

FOREWORD

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Cultural Anthropology: Edith and Victor Turner, *The Poetics of Discovery of Self and Other*.

Edith Turner, developing her joint work with her late partner Victor (Vic and Edie), is already among the most influential researchers and teachers of social and cultural anthropology in the twentieth century on both sides of the Atlantic and in the wider world. Her autobiography stands alongside and even surpasses in its long-term significance, those of Levi-Strauss and Margaret Mead. Readers will find in it both an adventure story and the story of adventures across the world.

Vic and Edie were also amongst the earliest of the small group of anthropologists who aim successfully at *knowing* rather than merely *knowing about* the people with whom they lived and studied, as well as having genuinely shared in their daily lives. Above all they showed through their creative partnership that learning about others goes hand in hand with learning about oneself. Anthropologists studying their own home societies in Europe and in the U.S.A. adopted the slogan of *making the normal, strange*. Vic and Edie, not without a struggle, accepted the practices of those they studied—strange as they might seem to outsiders—as at once normal and valid as well as deserving of respect. They took them as seriously as those of anyone else, a far cry from the dismissive diaries of Malinowski. Edie here charts the shared life of herself and Vic's development from a premature hippie style with links to the British artistic and literary *Bohemia* of the thirties, through anthropological training and radical communism, to orthodox Roman Catholicism, and then on to a humanist Catholicism—the acknowledgment of diverse spirituality. This becomes for Edie a small

“c”—catholicism in the broadest sense that follows the spirit where it moves. Edie, once converted and received lovingly, but loyally, like many other thoughtful intellectual Catholics and pragmatically alert lay people, became critical of the politics of Vatican and Church Catholicism while still deeply embedded in the practice of the faith in a wider, yet more basic, context. She does not hesitate to condemn the adoption of patriarchal and hierarchical techniques by various Popes, historical and contemporaneous, by the Vatican and the organized Church at the expense of the poor and the peaceful, and not least, of women. Although she was critical of some pronouncements of former Cardinal Ratzinger, she will surely take more kindly to his first Encyclical as Benedict XVIth on the subject of love—“*Deus Caritas Est*”—and on its opening statements (see below) which in an important sense Vic and Edie prefigured in the trajectory of their own lives.

The book chronicles how the Turners formed, with their parents and their offspring, their friends in many societies across the world, their colleagues, and their students, an ever dynamic and always changing but perduring team. They, within this one, intimate, but often widely dispersed human milieu, and in many diverse cultural environments, produced for themselves and made available for others, constructive escapes from bureaucratic and oppressive communism, from hierarchical alienating churchiness, as well as from dehumanizing formalistic scholarship within academia, social science in general, and anthropology in particular.

First, however, as Edie explicates, they had to experience, like the protagonists of *The Magic Flute* and Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, not merely dark days of the intellect but also dark nights of the soul. Edie chronicles these and even illustrates the journey with a wealth of expressive photographs (as we know and enjoyed Vic doing elsewhere with poems and lectures, literally dancing and singing to share experience of spirit, mind, and body). She does not disown the experience, the example, or the goodwill of either the comrades who shared with them the frustrating bureaucratic distortions of mid-twentieth-century communism, (see page 66) nor the Cathedral and Church status-obsessed formality of class-organized ceremonial, rather than the true rituals of shared faith. That includes the sometimes disembodied, even body-rejecting, Anglicanism in which she was, however lovingly, raised. The book begins and ends with visions of the English town of Ely and its cathedral that, as she reveals in the final chapter, provided a lifelong backdrop to her dreams, waking and sleeping, achieved and frustrated.

Together Vic and Edie, a partnership continuing to this day long after Vic’s passing, raised the idea of participant observation (and

indeed of team learning) to heights and depths that most anthropologists never achieve. Even before they came together, they were both people of broad religious and literary culture in their own right. They gradually, as their studies progressed across the world, became literate in several world languages. Victor died of a second heart attack in December 1983 at a relatively early age of sixty-three.

For more than 20 years into the beginning of the twenty-first century, Edie has carried on, sustained by colleagues and friends as well as interlocutors and co-participants in rituals who became friends and colleagues themselves. She has never been totally alone but always also in the spirit of, and with inspiration from, her abiding love for her family and friends, and her memories and dreams of Vic. This is as evident in the grand hotels of academic conferences as it is in humble homes whether huts, igloos, tents, or villas.

