

Ritual, Sacrifice, and Identity in Recent Political Drama - with Reference to the Plays of David Greig

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This article will examine the role of ritual in recent drama. The problems and limitations of prior theoretical definition and dramatic use will be noted and an alternative reading proposed. The relationship between ritual and performativity will be discussed with a focus upon sacrificial forms. "Performativity" here will not refer to the difference of an actual performance to the written text, but rather the effect in both of the extra intensity of words which are also acts (it is in this general sense that rituals are treated as performative, as both real and not-real, as words and gestures and as the acts they symbolize). The special relationship ritual imposes upon an audience will be noted, as will the implications of this relationship to the issue of the sacred and to the construction of collective identity. The question of whether drama *is* ritual, implying a special genre relation to the audience, or whether drama contains ritual (or both), will be attempted. The differing roles of ritual in identity formation and its presence in recent political drama will form the main insight of this article. A discussion of the political uses of ritual identity, and particularly the representation of sacrificial rituals, will follow. The key category of "identity exchange" will be introduced. An ethical division will be made between "progressive" and "reactionary" ritual exchanges (or, for those suspicious of linear models, between "acceptable" and "unacceptable" forms). After the exposition of an alternative conceptualization, this article will take as topical exemplars of the new approach to ritual in drama, two plays by the young Glaswegian playwright, David Greig, *Petra* (1992) and *Europe* (1995). I will conclude by attempting a theoretical overview of the relationship between ritual and performativity in drama.

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Has the role of the sacred in dramatic ritual and ritual drama been exhaustively described and employed? Have the implications of the relationship of identity, especially of community identity, to otherness in ritual been given due consideration? Are current uses of ritual effects in drama adequately described by previous theories? A description of the aporia of received criticism will enable

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newer, or alternative, forms of ritual in drama to be more easily recognized and understood and so allow a new theory of ritual to emerge.

The concept of “carnival” has been, perhaps, the most influential source of theory pertinent to ritual in drama.¹ On this reading, ritual as drama carries the promise of the healing of “fallen” social divisions, of a return to a (prior) unity of opposites, of the con-joining of sacred and profane, and so of copulation and dismemberment. These latter elements remind us of another theme that frequently occurs along-side that of ritual: the theme of transgression.² The “carnavalesque” has been adopted by many as the ideology of utopian populism: but has been criticized on the grounds that it is a permitted, and therefore, complicit or conservative form of transgression. More important from the perspective of this article, however, is the criticism of carnival as an excuse for the persecution and baiting of old women, the handicapped, and those regarded as foreigners, especially Jews—all potential scapegoats whose persecution, if anything, was increased on such days. Such a fact, whilst embarrassing to Romantic populists of all political tendencies, should come as no surprise to those familiar with the concept of ritual. On the contrary, the relation of ritual to collective identity that I will discuss below would expect precisely such a response. The “inversion” of the carnivalesque is a ritual inversion; yet, if there is no real overturning, the result is a symbolic overturning that cements collective identity with the usual scapegoats. More recently, key questions have been asked of ritual by dramatic theorists influenced by anthropology. For Richard Schechner and Victor Turner, the audience’s role is very much like that of participants at a ritual; the events witnessed, or participated in, are simultaneously “real” and “not-real,” and are productive of a sense of community—even of a sense of liberation.³

These questions spiral down to one central issue: the role of archaic, of “other”, or “exotic”, ritual forms in drama as a liberating force or as an “alternative” to the values of capitalist, administered, or middle class culture (the transvaluation of values).⁴ The question of ritual in drama is, therefore, a question addressed to the notion of the sacred, which we may define as a combination of what it is that people “hold most sacred”, and its special relation to the overlap between their personal identity and the identity of the communities of which they feel a part (including the ability of this identification to provide truths about the world and make it appear whole). Dramatic ritual has, thus far, been read in one of two ways: either as providing an alternative glimpse of the sacred to an already existing form of the capitalist sacred (such as Marx’s “commodity fetishism”); or as providing the means to an alternative sacred in the face of the total absence of the sacred in post-modern or advanced capitalist society.⁵

