders identifies five distinct phases in the process of bereavement; shock, awareness of loss, conservation / withdrawal, healing and renewal. "The process is free flowing: symptoms of one phase often overlap those of another phase. We can often get stuck in one phase or another and stay there for a while. Sometimes we may well be moving into the next phase and then something, a sudden memory, a crisis, a new fear - causes us to regress for a time to the previous phases"(Sanders 1992).

The *Common Worship* funeral service and the commended texts can be seen to address these five phases;

Shock and Disbelief : The services encourage people to stay with the dying person until the point of death. Commended material exists for ministry at the time of death. The prayers both in the various commended texts and the funeral service itself acknowledge feelings of shock, denial, confusion and anger in the prayers for those who mourn. "O God who brought us to birth, and in whose arms we die, in our grief and shock contain and comfort us", "Do not let grief overwhelm your children or turn them against you", "Merciful God, .. you know the anguish of our hearts. It is beyond our understanding and more than we can bear".

Awareness : The *Common Worship* service speaks aloud about the reality of death and many of the prayers are very particular about the person who has died; “Lord we come into your presence to remember N”. Such prayers help the bereaved to acknowledge not only the death but also their emotional reactions to it. More attention is given directly to the coffin in the *Common Worship* service than previously in the ASB, people are encouraged to come near to it and name the body within it. At the reception of the coffin the words “we receive the body of our brother/ sister N” are used, which also helps those bereaved to make the connection between the body in the coffin and their loss⁷⁵. Viewing the body is often a helpful part of the mourning process, “it is difficult to avoid the reality of death when looking upon it”(Klander 1990).

Conservation / Withdrawal : The *Common Worship* services make it clear that grief is normal.⁷⁶ A prayer at the start of the service reminds the gathered congregation that even Jesus was moved to tears at the grave of his friend Lazerus. The service also allows for prayer for oneself and ones own needs, for example “Lift us from anxiety and guilt”, “Heal our memories of hurt and failure” “We are angry at the loss we have sustained”. Some of the prayers address anxiousness, loneliness, isolation, despair, guilt and anger “Out of the depths I cry to you” “spare them the torment of this guilt and despair” “draw near to us as we walk this lonely road” “Give your strength and presence in those daily tasks which used to be shared”. Also by mentioning tears in some of the prayers it is almost as if permission is given to cry “We cry to you O Lord, you gave *him/ her* to us and you have taken *him / her* away” “Be with them [the mourners] as they weep” “Help us through to tears and pain”.

⁷⁵ It has been proven that mourners often have difficulty accepting the reality of the death if there is no body or ashes. The death somehow seems unreal. This proves the importance of drawing a connection between the body and the loss. “If no viewing and no coffin are present at the memorial service, expressions of sympathy may be less natural because the sense of unreality interferes with acceptance of the death. Klander (1990)

⁷⁶ The *Alternative Service Book* has been criticized for over-emphasizing ‘resurrection-joy’ at the expense of natural human feelings of grief and perhaps doubt and confusion. Theologically it places a far greater emphasis upon Christian joy and resurrection hope. The service has also been attacked for addressing only those who are Christians rather than those who may be on the edge of the Christian community. *Common Worship* tries to address both of these criticisms and is arguably more inclusive in nature, as well as being more aware and more sensitive to the emotions people go through at the time of death, whilst at the same time it still attempts to be an ‘appropriate witness to the resurrection hope.

Healing and Renewal : Provision is made for prayers upon returning home after the funeral and much more importance has been placed upon the annual memorial or anniversary services and prayers than previously. Optional prayers are offered that can be used later on in remembrance of and thanksgiving for the departed. The intention of the new services is that liturgical provision is made for “every stage of the journey from dying, through death and the immediate days before and after the Funeral, to a memorial service and annual memorials and anniversaries”(Horton 2000). The new *Common Worship* funeral service is based upon the notion of a journey - from the earthly to the heavenly. It begins by celebrating the humanity of the deceased before moving, through readings and the sermon, to thinking about heaven, in the prayers of the committal and the commendation.

The *Common Worship* Funeral

The structure of the *Common Worship* funeral service is thus;

The Gathering

[Sentences]

Introduction

[Prayer]

[Prayers of Penitence]

The Collect

Readings and Sermon

Prayers

Commendation and Farewell

The Committal

The Dismissal

The structure of the service is very similar to the structure of the Holy Communion Service. This is the normal structure of the majority of the *Common Worship* services. It is hoped that this will “help make Church of England worship more nearly ‘common’ worship”(Horton 2000).

The Gathering

“The sensitive gathering of the Funeral Community is essential”(Horton 2000). In the circumstance of a funeral the various grieving needs of those present can best be addressed by creating a sense of fellowship, albeit for a short time. This sense of community, one in which everyone has assembled to say goodbye to someone important to them, can be a tremendous emotional support.

In the past the norm has been that those present at the funeral know one another, nowadays this is not always the case. In the past the funeral was simply one stage in a series of shared expenses that took people through the grieving process. There was more of a sense of community in previous times, and although sudden death is by no means a new phenomenon, in the past more people died surrounded by their friends and relations. A funeral used to be, more often than not, an occasion where one remembered someone one saw as they died, or at least soon before. Nowadays, this is no longer the case. As a result of this fewer people arrived at a funeral without having had any involvement with either the dying or the mourning up until that point. “Today the funeral has to carry so much more of their shock and grief.. sometimes the death is not real for them until they enter the building and see the coffin” (Jupp and Rogers 1997). This means that more is demanded of the minister and of the liturgy. “The funeral liturgy can be understood as the ritual recapturing of the moment of death for those who were not there” (Perham 2000:196).