The book is titled in reaction to Joseph Conrad's ambiguously pessimistic projection of his own darkness onto a supposedly mysterious other. It acknowledges that Africa, while not necessarily the ultimate source of the Turners' enlightenment, was the continent in which their shared experiences crystallized into their mature key concepts of liminality and *communitas*. It was there that the material and spiritual shape of their future analyses of their own and others' ritual and their feelings and experiences took shape and was confirmed by Edie's return in 1985 to an independent Zambia, thirty years later. Key moments in Africa are condensed in Edie's account of a literal meeting of hands across the bounds of race that leads to the possibility of meeting of minds (on page 62) and the prediscovery of "actuality" (see page 71).

The book is a very personal but theoretically and empirically informed memoir centered on the life of Edie herself, alongside her family and close friends and collaborators. In its wholehearted embracing of both spiritual and dramatic experience as real and legitimate, and indeed often overlapping, it is part of an important and possibly expanding trend in American, and hopefully world, anthropology, centered on, but not confined to, the Society of Humanistic Anthropology within the AAA. It has its parallel also in other AAA sections including, not least, medical as well as critical anthropologies to my direct knowledge, and no doubt elsewhere.

It is not, however the kind of autobiography based on diaries or letters and other documents that aims to tell it historically, exactly, in strict chronological order as it was. She realises that her truth might vanish if she did not recognise, if she had not at the time, a particular present as embodied in several pasts and the future, however uncertainly it is glimpsed.

One biographical note of a more formal kind has been published (and exists in greater detail in a dissertation) with Edie's collaboration and that of many of her friends and colleagues (see Matthew Engelke 2004 in Volume 10 of *History of Anthropology*, pp. 6-49). It is rather Edie's own interpretation of her life, as she sees it looking back from the time of writing, self-consciously and, I believe totally honestly, seeking to make sense of her experience.

It is legitimate for a reader, who like myself, shared a miniscule proportion of her life events (mainly in Manchester UK), to feel from time to time, "it was not like that at all" but that is not to say she is wrong, merely that the same events had a different impact on me or on other participants. Such differences of view, stimulatingly lively and conflict-producing, kept all of us, despite partial gender segregation, awake and alert to novelty especially in the intellectual (and sporting) milieu of Manchester. In fact, they paradoxically confirm the aptness of her overall intellectual and emotional stance.

Atheist anthropologists are on the whole surprisingly (or at least, it seems so to me as, archetypically, a virtual-secularist but somewhat observant Jew) and considerably less tolerant of the religious in the modern era than the religious are of the secular. I feel after long association and interaction with Catholics and Jews, that both categories allow themselves an almost but not quite authorized, questioning agnosticism despite the fulminations of priests and rabbis. It is only the totally *EX-* of both religions that enjoy at once both their new-found undogma and, negatively and often inaccurately, the dogma they have deserted.

Although, at the time when I first met Vic and Edie, I had long since refused the personal invitation of Raji Palme Dutt, president and Comintern representative of the Communist party, to join the party, I was already committed to the left through pre-WWI Bundist and pre-WWII communist family tradition and had been a recent member of the Zionist Ma'pam Party that I had joined at Cambridge. Vic and Edie had just returned from Africa and I had returned from rural Wales to work on our Ph.D. degrees. I had in fact, earlier been excluded from the West Indies on suspicion of being a security risk. I shared reading Mgr. Ronald Knox's newly published translation of the Vulgate Bible with Vic during the Suez and Hungarian crises of 1956, went with Vic to the cinema to see—and being Vic, to analyze—the film on the Coronation of the Pope. I also accompanied Vic on visits to Moss Side to try, against party policy and the personally communicated directives of the same Palme Dutt, to get black comrades to organize their own branch to escape the embarrassment of tea and sherry party-branch meetings in white middle-class intellectual Didsbury, with

their policy urgings which often seemed irrelevant to the working class as a whole, let alone to its "black and colored" sections.

The general thesis of the book will perhaps not at first appeal to many, perhaps even most, anthropologists. But any who start reading it will be gripped by the well-told story, and the genuine and shared experiences recounted will, at least for many, open new vistas.