The problems with the view that dramatic ritual poses an alternative or authentic sacred to an inauthentic or alienating capitalist sacred are that there is an

assumption that the use of prior or exotic forms of ritual will counter current social forms and let the true human self emerge (Romantic naturalism) or that such experiences will open new spaces up for debate (Romantic utopianism). The risk of such productions, however, is that they will, contrary to their best intentions, only perpetuate forms of orientalism, and continue the entertainment industry's use of the other and of ritual as a simple intensification of commodified entertainment (as can be seen in many borrowings from the East, or from "internal Others"—such as the American Indian, and in the work of the anthropologically influenced American theatre of sexual revolution, such as "The Living Theatre").

The problem with the notion that ritual poses an alternative sacred to the absence of the sacred in secularized or administered culture is the tacit assumption of a culture which is rational or rationalized (because secular and administered), and intellectual or demystified—or one that is simply ideological (as opposed to superstitious or faithful). This culture, the assumption runs, is so de-sacralized as to demand new religions, such as New Ageism and assorted fundamentalisms, secular and sacred, and to inspire religious-type experiences in the realm of the arts (examples might include Abstract Expressionism, Grotowski, and, again, some American theatre of sexual revolution). This assumption of a de-sacralized culture is one that this article will choose to challenge.

Before continuing, I will summarize the two general positions taken on the role of ritual in drama in received criticism. First, ritual may function as the "royal road", or path to the unconscious, to our true-selves, or to utopia, in opposition to the identities and "false" community of the capitalist or administered world. Second, there is the perpetuation of the Enlightenment illusion as seen from the side of the Romantics; ritual is to be the antidote to the lack of the sacred in a rational world. Both of these positions are universalistic by implication.

Clearly, it is the join between the "I" and the "We," the joining of self to community, and its representation, that is the key to the issue of ritual forms and their dramatic use. Two examples will illustrate the tendency of ritual drama to become the privileged performative of this collective suture. The first is the Ur-model for ritual in earlier twentieth century drama: Balinese ritual. In Balinese ritual drama, the performance of a myth effectively performs the collective cementing of the community from which the participants, and its participant-witnesses, come. This ritual was highly influential on earlier generations of dramatists—whether used by the avant-garde and by blood and volk communitarianism in the 1930s, or by utopian communitarianism in 1960s. If the liberationism of the latter, should appear to belie the suturing force for which ritual is renowned, we should remember that the supposedly pre-capitalist forms of consciousness to which these experiments were appealing were often little more than the product of the mid-twentieth century counter-cultural ideology that inspired

its makers and its audience. It was the act of belonging to *this* ideology, that the ritual in fact performed. In other words, belonging, or the statement of a collective membership, has remained the central effect and function of ritual in drama.

The controversy over a Peter Greenaway film, *The Baby of Macon* (1993), will serve as my second, and more recent, example. *The Baby of Macon* is presented like the film of a play, or a film of a play being made—backstage intrigues and all. However, within this traditional device, the events of the play within a play (the film) become horrifyingly “real.” Events that are supposed to be acted out become actual—on the level of the filmed play only (this is not a “snuff” video). The result is a double sacrifice, a child murder and dismemberment, and the mass rape and murder of a virgin, that turns a play staged by a community into a ritual. It is as if the community theatre of Ann Jellicoe or the Welfare State theatre company were to be represented in film with some of the events depicted becoming uncomfortably “real.” In this way, the addition of a “real” sacrifice within the world depicted in the film, transforms a simple theatrical pageant into a “full-blooded” ritual. The playing with frames, the confusion between “real” and “unreal” levels, effectively allowed Greenaway to depict what many thought was undepictable on the uncensored public screen. Many continued to think so, and the film was quietly strangled by the critics.

In these examples, the possession, even “passion,” of the audience is the defining feature. Participants in a trance (Bali) themselves become the (mythic) Others that will cement the Same of the community. The collective sacrifice by a community of one of its troublesome members (the female lead of *The Baby of Macon*) revenges and unifies the community, especially, as the film points out, to the benefit of its leading members. It is this latter kind of sacrifice that we shall see in *Europe* (although carried out from the bottom up) and in *Petra* (where, although spontaneous, theatre itself will again become actuality through murder, as in the *Baby of Macon*).