The service will be relatively short and those present will tend to go their separate ways at the end. Furthermore, due to weight of grief surrounding the occasion it is normal for people to be in a fairly solitary state of mind. It is true to say, therefore, that there is no longer a community that gathers to mourn. There are individuals who need to be drawn into community for a short time to mourn together. There is no longer a shared expectation, faith or culture. The minister needs a liturgy that can provide these and in a relatively short space of time. To do this the minister needs a liturgy that binds people together, gives them a sense of direction and a

common cause.

If the task of the minister is to bind the group together at the beginning of the service, then the theological issue at this point is whether that group of people can say "we are the body of Christ" or whether the group is simply made up of spectators watching the minister perform a rite in relation to the dead body. The service has a latently Eucharist structure, which means that there is a slight emphasis upon getting right with God at the beginning of the service, an idea that may well wash over a non Christian attendee at the funeral. It is clearly more feasible and possible to behave more 'eucharistically' when those involved in the funeral service are all or mainly Christian, and therefore perhaps part of the local Christian community, it is more complicated however when the group are not.

Horton holds that it ought be a consideration of church councils that it ought be the thing to do to encourage members of the local Christian community to attend funerals where most of the congregation may otherwise be visitors. I am unsure as to what she feels this will achieve. If the directions are clear enough for all to follow there should be no need. I doubt whether the experience would be markedly deeper or more spiritual because the service was attended by a number of Christians who may not have even know the deceased. There presence may even be perceived as threatening by those in mourning. They may feel they are about to get the hard sell on the religion front. If, after all, the focus of the funeral is upon the bereaved they may not appreciate a number of people who did not know the deceased attending the service, most particularly if they are not Christian themselves. Although it is possible to see the pastoral and possibly even evangelical function of members of the church community attending the service, I would be wary of extolling its benefits.

However having said that, the Gathering itself attempts to create a Christian community focused upon God in the presence of death and it is important to remember that the funeral service is still thought of by the Church as an act of worship. "The mourners, or at least some of them, have gathered to express their faith as well as their feelings" (Horton 2000:41). "In Christian eyes

there would be no purpose in the meeting were it not 'in the name of Jesus Christ who died and was raised to the glory of God the Father'(Horton 2000:41). The pastoral introduction to the Gathering explains the purpose of a Christian funeral in fairly straightforward language, the Sentences, a well-established part of the Christian funeral tradition, proclaim the note of spiritual solemnity as well as of Christian hope.

It is at this point that the minister may receive the coffin, although it is entirely possible that the coffin may have been received earlier in the day or on the day before the funeral. The reception of the coffin may be very simple although the reception can include;

words as the coffin is received at the door (the text is provided in the appendix)

a sprinkling at the door (again the text is provided, but there are also points later in the service where the coffin can be sprinkled)

the sentences of scripture as the coffin is brought in

the coffin led in by a minister carrying the paschal candle, which then remains burning

by the coffin

a pall placed over the coffin by family, friends, or other members of the congregation (with texts provided)

suitable symbols of the life and faith of the departed person placed on or near the coffin (texts are provided for placing a Bible or a cross); this may happen later after the opening prayer or hymn. (Perham 2000:198/9)

Although some choice must be made from the above list, it is important that some action is retained, "...for words, especially this early in the service, may hardly get through to the congregation".

The Introduction

When everyone has taken their place the minister then welcomes those present and which reiterate the purpose of the funeral. This approach is new as previous services have begun with prayers straight away. Such an introduction is designed to put the congregation more at ease: the

important thing is that the funeral service then becomes more personal and particular to the deceased person, these words also tell the mourners briefly what is going to happen taking some of the unknown out of the situation.

One or two prayers may be said at this point asking that God encourages and comforts at the time of grief. These prayers are intended to address the grief, distress and shock of the mourners. A hymn may be sung, and a brief tribute may be made. The 'tribute' is the first official liturgical mention of a practice that has been part of many Christian and secular funerals for some time. The tribute has a note which says ;

Remembering and honoring the life of the person who has died, and the evidence of God's grace and work in them should be done in the earlier part of the service, after the opening prayer, though if occasion demands it may be woven into the sermon or come immediately before the Commendation. It may be done in conjunction with the placing of symbols, and may be spoken by a family member or by the minister using information provided by the family. It is preferable not to interrupt the flow of the Reading(s) and Sermon with a tribute of this kind.

The reference to a tribute and the placing of it at this point in the rite suggests that the acknowledgement of the deceased's earthly life and achievements might most appropriately come early in the service so the biblical readings and the sermon can move on to proclamation of Christian hope. Some ministers, however, prefer to interweave the tribute with the sermon, especially at the funeral of a practicing Christian. The life of a Christian witnesses to their personal faith and trust in God, and so has the power it draw others to faith. Whatever the positioning of the tribute, the encouragement to speak it aloud mercifully places humanity in the context of Gods providence and love. What is important is the belief that the 'last word' on a person is always God's word.

Prayers of Penitence

The option for Prayers of Penitence follows, these can simply be the words of the *kyrie elesion* but they could equally be a longer form. Penitence is a natural and necessary part of Christian

worship, though it has not previously been customary to include penitential prayers in the Funeral service. As the funeral service focuses very much upon human frailty it is not unnatural for the situation to make us aware of our own shortcomings. The opportunity for penitence and reconciliation is therefore appropriate. Also funerals remind us of our own mortality and that inevitably raises questions for us as to ones own readiness to face Gods final judgment.

The Collect

The Collect is one of the essential texts, but it may be transposed to the end of the later prayers. The opening prayer is about the mourners, the Collect is about the whole church in general and the deceased in particular. The set collect is a prayer made in the presence of death, for a strengthening of the faith of the congregation that all who have died in the love of Christ will share in his resurrection.