Edie considers her (upper?) middle-class childhood in Ely (creatively revisited with her poet daughter, Rene, in the last chapter 16), weaving together recollected and reinterpreted experiences of inclusion and exclusion at home and at various boarding schools, with the older generation and with servants and the "lower" orders. She recalls discrimination against her in the family and especially the cutting short of her education compared with that accorded to her relatives. She discusses the dynamics of rebellions and rejections, and the well-meaning avoidance of genuinely experienced religion by the religious who tried to make her accept a morality based on God's will. She now recalls its presentation, modified perhaps, in the days before the impact of modern mass communication, by their class and educational status. She remembers the occasional experience of *communitas* and the experiential characteristic of liminality, which she sees as the central concepts of Vic's and her own thinking. Later she traces her part in the discovery of this to the actual and felt warmth of her family's kitchen. Without excessive nostalgia she recaptures the paradoxical unity of families and servants and the sense of *communitas* based on difference that it engendered which, despite its popularity in film, museum display, and television reads so strangely today even to literate British and Americans (pages 25-26). She begins also to sketch out the links between this and Wordsworth's and other Romantic poetic insights about nature and the way that spirits are perceived in many different cultures. In later chapters George Herbert becomes a greater influence. She was also influenced by Bernard Shaw's feminism, Bergson, and Blake.

(In Jewish North London and at an Anglican, so called "public" Highgate School, I shared all these influences plus D.H. Lawrence, four or five years later, thanks to an inspired English teacher and Sir Allen Lane's Penguin Books!) At the age of eighteen Edie fled to London and her communist elder sister Helen, and helped work for the revolution, as she now sees, ironically supported by her Conservative party councillor mother and physician father. Then in 1940, at the time of Dunkirk she found herself in the Woman's Land Army joyfully working on the land with animals. Like Lucy in Wordsworth's poems (but still alive) Edie "Rolled round in earth's diurnal course with rocks and stones and trees."

When her brother Charlie, a conscientious objector at Keble College, Oxford, was drafted into a non-combatant section of the army stationed nearby in Berkshire, she moved to Oxford to be near him. She worked as an under-gardener at Lady Margaret Hall turning flowerbeds into vegetable patches. Perhaps this was good training for her later activity as an anthropologist when she and Vic turned earthy material Rhodes-Livingstone vegetable patches into flowerbeds of sociological spiritual understanding (a transition from Daryll Forde and W. Allan, agronomist cooperators with the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, to the Celtic Romantic, Alwyn Rees), without their ever losing their awareness of the intimate connection between them.

The same brother introduced her to his "hippie" bohemian mates including fellow communist, poet, and "conchie" (draft objector) Vic, who was literally an immediate hit, *un coup de foudre*, even before they had touched each other. The relationship developed rapidly and soon involved life long friend, John Bate, and both their circles, including Vic's mother (and even through visiting his old church, Vic's boyhood mentor, an Anglican mystic known as "Padre"). As a teenager, Vic had an "actuality" vision of the death of the old man as it was taking place far away. Edie is reunited with her siblings and her own mother. They are all politically and poetically active and their earthy occupations, as well as their literary and spiritual leanings, make them feel linked to both working class and intellectuals. Blake's roaring spirit and Burns's rich bluntness (like Vic he was a "heathen of the heather"), replace Wordsworth's *intimations*. This is reinforced by Violet, Vic's actress mother with an enthusiasm for Ibsen and Shakespeare. Vic himself had read Jung and Freud and already had a considerable poetic output which he declaimed to his lover, soon to be wife, and the mother of Freddie and then Bobby. After describing Vic's dark but "anti-wastelander" (his own term for his rejection of Eliot, Pound, and their ilk) poems, Edie writes "he himself was a flat-out character; in a sense he was out of control, his consciousness had escaped from him, it was there ahead of him like the *arutam* souls of the Jivaro Indians flying out ahead of their bodies over the battlefield. Vic had no side, no 'dignity,' no 'manner,' no self-consciousness or masking of his real self, although he loved acting. I don't think calculating types ever realised this about Vic as long as he lived." (46)

The story of their early love, like good wine, needs no verbal bush to be displayed on its behalf in this introduction. Like their whole life together, before as well as after Vic's early death, and like the aspirations of the embodied faith they both espouse, it is a dynamic blend of tears and laughter, poetry and prose, the earthbound and the sublime. It emerges as the united essence of their lives and their works.