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It would appear that a new theory of ritual is required to explain the use of ritual events, or ritualized transgression, in recent political drama (also in recent literature and film). Whilst my detailed workings (which follow this exposition of the new theory) will be on European texts, in the sense that these come from Europe and that they take the problems of the new Europe as their theme, the implication is that the links between identity politics, ritual, and their dramatic representation as described here will also apply to similar cases elsewhere. It is to be expected that such forms will also be found in recent American drama (and art and literature) concerned with the politics of identity.⁶ Indeed, I would suspect that these ritual forms already constitute a part of that drama which has concerned itself with, or has been representative of, minority traditions (race, region, ethnicity,

and gender).

Two elements, in particular, require special attention. The first element is descriptive and concerns the audience and its experience of affective intensity through the dramatic depiction of rituals. This intensity links the implied collective identity that results with lived forms of the sacred. The second element is normative and involves the ethical division of these rituals into two kinds: for the purposes of a progressive political theatre or for the criticism of such a theatre and the critique of ritual in drama in general.

The first element, on the dramatic depiction of ritual identity, insists upon the irrational nature of the join between "I" and "We." This emotive joining appears to require the originary exclusion of others. This exclusion, or definition of self/community against another, or against *others*, usually takes symbolic form, or is latent, as implied in any form of identification. If an unfortunate fact of "belonging," this form is usually tolerated, if not exploited, in political drama, when it takes the forms of the expression of a particular group against a dominant perceived as unsympathetic (at best, or, at worst, as the source of persecution). However, when motivated by fear or loss, such an attitude of exclusion may erupt into the actual sacrifice of those defined as the Other (examples include, pogroms, racism, homophobia, and all forms of populist communitarianism). Material gain is not the issue here; it is a threatened identity which is being re-affirmed. Hence, the definition of the violence as sacrificial; this is how all scapegoating functions. It is the depiction of this most crude form of ritual sacrifice in *recent* political drama, I will argue, that has eschewed previous dramatic uses of such events as cathartic, or as containing utopian potential, precisely due to its requirement of a sacrificial scapegoat. Such depictions in recent drama now function to highlight the dangers of unbridled communitarianism. It is precisely the us/them division at the root of all scenes of ritual violence that appears to have moved ritual forms of identity exchange into their current form of dramatic depiction.

Clearly, the aim of this paper is not the rejection of emotion in constituting belonging. This would be to re-enact the smug enlightenment position that "we" are beyond such identifications and to lose the opportunity to think through the role of emotion in identity and its representation in drama today. Rationalism becomes the invisible "white mythology" of the enlightened West, and we remember that the history of the Enlightenment excluded from its definition of subjecthood (from significant identity) women, children, those defined as savages, and slaves. Reason and Enlightenment also found a need for Others. From the point of view taken in this article, then, any rejection in this sacrificial type of dramatic identity ritual is due only to the desire to reject actually destructive and predatory forms of collective identity. Indeed, as observed, symbolic sacrifice (the negating of another symbolically, in effigy, or in words) is usually regarded as necessary for the construction of rebellious identities. A fine political line, and one always open to

debate, is to be drawn between “progressive” and “reactionary,” or between “acceptable” and “unacceptable” forms of agonistic sacrificality. The discussion of Greig’s *Europe* will help us to separate out the different uses of this form.

A crucial question nevertheless remains: are the politics of identity exchange always a politics of sacrificial destruction?⁷ This is in many ways the most difficult question posed by an approach that combines identity, ritual, and sacrificial forms of exchange: must the construction of an identity also be the destruction of another identity? Dominant identities often practice a form of exogamous sacrificial identity upon others (pogroms, vilification, abjection, discrimination)—although an “other” can always be found within if necessary. On the other hand, “minority” or oppositional identities not only destroy the dominant in symbolic form (they are not in a position to do so, literally), they may also, in certain contexts, practice the symbolic form of sacrifice upon members of their own group (an endogamous sacrificial identity).⁸

If the conceptualization of identity as collective suture seems to require a concomitant category of ritual sacrifice to cement the identity exchange, it need only be so on the level of a figurative or symbolic appropriation of sacrifice and ritual. The difference between symbol and reality is all important here: the symbolic is performative, therefore ritual, therefore “real” in a different way to actually existing sacrificial rituals (harassment, pogroms, lynching). The symbolically performative ritual may be read as the bearer of a “negative” symbolism which brings about affirmative real effects, just as with the performative element of all literature. Even an identity based upon a being-with-others, as one other “other” among others, still, *at this time*, involves a dominant to which these “others” are opposed, symbolically or in actuality.