The Resources section includes two alternative collects, both of which provide for the deceased to be mentioned by name. The first alternative simply adds the name of the deceased to the set collect. The second alternative collect prays for the benefits of Christ's saving passion and glorious resurrection for all, in company with the deceased person and all the faithful departed.

Readings and Sermon

The rubrics require that there be a psalm or hymn, a reading from the New Testament and a sermon. It is preferable if relatives read the Readings, but if this proves to be too much emotionally for them, then lay members of the church could equally undertake the role. There is a choice of about forty biblical readings, along with an encouragement to use Psalm 23 or another Psalm. The minimum here is for one biblical reading. It is not unusual for families to request that a secular reading be used at the funeral service in addition to the biblical readings. Christian opinion is divided as to the appropriateness if setting biblical and secular readings alongside one another. Of the preference is to use only biblical readings at this point in the service, suitable secular readings requested by the family could be placed earlier in the service, perhaps at the time of the tribute, or possibly at the end as a kind of epilogue.

The purpose of the mandatory sermon is to proclaim the Gospel in the context of the death of this particular person. This may also be an appropriate moment for the minister to recount a story about the deceased. It is important that the minister remembers their role as a spokesperson at the funeral; "They speak for God to people who are hurting and fragile and need to do so with a sure combination of sensitivity and confidence" (Perham 2000:200). The minister must say enough so as to allow people to still have their own thoughts and feelings and yet he still has to say the words for them. "It is a demanding role, speaking for them from inside their grief and speaking to them from outside in the name of God and of the Church" (Perham 2000:200).

Prayers

The rubric indicates that 'a minister' will lead the prayers of the people; this may seem to exclude an ordinary lay member of the congregation from leading the prayers, in some circumstances however the presiding Minister may decide that a lay church member might be the most appropriate person to lead the prayers.

A suggested usual sequence of prayers is listed, allowing the leader the freedom to construct a set of prayers appropriate for the particular context.

- Thanksgiving for the life of the departed;
- Prayer for those who mourn;
- Prayers of penitence (if not already used);
- Prayer for readiness to live in the light of eternity.

Commendation and Farewell

The Commendation of a prayer of entrusting the deceased person to God's merciful keeping. When the committal is to take place elsewhere, and in the presence of a smaller number of people, this prayer can also be seen as a focus for the end of the funeral service in church.

There is one primary text for the commendation, however, a good variety of alternative texts of entrusting and commending is given in the resources section. This section includes appropriate forms for special circumstances, Commendations for the funerals of infants and children are

included within the Resources for the Funeral of a child.

The Committal

The Committal immediately follows the Commendation except when it is to take place elsewhere. In these circumstances the Commendation would be followed by the dismissal. The texts of the Committal are very similar to those in *The Alternative Service Book*. The two sets of verses from Psalm 103 are retained for use immediately before the Prayer of Committal. The second set has been slightly revised to be more inclusive ('we' instead of 'men') and it has one additional phrase that represents the full extent of the *Prayer Book* sentence.

Three forms are given for the Prayer of Committal; the first is appropriate at the burial of a body, the second provides for those occasions when ashes are buried in a churchyard or cemetery at some later date, the third for a committal at the crematorium.

The form of words to be used at the crematorium before a later Burial of Ashes, encourages us to see the cremation as a preparation for burial.

The note relating to the Committal indicates that it should be used at the point at which it is needed. Interring the ashes as soon as possible after the cremation is commended, whether in churchyard, cemetery, vault, mausoleum or brick grave. Scattering or sprinkling ashes are not authorized anywhere. Ashes should be buried in church yards, not scattered (Canon B 38.4b). Most church yards have Gardens of Remembrance or special areas where ashes are interred. If there is a family grave, this may be a possible site for interring the ashes of a close relation. The burial of ashes is seen as the equivalent of burying a body and would normally be expected to take place as soon as possible after the funeral service. In some circumstances it is pastorally more helpful if the cremation takes place first and the 'main' service held when the ashes are buried. The *Common Worship* provisions also enable this option.

The Dismissal

One of the perceived weaknesses of the *ASB* was the absence of a proper dismissal at the end of the funeral service. The *Common Worship* service however sees the dismissal as an integral and important part of the service. To that end the choice of several well known texts and prayers is

given and the use of other 'suitable prayers' is allowed. It is suggested that, if it has not been used earlier, the Lords prayer might be said immediately after the Committal. The *Nunc Dimittis* or 'God be in my head' might be sung. This formal and easily perceivable ending to the service is of utmost importance to those grieving in terms. The end of the service is the point at which they all have to go out and face the world in their new and ultimately changed status. If there is no clear ending to the service this 'going out to meet the world' could potentially leave those bereaved with a dissipated sensation and little or no ability at that point to find a handle on the circumstance or a place from which to situate themselves.

Symbols

"Symbols, signs and gestures are potent attributes of liturgical prayer. The new services indicate a developing understanding within the Church of England of the power of symbols, either to underline or to undermine the worship we offer"(Delap 2000). As Delap goes on to point out, an awareness of the power of visual symbols is of the utmost importance, particularly in today's society which places so much value upon effective visual media⁷⁷. The fact we place such importance upon the presence of a congregation at a funeral is a clear symbolic sign that man is not 'an island' - "we live and die, grieve and rejoice, not as lonely individuals, but as members of one fellowship, the body of Christ" (Horton 2000:135). *Common Worship* encourages lay participation in all areas of the service emphasizing this notion of the body of Christ.