Before the birth of their first child, they briefly shared a cottage until Vic was “posted” 80 miles to the North, had an accident and was hospitalized and then sent to Rugby, where they had a meagre cottage. Freddy was laboriously carried on foot but *in utero* to, and eventually born in, an Emergency Medical Service Maternity hospital. After the newborn had spent his early months in chests of drawers in several hired rooms, Edie reluctantly gave in and moved to share the drawing room in her mother’s house at Ely with her sister Helen and her baby. Helen spotted a gypsy caravan (shades of Augustus John!) for sale for £25 in the *Ely Standard* and Edie had nearly enough money from her Land Army savings to buy it. With the help of “liberated” navy rum, the price was reduced and after hair-raising near calamities the caravan came to permanent rest minus one wheel on the banks of a canal where, with the help of Vic’s army mates, it provided Vic and Edie with a shared home and a birthplace for Bobby in February 1945. Meanwhile Vic read the life of Toulouse Lautrec and Edie looked at the pictures. Edie had a prolapsed uterus which made for difficulty in the four mile walk to Rugby for shopping with Bobby in the pram, while Freddie, because she could not carry him, had to struggle behind.

A major change in their outlook came when they discovered Margaret Mead’s two Pelican books *Coming of Age in Samoa* and *Growing up in New Guinea* by chance in a Rugby bookshop, followed by Radcliffe-Brown’s *The Andaman Islanders*. They realised that anthropology might offer them, if not poetry, at least close contact with living ordinary people, whom they wouldn’t be required, as many other social scientists seemed to them to be, to look down on from a great height. This led them to a decision to live in what seemed the nearest thing in Britain, the Scottish highlands and islands with which Vic had ancestral ties. Vic visited Raasay, which he soon felt he understood and where it was possible to find a farm but which Edie’s health was not up to. This project ended in Edie’s terms as a “mere proto-hippy dream.”

After the war, Vic decided to abandon his part-completed degree in comparative literature at UCL as too academic. He negotiated, with the Registrar, a fellow Scot (*and* whisky drinker!), to change to a full three-year undergraduate course in anthropology with Daryll Forde. This was to be followed by a year of archaeology and hopefully a Ph.D. in Africa. Daryll was, of course, as she says, an “argy-bargy down-to-earth Welsh materialist geographer (like H.J. Fleure before him and Emrys Bowen after him at Aberystwyth).”

The idea “that ritual arose from social structures” characteristic of “the British School” introduced a break from the interaction of earth and spirit in favor of the earthy, and did not appeal to Vic and Edie,

despite the fact that they were, of course, active communists. Worsening conditions of life in London and the birth of their daughter Rene forced Edie to live near Vic's mother in St Leonards-on-Sea. Vic wrote endless essays but Edie was then not able in either training or opportunity to write. "My hands were not for that, though my ears were for listening." Political systems were seen as central but Max Gluckman, who offered Vic a studentship in Manchester and eventual field research in Africa, was moving towards process rather than structure. [He had already shown this tendency in 1942, before even going to the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, in his Zulu Bridge Study (see my and other papers in Evens and Mandelbaum 2006).]

Their African adventures begin dramatically. In Edie's own words, "Nothing went according to plan." (83) Not the least failure of plan was that Vic had at first to go on his own to Africa, leaving Edie and the children behind to follow. Edie describes provisioning and her mother's help. Vic arrived in Capetown and was met by Max's "party friends" [all RLI fellows were met by Jack Simons and his wife, Ray, who were indeed CP members but also, respectively an academic lawyer (later Manchester's Simon Professor and Professor of Sociology at the University of Zambia) and a distinguished historian. They were both recognised as experts on so-called native affairs in Southern Africa]. Edie read Doris Lessing and realistically considered the extent to which she and Vic would be able, as they wished, to escape the standard Southern African household pattern (for example, with domestic servants, who often in towns lived either in township squalor or in a hut at the bottom of their employers' garden) and live like Africans. She achieved a lot in this direction but still realistically doubts their more than partial success.