If the audience is to be appraised of the destructive effects of the identity of a group sufficiently different from themselves, a simple depiction of the other group’s sacrificial destruction will usually suffice.⁹ If, however, the intended audience of a given drama is from the group whose own collective identity is to be revealed as domineering or predatory, then care will have to be taken in trying to shift their position or in not giving too much away in the course of eliciting their sympathy (there is, of course, the recourse to shock, but, if we are honest with ourselves, this technique only really works with audiences who are already convinced, who are not also the targets of the drama’s polemic).

Ritual in drama will evoke sympathy or identification depending upon the group-identity or subject-position of the given individual. Inclusion is usually a feature of such dramatic rituals; audiences will empathize with identities of which they are not a part (even if expressed in destructive ways, as is often the case in the representation of racial, sexual or social rebellion). The performativity of a particular ritual therefore extends beyond simple “clan” identifications. This inclusive unity-

in-difference, or symbolic alliance-making, is an important part of recent oppositional theatre and writing (especially in relation to sexuality and the AIDS/HIV crisis, as in the work of "Gay Sweatshop" for example).

To summarize the salient points of the argument so far, there appear to be two main kinds of ritual identity with which a political drama of community or minority identity would wish to concern itself. Both feature a moment of self-recognition which involves membership of a (real or imaginary) community and a relation to the other which defines this difference. However, it is here, for drama at least, that the similarities end, in actuality, identity assumption may always involve some kind of sacrificial exchange relation or identity exchange (definition against and abjection of the other, albeit only in symbolic form). On the other hand, forms of giving also involve an identity exchange (gift, charity) which is sacrificial of the self and its possessions to the advantage of the other; the identity exchange or profit for the giver lies in their self-recognition as worthy within their belief-system.¹⁰ What we have then are two sets of indices which we can expect to play a significant role in recent drama: *sacrifice of self versus sacrifice of the other, and actual as opposed to symbolic sacrifice*. These forms of sacrifice may in turn appear in an obvious form of ritual (the ritual murder of the other). Or they may appear in the more subtle form of an identity exchange which may be defined by its ritual function, conferring identity (as, for example, in a dramatized rite of passage). The latter may take the form of a verbal sequence or action that has a similar, if more moderate effect, on the intensification of the dramatic mood and the heightening of significance, which a change or confirmation of identity brings. It is a matter of degree (it is here perhaps that the discrete forms of ritual may merge with the play itself as ritual; the performative element of ritual eventually fuses with the drama as performance).

The kind of political drama which I am concerned with, then, demands that we focus upon two distinct types of ritual effect, two kinds of audience recognition or response. The first links recognition with sharing, where some characters identify, or are identified, fully with a particular identity. The audience may empathize with a wide variety of identities presented in this way—even if the identity introduced in the course of the drama is very different from their own, and even if the ritual is negative or destructive, as in the case of the depiction of rebellion, or any reaction against a dominant social form which is deemed restrictive. This type of recognition is paradigmatic to any pluralistic politics as it involves the spectator in both identity and difference.