When the coffin enters the church it may be sprinkled with water in remembrance of the deceased persons baptism. "The minister is encouraged to be generous with this sign of baptismal blessing and may like to use an evergreen branch possibly taken from the family garden. The minister, or a family member or friend might cover the coffin with a white pall, a cloth that signifies baptismal life in Christ. Other Christian symbols such as a Bible or cross, if possible the deceased persons own, may be placed on the coffin. A large lit candle, possibly the

⁷⁷ The growth of symbolism is a noticeable feature in the new *Common Worship* services. However, in an age of "increasing Bible illiteracy in the churches and a loss of confidence in the word of God the flourishing of symbolism is a cause for concern. Because of general ignorance the meaning of symbols cannot be taken for granted and people may easily be misled or deceived" (Churchman 1998:112/2).

Paschal (Easter) candle, carried by a server or member of the pastoral ministry team, could lead the coffin into the church and stand at its head throughout the service, a sign of the presence of the risen Christ”(Horton 2000).

All these symbolic acts are suggested as possibilities in the *Common Worship* Funeral provisions. Accompanying prayers and sentences are also given which may help open up their meaning to the mourners. “The meaning behind the Christian symbols is unfamiliar to many people today; some will find this unfamiliarity threatening”(Delap 1999). Provision is also made within the *Common Worship* service for ‘suitable symbols’ of the life and faith of the deceased person to be placed on or near the coffin. This has caused consternation among some who question the propriety of this, the point of these symbols however is to affirm the Christian life of the deceased and not their earthly life and as long as this is remembered and retained as the focus there is no reason it should cause a problem. Frequently people may want to place personal gifts of love and farewell on the coffin, such as cards or in the case of one funeral I attended for a young child, his classmates placed toys and pictures that they felt had special significance in the coffin. “It is probably wise to be generous responding to peoples grief but to encourage good practice wherever possible and discourage anything that obviously weakens, trivializes or even undermines the symbolism of Christian faith (Horton 2000:136).

Continuum

The *Common Worship* services focus more than the ASB on the notion that the rite is part of a continuing process. The link with baptism is stressed; Notes on receiving the coffin into the church suggest the coffin is sprinkled with water. The use of water is much encouraged because of the link with baptism and the idea of a journey. Delap points out that research has shown that in the minds of many people “new birth begins a new process which does not end in death, and this is achieved in close conjunction with a verbal formula of baptism” (Davies 1997:19). “Thus is important to follow through the journey from birth to new life in Christ and on to eternal love, through a coherent liturgical provision” (Delap 1999). Therefore although the funeral service can stand in its own rite much commended material exists in order to support those bereaved,

this includes;

- Ministry at the time of death

-Before the Funeral - at home (on hearing of someone's death, the evening before, for those unable to be present at the funeral), at church (receiving the body, a funeral vigil), on the morning of the Funeral

- After the Funeral - at home, the burial of ashes (authorized), the Memorial(the Sunday after, the Annual Memorial)

-The order for the Funeral of a Child

-Prayers and other Resources

Challenges to the *Common Worship* Funeral

The Churches' Funeral Group called upon the Church for increased co-operation with professional involved in funeral and bereavement support "in light of the growth of consumer consciousness [which] means that people have higher expectations of professional support and service"⁷⁸. People who attend the funeral will want to honor the life of the deceased and have space in which to honor the life of the deceased and have space in which to recall their own memories of him / her and time to say goodbye - they will expect the service and the leader of the service to do this well. This involves the clergy taking time to talk to the family and get some sense of what the person was like. Each funeral must seem as if it is special to the pastor and not 'just another funeral'. Furthermore people nowadays are far more aware of how well they can see and hear what is going on. Technological advances in our society in general have raised people expectations of audibility, visibility and professional presentation in church as much as anyway. People will not be satisfied with a service in which they could understand little from the muffled and distant figure at the front of the church.

The funeral service is central to the churches ministry at the time of death, and much is expected of its liturgy from many directions;

⁷⁸ Churches' Group on Funerals *Guidelines for Best Practice and Good Funerals* General Synod Misc 539

- 1) the Church of England as a whole expects its formal worship to reflect its ethos and identity as an established church
- 2) the local churches want a liturgy that is pastoral sensitive and has relevance in a whole range of circumstances. Local ministers have pastor hearts but busy lives. They will appreciate a service that responds well to the particular pastoral needs of each death, but which also makes links with the care in the community in which lay church members may be involved.
- 3) The bereaved want a service that is personal to them and helps to make sense of their loss, whilst at the same time remains essentially and recognizably Christian. The Church of England does not have a 'fixed liturgy', that liturgy is not these days that other impromptu words may not be spoken within worship (Horton 2000). That is the whole ethos behind the new *Common Worship* services. The service offers many opportunities for the minister or the congregation to say a few of their own words.
- 4) There will be a wide range of people gathered to pay their respects at the funeral; wide ranging both in geographical and spiritual terms - this must be taken into account if everyone is to benefit from the service
- 5) The deceased person themselves may have contributed to the planning of their own service. Some clergy encourage members of their congregation to plan ahead and fill in a 'My Funeral' sheet. Sheffield Cathedral, for example, promotes such a practice. The majority of the time these requests will be straightforward such as for a favorite hymn to be sung or a certain prayer to be included.
- 6) Funeral directors have their own expectations of the funeral service, as it is in effect a part of the overall service they offer. If these expectations are not lived up to then they may decide to take 'business' elsewhere.

Individually these all offer challenges to the church in its response to their needs, collectively however the response required is huge. "If this service cannot bear the very great expectations of all who look to the Church of England to bury its dead, then the whole package will be found wanting"(Horton 2000:123).

Will the *Common Worship* funeral provision meet the needs of our society?