Max suggested a change of research area in Zambia by cable to Vic in order to facilitate an eventual change to the analysis of ritual. Most British anthropologists following Durkheim, as interpreted by Radcliffe-Brown, were in fact interested in ritual but in a way that suggested its secondary status to structure and even economy. The difference between the final position of earlier scholars and Vic and Edie, is that the former, although they respected the ritual of others, and often came to understand it in some depth, nearly always saw it as totally other to themselves. These predecessors observed it deeply and sympathetically but from without. This was, perhaps especially true for many Jewish anthropologists who either adopted a deeply-held cultural secularism or a loosely-worn cultural religious observance of their own. Welsh Methodists or orthodox Roman Catholics, especially converts, also took this approach. The French scholars Marcel Griaule and Germaine Dieterlein, however, were culture

heroes to both Gluckman and Daryll Forde. Their long and detailed study of West African Dogon cosmology, as Malinowski's initial experience in the Trobriand Islands had been in WW1, was made possible by wartime internment in their territory. The International African Institute under Forde's direction instituted a major project to build on Griaule's work throughout Africa, which the present author, encouraged by Gluckman who appointed Forde as his doctoral examiner, sought unsuccessfully to join.

Eddie and the children eventually reached Cape Town and were blissfully reunited at Lusaka railway station, where the lateness of trains was then and later often measured in days rather than hours. They met Clyde Mitchell and collected the famous RLI census forms, They set off to meet the Ndembu, still with the perception from Max that social structure came first, a view that they were to show to be oversimplified in the extreme. Indeed they turned it on its head first in Africa and then, as Eddie graphically describes among many different people, in many languages and above all, in their own lives.

When they arrived back in England, they found Manchester at the peak of its most dynamic period. The idea of social process had vanquished its more staid and stolid structural legacy and life was exciting but fraught politically, emotionally, and intellectually. As Engelke points out in his chapter referred to above, the wives of the department were not much included in its proceedings at the center even on social occasions, let alone in seminars, or rather the almost continuous seminar which went on in Max's office and other offices in the Dover Street building, in local "Caffs," and in the informally annexed TV room of the academic staff club across Oxford Road. The early mid-fifties were also a time of national and political turmoil with fears of nuclear war.

Eddie was still trying to come to terms with the emotional, spiritual, and intellectual impact of her Kajima spiritual experiences that was enhanced by a dream in Manchester at this time, and she managed, although in partial isolation, the first draft of what was, decades later, to become *The Spirit and the Drum*.

She also became involved again with the Communist party which pressed her to accept her choice by the local left-wing business tycoon, Lord Simon of Wythenshawe, to lead the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament organization of a major Manchester regional rally. This was frustrated by a breakdown in her health accentuated by problems concerning the oppressive nature of the local schools to which she was obliged to send her children. She suffered a deep depression, not helped by Vic's increasing, obsessive concern with African ritual. He was trying to link his analysis with his own past

mystical experiences and still satisfy the demands of Max and his down-to-earth colleagues and friends. He flirted conscientiously with an attempt to use Freud as a way of achieving this but settled on a dramaturgic performance approach.

“Okay, Freud could show the polarization of a symbol—but that too was Marxist: the idea was that the sensory part of a symbol gave driving force to the socially-required duty of virtue whose commands were embedded in the object, an object like a cross or a flag or an eagle clutching arrows.” Vic and Edie characteristically embarked as a possibly productive distancing device, on a local experiment of looking at the varieties of religion available nearby their home suburb. They explored it in Stockport, a smaller industrial city next to Manchester. After going to Anglican and Presbyterian churches and a Quaker meeting house, they set out to attend a Unitarian church that unexpectedly turned out not to be in session. They had engaged in much soul-searching and textual reading including Roman Catholicism, so when they found a Catholic church Mass nearby, they went there instead and were struck by its similarity in feeling to their African experience.

They soon decided to take instruction. “This wasn’t research any more, this was serious.” The whole family was received after six months, their instruction reinforced by Vic’s reading of Catholic novels and other imaginative and scholarly writings and the discovery that his army comrade in bomb disposal, who was to become a life-long friend, John Bate, had also recently become Catholic.

I too remember and was naively surprised at the resentment that arose in the department; close colleagues who had worked closely with them for months, even years, turned aside when they encountered Vic and bitterly blamed and criticised them, both in their presence, and behind their backs. Two of the critics, in fairness, came from and were marked by communities riven by sectarianism (one had also studied one such) in Holland and Scotland respectively. Paradoxically and unsurprisingly, Vic and Edie’s conversion, followed by hostile semi-isolation and especially the joyful birth but tragically very early death of their child Lucy, greatly restored their closeness to each other and added to its depth. Abandonment of birth control had led to the birth of Lucy, who had Downs Syndrome, and who only lived for five months. Edie, controversially but not unreasonably attributes both the disability and death of her child to the Sellafield nuclear disaster since there were indeed “many thousands of abnormal births in Manchester during the period of the late fifties” although the causes remain unproven and may well be multiple.

