

develops this idea), whose messages depend on the meta-communicative premises of the ritual frame itself. I will return to the matter of 'liminality' in the course of this paper.

Therefore, the ritual-clown – an ambivalent figure of danger and enticement, gravity and hilarity, solemnity and fun – appears within a frame of messages about the sacredness, the truth, and the authenticity of experience. This matrix of contrasting (and clashing) attributes is crucial to the appreciation of affinities between the ritual-clown and the ideas of "process" and of "boundariness," on the one hand, and the affinities between deity-figures and ideas of "anti-structure," on the other. The paradoxical placement of the ritual-clown is also significant to the understanding of how these opposing sets of affinities are resolved through the sequencing of particular rituals.

Previous studies of the ritual-clown, with which I am familiar, have the following feature in common: with one major exception (Hieb 1972), these studies try to pinpoint how clown behavior, within ritual contexts, contributes to the ongoing, mundane, social order. With two partial exceptions (Crumrine 1969; Hieb 1972), these works are not concerned to uncover how clown activity, within ritual, actually makes such rites work, in both organizational and symbolic terms. In other words, if clown activity is present always in certain rites, then such behavior is integral to them. Therefore, a parsimonious explanation of such behavior should look, first of all, to the composition and texture of the rite itself. I am not suggesting here that rites are necessarily self-reflexive: but they may be, when viewed as an additive sequence of symbolic meaning, in which each additional ritual phase adds to the likelihood that the overall rite will attain the kind of outcome it should have. This is, of course, a central point in the work of Turner (1969), Leach (1972, 1976: 33–36, 77ff.), and others. I would not say that clown behavior, in ritual contexts, does not have important cognitive, sociological, and cultural consequences, for the conduct of mundane life, for we deal with different levels of signification. But I am stating that the ritual-clown contributes to the working of those rites, in which it is situated. To find if this may be so, the sequential ordering of the rites themselves must be examined before summing the clown in ritual as a figure which, for example, simply enables persons to behave or to think in otherwise forbidden or repressed ways.

In this vein, Honigsmann (1942) suggests that the ritual-clown reduces the tension and anxiety generated by sacred aspects of life: through harmless burlesque the awesome and frightening is rendered familiar and known. Charles (1945) maintains that the ritual-clown helps to concretize otherwise unconscious psychological tensions by bringing them to conscious thought. Steward (1930) argues that the content of ritual-clowning reflects the cultural interests of a given people, and hence, one would think, reinforces such concerns. Crumrine (1969), who provides a useful summary of the above studies, argues that the comprehension of routinely-accepted aspects of culture is enhanced when individual cognition is 'aroused' and when attentiveness is heightened. Then, seeing social structure in atypical combinations makes ritual-learning more effective by focusing on solutions which have cultural value.