The new *Common Worship* material serves existing liturgical, spiritual and pastoral needs very well indeed. "It opens up and resources new possibilities for worship, prayer and pastoral care.."(Horton 2000:159).

One of the distinctive, and perhaps most valuable, features of the *Common Worship* funeral provision is the abundance of choice that is available. This choice is not only terms of the texts usable in the service, but also in the ethos of the whole occasion. Whilst it is still possible to create a relatively standard funeral service, for those who want it there is the potential to create a special service for each individual who dies in the parish. It is the purpose of funeral rites to give us something to say, when words have failed us, the funeral liturgy should take over and offer us a way in to express something of our grief, and offer some hope. On some occasions one is glad for the words of a liturgy for without them one would be speechless.

The funeral service retains the use of biblical texts at its center, these have been carefully chosen in an attempt to reach those who are mourning the loss of their loved one. There is a wide variety of scripture suggested, and it is the intention that the passages set the proclamation of the resurrection hope in the contexts of the fragile nature of humanity. "Between them the readings acknowledge the apparent futility of death encourage us in a right remembering of the departed, teach us to hope in our future gathering together in Gods kingdom, and encourage us to the continuing witness of a Christian life" (Horton 2000). The choice of biblical texts and prayers is far wider in the new *Common Worship* service than in either the ASB or the Book of Common Prayer, thus the person leading the service should be able to find suitable texts for most circumstances, however if he / she feels that they cannot there is nothing precluding the use of other appropriate passages of scripture or prayers from other Christian sources. The main focus of the *Common Worship* funeral is to meet the needs of the bereaved and provide them with a service that is both exactly personal and yet at the same time retains the sense that it is still part of the wider family of the church.

There has been a very positive response to the *Common Worship* funeral service from the

experimental parishes; “after eleven years of ministry I at last felt that I was officiating at a real act of worship, instead of just a funeral” (Rev. P. Louis 2001); .. “[the service] is concise, clear, but still beautiful. All in all a great improvement” (Rev. P. Louis 2001). Of utmost importance in funeral and bereavement ministry is to create worship that honors God and expressed Christian faith but is also true to the person who died, it seems as if the *Common Worship* provision has achieved this balance. Most of the adjustments made to the service involved paring down language and the ‘omission of jargon’. Importantly however the name of the deceased was inserted in three additional places. “Certainly in the draft that went to General Synod in July 1998, there could be no doubt that the Church was acknowledging the person who had just died. The service had come a long way from the one contained in the Book of Common Prayer, which removed any direct reference to the particular person who had died in 1552, instead it made its prayer for a more general association of all the living and the dead in Christ (Cocksworth 1997:7).

“The *Common Worship* funeral material offers a clear structure, a good choice of texts and a variety of opportunities. It has the potential to serve the Church of England well through the early years of the twenty-first century”(Horton 2000:169).

Chapter 4

Conclusions

The funeral service marks the most terrifying of all transitions faced - that from life to death. All rituals mark the shift from one emotional state to another⁷⁹, the funeral, however, marks a very physical change, one over which man has no control. This transition links back to the transitional period from the womb to life itself⁸⁰. There remains the strong sense of the immutability of the situation. Ritual activity can firstly be seen to have the function of acknowledging the psychological danger of such transformational states and secondly helping to contain the potential outpouring of emotion yet without having to deny or repress it. This renders the emotional transformation safe and non-threatening.

The liminal period is emotionally the most fraught within the linear progression of the ritual. It is the point at which we experience most anguish and insecurity, it is the point at which we redefine ourselves. "Ritual work is soul shattering, while it is happening the defensive husk and shell of the personality are broken ... personhood and it's meaning are altered" (Shorter 1996:110). This is why it must be thought of as transformational rather than simply transitional. If Turner's⁸¹ linear interpretation of ritual action is combined with a circular interpretation of ritual, support can be found exactly at the liminal moment. The ritual arks round upon itself and acts as a shelter:

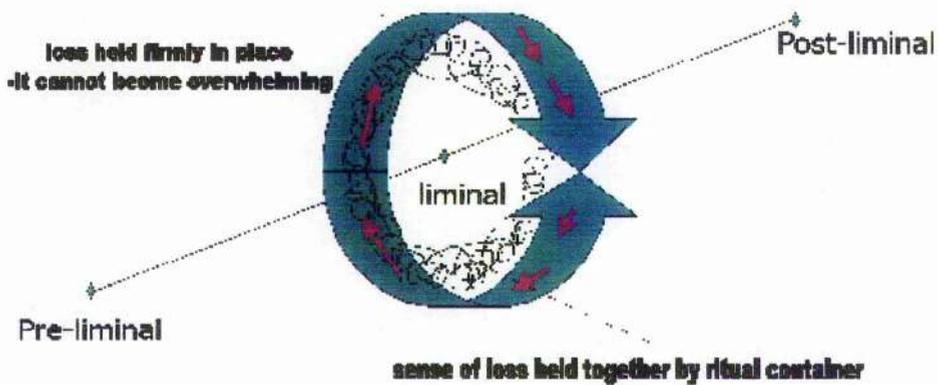
⁷⁹ The wedding service, for example, does not change anything physically for a couple; the same two people are in the same relationship. Many people say that their relationship changed when they got engaged and the marriage service was more of a formality. The commitment had already been made.