In the first of what were to be their many experiences of pilgrimage (especially for Edie after Vic’s death), they journeyed to Aylesford, the

ancient monastery of St. Simon Stock, the earliest English Carmelite House in Cobtree, Kent, said to be the oldest village in England. The Priory had recently been restored by Father Malachy Lynch. Their visit seems to have been another turning point to an improvement in their lives marked by the normal birth of Alex nine months later. Intellectually they began to restudy Kierkegaard together and especially his study of the "Sacrifice of Isaac." "It was the opening of one of the doors." Its paradoxes enabled intellectual development and the deepening of the concepts of liminality and *communitas*, just as the study of St. Augustine's *City of God* later led to the key discussion of Edie's concept of Power 1 and Power 11. These books focused their discussion (118-123) of what religion in general and Catholicism in particular meant to them at that time. They now moved into their own liminal state in Hastings, betwixt and between the U.K. and the U.S.A.. In the course of time they transferred to Cornell in the U.S.A., paid a return visit to Africa (Uganda), and started a new partnership in the study of pilgrimage. Edie graphically describes in the "Hairpin Bend" how their intellectual, religious, philosophical and even geographical lives coalesce in their move to Cornell and the United States. Their apprenticeship, and their trials by fire and water, were to an extent surviving. Their poetic muse was now Gerard Manley Hopkins and they emerged into the light, through lived, not merely observed, liminality as the master/mistress of their craft to continue to learn, like other mature scholars (and artists), by doing and teaching and above all by conscientious submission to the explanatory power of theoretical concepts. (See Power I and Power II, 93)

At Aylesford they had been on pilgrimage primarily to consolidate their learning. They now began their study of pilgrimages where they could still learn but also focus on the research that would bring understanding to pass on to students. They started at the most visited Christian pilgrimage site in the world, Villa du Guadalupe in Mexico, and its story about how the Blessed Mother and a simple peasant made the haughty bishop take notice. Edie describes how, on her insistence, they became determined to study the living religious practice of ordinary people which they felt most scholarly anthropologists ignored out of a kind of intellectual snobbery.

This they pursued to Ireland inspired by Vic's admiration for the Welsh Celtic scholar, Alwyn Rees. "Again," writes Edie, "the trip turned out to be a quest for spirit consciousness, though at the time, we thought we were researching ritual." Visiting Knock, the place of an apparition of the Blessed Mother during the potato famine, Edie vividly imagines herself as contemporary witness of the historic event and visualizes and reports her experiences as if she were present (as

in a sense she was) at the contemporary conversation around the apparition of the Lady and St John. She comes down reluctantly from this high, which reminds her of her experiences in Africa, to describe the modern scene and moves on to discussion of miracles over the years. After her first two visits, she notes that the list of miracles was hidden away by the Church "for fear of fraud." The conflict between the feelings of the people and official reactions of the organized church were very apparent and displeasing to her.

Having relived in vividly imagined actuality and described the original events in Knock, Edie describes over several pages her own physically lived experiences with the companion she made in 1971, Bridget (Bidgy), how they met, and their shared experiences. She discovered that by taking communion before confession, she has departed from local custom.

"When I went into the [confession] cubicle I confessed to having pandered to the scientific coldness that accompanies anthropology. I have not had to do this since, [!] though I confessed to attacking the church." She also put herself up as a representative penitent for English behavior in Ireland over the centuries. She describes many more of her experiences in Ireland and how she and Vic over the years struggled to make sense of Knock and their other Irish experiences in order to understand the spirit and significance of music, femininity, and ultimately the Eucharist.