⁸⁰ Wasdell (1995:5) argues that from the foetal perspective the one and same ground of being is both giver and destroyer of life. "The Great Mother on whose existentially unbounded womb the foetus has been nurtured, protected, resourced, carried and cradles, becomes at full term the constricting, polluted, poisonous and persecutory world in which the baby experiences the rising stress of hypoxia and malnutrition. The contrast in signals is profound, even before the neonate is propelled in rage and terror beyond the boundaries or tolerable pain through the crushing vortex and eviction of the birth canal itself"(1995:6). Unconsciously, if we follow Wasdell's line of thinking, it is entirely possible that we make the link between the traumas of birth and attribute it also to death. It maybe that his is the reason we try to return to the womb like status of ritual in order to have some control over our rebirth.

⁸¹ I use Turner's interpretation only as a spring board, moving away from his culturally based interpretation of the liminal moment to focus more closely upon the psychological, interior world.

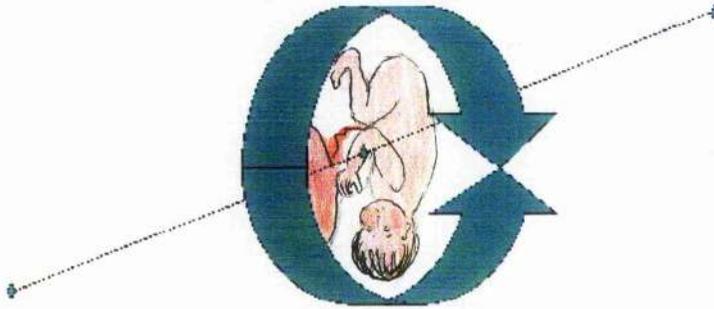
Ritual thus acts as a container, and the protection this action provides enables people to confront emotions rather than hide from them. Such confrontation is an important part of the grieving process, as it allows people to accept fully that enormity of the loss in their life.

Containing action of ritual



The quality of time experienced within the sacred space provided by the ritual is quite different from that in the 'real world' of consciousness. There is a sense of timelessness, stillness, eternity which cannot be reached in everyday life, "the present is a never-ending moment, a still point with the dimension of infinity. It is like a still picture, taken from the moving video of time" (Wasdell 1995:11). Ritual adopts a womb like status, we become "frozen in fetal consciousness" (Wasdell 1995:12), our environment is idealized, safe, secure, one in which we feel totally omnipotent and yet in reality we have no control over.

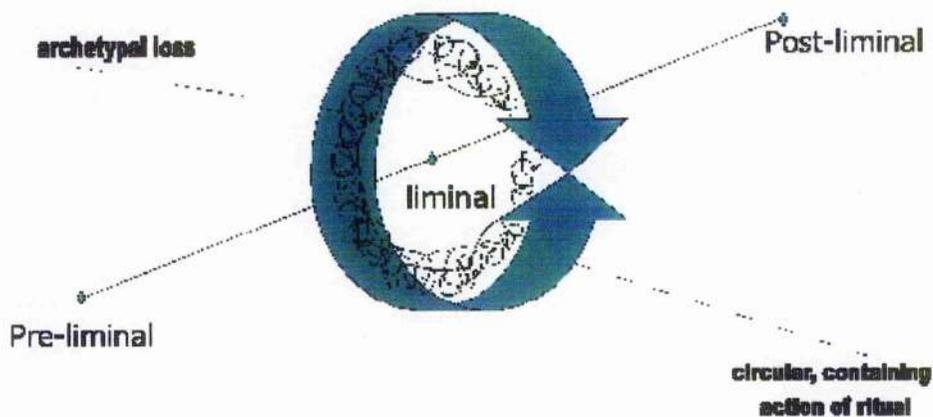
Ritual as a womb



However, this model can be taken further. Within this womb like state it is possible that we connect with grief and loss that we have previously experienced yet not completely worked through. Grimes holds that funerals have the capacity to facilitate grief, “Funerals help us find our grief, even if that grief is left over from some other death and our mourning is for someone other than the deceased”(Grimes 2000:279).

There I was, sitting in the front pew of at church at a hospital memorial service. I had just preached a homily on the 23rd psalm: “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want”. I had done a play on words and centered in on the phrase ‘How shall I not want?’ How shall I not want the one so dear to me? How shall I not want everything the way it once was? The soloist was singing the song by Boyz to Men and Maria Carey “And I know you’re looking down on me from heaven”. At first my tears were just lightly wetting my face. Suddenly it was like a faucet let loose and I had to work hard at choking back my own sobs. I sat there, trying to figure out what was happening to me I thought to myself “I must be more burned out than I thought, or I haven’t cried enough with the people I’ve stood beside and been with in death, or maybe I am really over projecting here, as if someone I really loved died...” Yes, the church was full of 500 people grieving people, but it wasn’t their grief I was feeling it was mine. Not unlike many of those present at the service, I just sat there feeling sad and confused, exhausted and a little afraid. All quite normal emotions for someone in grief” (Hilliard 1999:227).

Archetypal loss found within ritual



The funeral of Lady Diana Spencer is a prime example of the way in which a funeral can facilitate grief that is not solely for the person that has died. What Diana's funeral did for millions of people was to "take them to a place where it hurt, even if it did not need to" (Grimes 2000:276)⁸². "Even if you did not know the woman, even if you couldn't have cared less, it felt good to feel so bad watching Diana's funeral. It was good to grieve with the world... Princess Diana's death did not distract people from pain, it conjured pain" (Grimes 2000: 280). The debate surrounding the 'collective mind', here demonstrated in the face of grief, is far from new. Gustav Le Bon, writing in 1896, held that the crowd or mass had this collective mind and that mind was not governed by rationality but by various unconscious instincts⁸³. However, this collective, or multiple, concept can be thought of in two ways. Esther Schor (1994) argues for a cultural rather than psychological concept of mourning as a process that generates, perpetuates and moralizes social relations among individuals. "Mourning rarely, if ever, occurs in isolated

⁸² People all over the world, but most especially in Britain, laid claim to the grief and felt they had a right to display it. No one decided to create a sea of flowers at Kensington Palace or to shower the coffin with flowers as it passed; these were spontaneous reactions, but they arose out of a deep sense of need, "a need to find symbolic tokens to express our inner feelings" (Coleman 1999:112). People displayed grief and shed tears all for a woman that few had met, but whose image had played an important part in their lives.

⁸³ The Crowd : A study of the popular mind (1896) Le Bon popularized views which were current in Europe and which became central to the inception of social psychology as well as the psychoanalysis of groups.

instances, a single loss may generate multiple instances of mourning as well as manifold of sympathies that lessen in intensity – but stops where?- as one moves further from the wrought center of grief” (Schor 1994:4).

The funeral and grieving surrounding the death of Lady Diana Spencer demonstrates multiple instances of mourning in two ways; 1) The funeral allowed people to connect with each other in their grief, there was a sense of overwhelming sadness and bereavement, the focus of which lost importance, the simple fact it was there was enough. People discovered an intimate collective connection in the face of her death; 2) The funeral also allowed people to connect with far more personal grief, previously experienced yet not fully worked through. Diana was clearly the object of many transferred feelings, feelings that had little to do with her own life and death and everything to do with the lives of her public”(Johnson 1999:23). There appears to be continual transference between the collective experience and the deeply personal experience of grief, all of this is bound up and contained within the space created by the ritual. The two are mixed and feed off one another. “The loss of an individual appears to parallel a universal tragedy of loss” (Kear and Steinberg 1999:6)⁸⁴.

It appears that a funeral service has the potential to allow people to connect with pain on an unconscious level, whilst enabling them to focus upon their conscious grief. This poem by T.S. Elliot, in my mind, describes this sense of things being too deep within the psyche that they are not immediately available or apparent within ones conscious.

For most of us there is only the unattended
Moment, the moment in and out of time,
The distraction fir, lost in a shaft of sunlight,
The wild thyme unseen, or the winter lightening

⁸⁴ Huntington and Metcalfe (1979:182-3) discuss the death of a King, claiming that such an event readily lends itself to become a symbolic paradigm for our own deaths and the meaning of death itself, “the royal funeral, effigy and corpse become a highly condensed set of symbols directly representing every one of the deaths of all the people of the realm” (Huntington and Metcalfe 1979:183).

Or the waterfall, or the music heard so deeply
that it is not heard at all, but you are the music,
while the music lasts. These are only hints and guesses,
Hints followed by guesses; and the rest
Is prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action.
The hint half guessed, the gift half understood, is Incarnation
Here the impossible union
Of spheres of existence is actual,
Here the past and the future
are conquered, and reconciled.

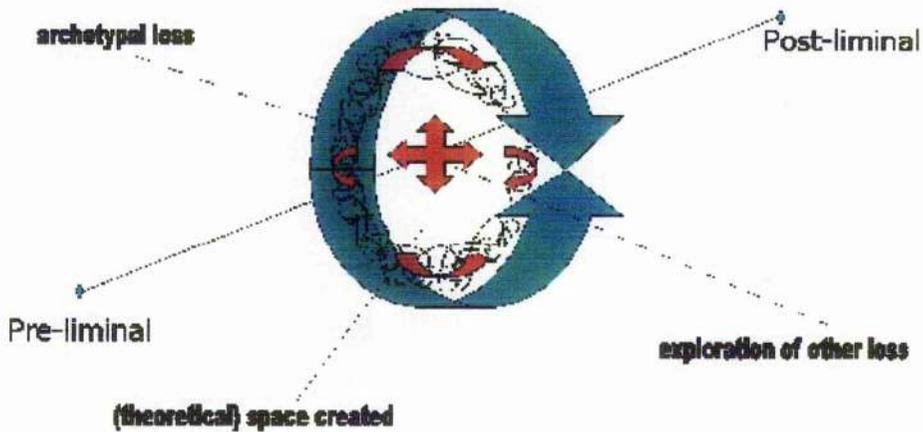
If the ritual is to enable us to connect with grief that is either unknown or insufficiently dealt with, it is important to own or internalize the rite. To internalize a ritual is to situate oneself in relation to the act. After the initial shock of death it is important that the person grieving has the opportunity to reinterpret the self in relation to the events that have happened. Through the funeral one remains mindful of the loss that has just occurred, this allows space in which one can work through any unresolved issues and begin to come to terms with the actual fact of the loss. "Mindfulness is about attending to what to what is happening in the present moment without altering or distorting it" (May:1995:35). By staying with 'what is' other things can arise. If we remain attentive enough to the matter in hand then we can drop through our conditioning and experience those things that arise from our core.

"It was as if I had been walking on top of a green house - I could see shapes of things beneath me but I could not reach them or feel them until the glass broke, and I fell down into that which was below" (Miss C 1999).

The funeral ensures people remain mindful of the loss that has just occurred but it also gives the opportunity to connect with all other loss experienced. In the grief work encountered for that particular loss, other losses may well up from within. The archetypal sense of loss can be connected with and explored in more depth. The ritual context prevents connecting with this

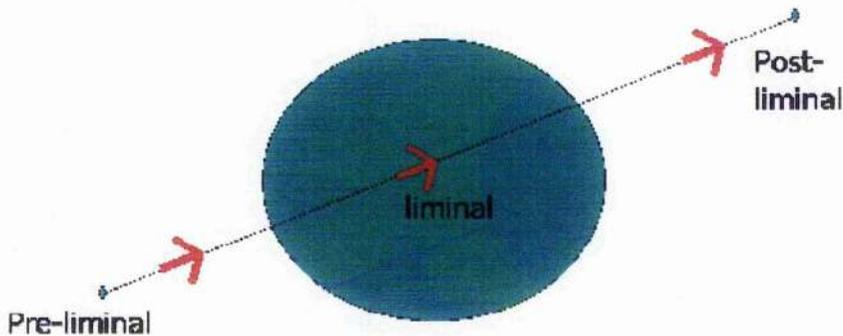
archetypal force from being too terrifying.