After moving from Chicago to Virginia, Edie took a Master's degree in English with a focus on symbolism. They moved into a period of intense experience and traveling, intellectually and often spiritually, with a group listed (p. 125), and all of whose names, Edie writes, "glow for me." From this *communitas* many books emerged. She adds the culminating name of "Roy Wagner, strange and visionary." During these years, lasting until Vic's passing in 1983, they experienced in depth, four religions, and became aware of more. They went to Anuradhapurna, a region sacred to Buddha in Ceylon, with Ranji Obeyesekere. Edie was able through eighteenth century and her own poetic imagination to compare the Bo tree sacred to Buddhism with the English ash, pagan and Christian. They visited Israel in 1980 where she was reunited with the foster brother who as Jewish refugee had shared some of his life with Edie as a child. Edie deepened her knowledge of the Hebrew Bible and especially the poetry of the Psalms, and the spiritual role of trees within them. They met and talked with Coptic Christians and Edie observed, from the women's gallery, ultra-orthodox Jewish students chanting the Talmud and studying its meaning. On a second visit to Israel, with Barbara Myerhoff in 1983, the latter advanced the anthropology of shared

experience that has been the mission of Edie's and her own later work. On their return Edie even struggled with the Zohar, the mysticism of which she sees in the context of several other forms of mystical spirituality within and outside Catholicism. Finally she visits a family of Sufi Palestinians and prays and chants with their women-folk, while the boys learn Koran in school and the men chant the Koran in the mosque next door. She summarizes this chapter as a collection of grains of certitude amidst confusion. "The little grains rest but never go away, and they have become part of a map of the directions in which my wandering path is going."

A short but intensely moving chapter follows the four religions discussion called: "The Loss of my Life Mate: I was broken in half but had to become a whole person." It describes Vic's death and that of their close friend Barbara Myerhoff as well as their funerals and the symbolization of death and eternity in the context of funerals in other cultures.

When Edie returns to Africa eighteen months after Vic's death, 31 years after they worked in Kajima together, the grains arrange themselves into a pattern and, as she puts it, "another door opens to the soul."

She gives as usual a more personal account but less detailed formalized argument about the experiences she had described and analysed in a more formal framework in her book with William Blodgett, Singleton Kahona, and Fideli Benwa, *Experiencing Ritual: A New Interpretation of African Healing*, published by Pennsylvania University Press in 1992. She does what anthropologists unfortunately rarely do, and supplements the scholastic analysis published elsewhere with her presentation of the total experience from letting her hair grow in white, acknowledging her father's name of Brocklesby: the badger, and appearing to be, as well as actually being an "elder," worthy to participate in serious rituals. She worked for the first time alone through "the business of threading her way through official channels" before setting out, by means of renewing old acquaintance and making new friends and co-celebrants to the Ihamba ceremony in both its commonplace and miraculous aspects. The outcome reaches its climax (on page 173) where she recognizes it as a turning point in her life comparable with meeting Vic in 1942, her conversion in 1958 and, still to come, her sense of *communitas* in the small group (see page 224). She describes it, using a 17th century philosophical term used by Husserl, as an *apodictic* experience—necessary, clearly established, and beyond doubt. She now regarded herself as a guinea pig of the soul, echoing the crew of the starship *Enterprise* by boldly going "where no anthropologist has gone before," "seeking new experiences and states of consciousness."

Following this star, she sets off, encouraged by a graduate student and Roy Wagner to experience and study Inuit healing in Arctic Alaska by participating with the healer and scholar, Claire. As usual she brings her vividly to life. in a way which experienced anthropologists will envy and tyros struggle to emulate. There is a description of the “four-day shaman syndrome,” a kind of “dark night of the soul,” preceding moments of power and illumination. (The shamanistic scholar/healer, Claire, sees the moments as coming not from within her but from God, and Edie compares the situation with Vic’s four-day “black” periods that preceded his “Aha!” periods when he first wrestled with and then resolved an intellectual or a personal problem.)

There is much else in this crowded chapter that pulls together Edie’s world-wide experiences. For example, she relates the exotic topics of seal-skinning and whale-killing with religious experience in English cathedrals as well as the nature of death, the Passion, and Near Death Experiences, then to the beginnings of a coherent personal theology. It is summarised in a key passage: “... they were living in a fully-experienced syncretism of indigenous spirituality and Christianity, in which the people sensed their church, that double-natured church, as one of the two sources of all good power. The other was the whale.” (p.195)

The chapter closes with George Herbert’s sonnet on prayer and a summary/summery sentence by Edie herself. After her year in Alaska, and becoming an American citizen, Edie returned once more to Ireland in 1995, 1998, and 2001, accompanied at different times by different members of the family.