Types of loss potentially explored in ritual



In saying all this however, it is still essential to appreciate the linear progression present in the ritual process. Although the stillness provided by the liminal moment is of utmost importance, the forward movement provided by the progressive action of van Gennep' model has equal status. This enables one to progress along the linear pathway also present in the ritual and emerge the other side a new person.

Forward processual action of ritual

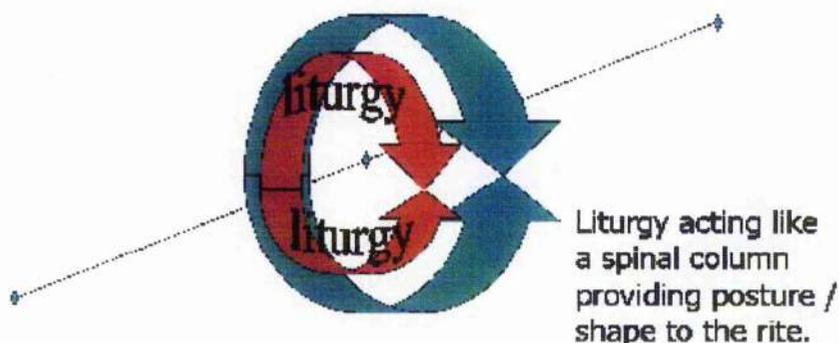


Thus ritual acts in such a way as to promote psychological growth, by easing a difficult transformation from one emotional state to another. In acting in a protective way the ritual facilitates a deeper self re-interpretation than possible outside the realms of ritual. Security can be found in knowing that one will have ones emotions contained. The idea that ritual acts in a progressive manner can also provide security in the knowledge that one will not end up stuck in a motionless vacuum unable to move beyond certain emotions. In entering ritual one is always aware that there is light at the end of the tunnel. It is not simply a dark chasm that one enters.

The liturgy of the *Common Worship* funeral can be viewed as the tangible part of the theoretical structure explored. Firstly the concrete nature of the written words can help those grieving to realise the containing action that ritual provides; Secondly, the *Common Worship* services also demand input from those bereaved, thus enabling them to own the rite; Thirdly, the fact words are easily followed and contained in a book or handout means that one can focus upon the emotional element of the service. It does not matter if one loses ones place as a result of becoming too deeply involved in ones thoughts, for the flow of the service will continue

regardless. This gives greater freedom for the congregation to connect with grief both known and unrealised. The flow, the ceaseless turning of pages, and progression through the rite in a physical sense is upheld and, to an extent, enforced by the liturgy. In the case of *Common Worship*, the liturgy can be thought of as the spine of the ritual. For this reason it is of utmost importance that it is strong enough to hold the rite⁸⁵.

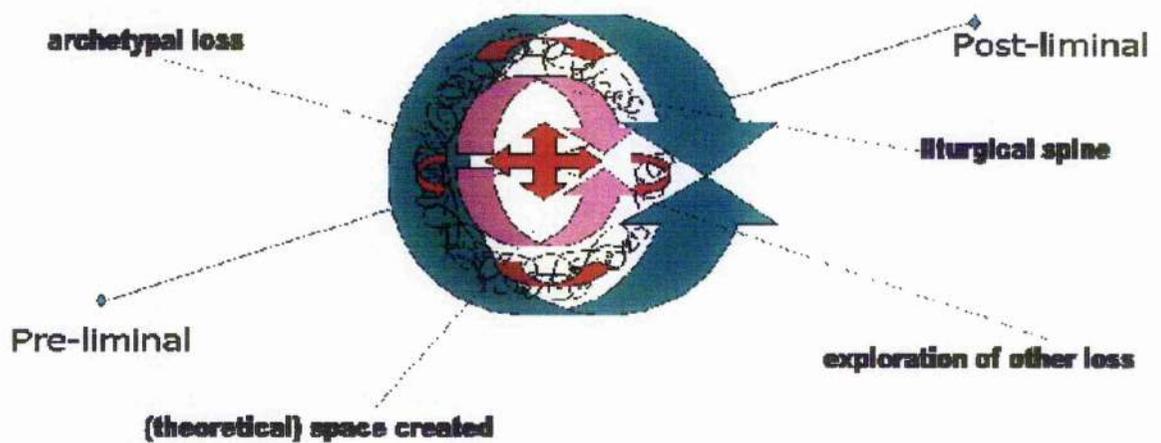
Liturgy forming a spine



Incorporating all of these ideas the final model of ritual can be pictured thus:

⁸⁵ However, in saying this it would be interesting to question what the repercussions would be if the liturgical input thus described were to be absent. One has to ask whether this model is dependent upon the liturgy. Is it in fact the liturgy that arcs over the top of the ritual, having the containing action instead? It would be interesting to research the effects of non- liturgical ritual upon this model.

Theoretical Space Within Ritual



“like any rite of passage, a funeral erects a safety net, allowing participants to fall - but only so far. After that, the net of ceremony yanks up, just short of hitting hard ground at too high a velocity” (Grimes 2000:234).

instances, a single loss may generate multiple instances of mourning as well as manifold of sympathies that lessen in intensity – but stops where?- as one moves further from the wrought center of grief” (Schor 1994:4).

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