Revisitings and productive rethinkings are a feature of Edie’s work throughout her life and enable her to overcome the snapshot impression of their field that the exigencies of finance and academic life today impose on many struggling young anthropologists. This is especially so in the US and the UK where priority is given to often shallow journal articles, over long thought out books written with maturity and depth. In these visits Edie explores other aspects of “unconventional” healing in Ireland, as well as reengaging with old arguments about the rift between Church and people both in the depth of their participation in the most rigorous pilgrimages, actual on the ground, and personal throughout the life course. She draws a distinction, to Jung’s disadvantage, between the merely psychic healing that he advocates and the phenomenological concept of embodied experience. She notes the similarities across culture of embodied symbols from the pricking of thumbs (201) ascribed by Shakespeare to the witches in *Macbeth* and also evident in the practice of the Irish healer. Edie has also become more conscious of her own bodily sensations in critical situations. She is splendidly angry about the rebuilding and

modernization of Knock (perhaps one should say postmodernization in the sense of the pilgrimage being transformed into a media event) including the masculinization of its presentation. (205-214) She shares in Irish rage at the depredations of the English over the centuries and she involves herself in fierce arguments with inevitably *male* clergy, some found to be even worse than anthropologists in the one-sidedness of their vision!

Knock is said to attract 1.5 million pilgrims each year, whereas the Purgatory of Lough Derg, only fifteen thousand. Edie's graphic account of its hardships explains why and also how both pilgrim and anthropologist (and indeed feminist scholars) may painfully gain more, including humility, by participating in it. It ends, "the purgatory simply and directly showed me my limits and made me fail, and I accepted that this was where the matter stood."

In the closing section of the book, the last third, Edie takes stock and draws conclusions about her life so far, in all its complexity of combined professional anthropologist, centers of friendship and kinship networks; conscious and unconscious, felt unity and division of mind, body and spirit.

She finally finds and reconciles her two homes in the mind and spirit first in church choirs, then in a small Christian Group, and in the Spiritual Direction Group directed by Chester Michael to whom the book is dedicated. And at the last there is a symbolic return to Ely for a final, or at least first final, stocktaking.

There is a short but key chapter describing how Edie came to join and to experience a life-changing—because *communitas*-inducing—liminal rite of passage in a church weekend group centering on individual and group confession (practice of reconciliation) in a community context. All this last is, as we have come to expect, intensely experienced and written in lively and polemical style, facing both ways, against church formalism on the one hand and materialism on the other. It also includes cross references to popular culture, science-fiction and the poet. George Herbert is an enduring influence. She makes a similar distinction to her earlier discussion of Power I & II for Social I & II, social rules as against *communitas*.

The last chapter is a poetic and religious meditation (not in verse) on her life's pilgrimage seen through a visit to Ely cathedral with her daughter Rene in 1999. It gives readers an opportunity to ponder on her experiences as an anthropologist, as a woman, as a wife, a mother, and as a person and thereby adds to identification with her experiences, even if the readers have not had similar ones.

Her life story, set alongside Vic's and that of her close family, seems even perhaps, to begin to answer the question that Pope Benedict

XVIth (who as Cardinal Ratzinger often dismayed Edie) poses at the outset of his first encyclical:

“Let us first of all bring to mind the vast semantic range of the word ‘love’: we speak of love of country, love of one’s profession, love between friends, love of work, love between parents and children, love between family members, love of neighbor, and love of God. Amid this multiplicity of meanings, however, one in particular stands out: love between man and woman, where body and soul are inseparably joined and human beings glimpse an apparently irresistible promise of happiness. This would seem to be the very epitome of love: all other kinds of love immediately seem to fade in comparison. So we need to ask: are all these forms of love basically one, so that love, in its many and varied manifestations, is ultimately a single reality, or are we merely using the same word to designate totally different realities?”

She may still feel the need, alongside the rest of us, to wait to see what might be concealed, albeit with goodwill, behind this text, in addition to what appears on the surface.

At a more general level the work that she records reflects an approach to anthropology that is not based, like modernism, on capturing and explicating the culture of the other. Nor is it based, as at least some postmodernism seems to be, on the reflection of the (usually Western) self, as seen through a glass darkly. What it describes and analyses is the processes of interaction between the actors as they mutually learn about and come to understand one another, not as subject to object, but oscillating passive/active and always, and as directly as possible, subject-to-subject; auto-anthropology squared, or even raised to the power of the infinite.

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Newcastle-under-Lyme
February 2006