The second group of ritual effects link recognition with rejection: rejection on the level of collective bigotry, with its attendant sacrifice of the other; and rejection by an otherwise tolerant audience of such forms of recognition (a political aim of such drama). Ritual in drama functions by recognizing the role of the sacred in the everyday life of "rational" capitalist societies, and by the negative and positive, ethical and political, classification of exclusive and inclusive identities. Therefore,

against the positions taken in traditional drama theory or criticism, a preferred reading of much recent political drama would involve the exposure of the omnipresent role of the sacred in societies that deny its existence and the exposure of the blind spot of theories that ignore the functioning of the sacred in the construction of present day collective identity. The failure of such blind spots should be only too evident in the 1990s with the collapse of the Russian empire and particularly the Yugoslavian wars, the latter becoming a new paradigm for community conflict. It is necessary to remind ourselves that this development echoes a previous response to the notion that society was over-rational, one occurring at the very "origin" or "birthplace" of drama called "European"; we remember Euripides in *The Bacchae* (407 BC), showing the dangers and weakness of an unrecognized but fully-functioning sacred in a society also described as over-concerned with matters rational (or believing itself too rational to give proper attention to the role of collective emotions).

3

This study will continue with the application of the theory of ritual proposed above to some examples of the new political drama of the nineties.¹¹ The rebirth of the use of ritual in the context of the problems of identity in the 1990s may be read as, in large part, due to the fall of Stalinism and to the reconceptualization of minority problems as problems of the "other," and not simply as a legacy of imperialism. Hence, the popularity of ritual (in its thematics, as in its formal methodology) in new drama, in a new generation of dramatists. This new awareness of the inter-relation of a given community and its others appears to be the key to the uses of ritual identity in drama in the 1990s (for example, the work of the Northern Irish dramatist, Vincent Woods, *Song of the Yellow Bittern*, *At the Black Pigs's Dyke*, both so far unpublished).¹² The notion of progressive or acceptable types of identification and reactionary or unacceptable manifestations of identity through the use of ritual in drama is best illustrated by reference to two plays by David Greig, *Petra* (1992), a play in ritual form, and *Europe* (1995), a play which ends with a ritual.¹³ The inclusion of both of these plays in this analysis is a mark of their impact and intellectual provocation that is a mark of their success. A large part of this success, I believe, is due to the good use to which a variety of ritual forms are put. The proximity of ritual to transgression makes it liable to misuse, not least for easy effect; Greig has avoided these pitfalls. The idea of ritual as covering all or only some dramas, of pertaining to the whole or only to a part of a given drama (genre, sub-genre, or incident), the question of different types of sacrificial modality and their political value, and the issue of actual versus symbolic sacrificial forms (in the world created by the drama), will all find a place in the discussion of the two plays that follow.

In *Petra*, a young woman comes to the aid of ghosts in laying the unsettled

spirit of her dead son, killed in an expression of virulent nationalism in a Balkan-type state. Not only is *Petra* replete with rituals and ritual-type effects, but the play itself is also a ritual, effectively taking the form of an exorcism, where the exorcism of the victim's loss and fear is also the exorcism of the mother's loss and (by implication the audience's) lack of understanding. The tableau that opens the play proper (two soldiers equipped with "medieval costume" and "long sword" face Petra) is also a marker of entry and a symbol of the play's central problematic: the militarization of collective identity (1). These mimes also signal the over-all ritual aspect of the play as a whole, an effect which is heightened by the inclusion of a chorus, the ritualized expression of collective experience; there are also songs, sound effects, and music (4).¹⁴ Further inducted by Petra's wordless journey across a moor and a bog (accompanied by sound effects), the audience are provided with a symbolic or ritual entry into the world of the play: "Petra struggles across the moss and the bog, against the wind, towards the stone . . . the children's voices become the sound of wind again" (1).

Rites of passage internal to a drama may be defined either as a passage from one state or symbolic site to another (traversing a this side that side, or in/out), or as a sequence of events which result in a change of beliefs, or change of identity, by one of the characters (the states traversed may constitute a self).¹⁵ The audience may play the role of witness or, if this witness is referred to in the play, of participant. Examples of rites of passage might include the performance of naming, recognition, realization, and communion, or conversely, of excommunication and exorcism, as well as the various forms of traditional, and symbolic, forms of birth, marriage and death available.¹⁶ These events are often ritual in character, including formalized entries (like the entry sequence in *Petra*), exits, processions, and dressing-up (acting within acting). If the rite of passage is concerned with a change of belief then the question raised is that of collective identity and belonging; to which group does one belong? More precisely, to which group does one *feel* one belongs? It is a matter of identity and affectivity, on stage, and off. A character may change loyalties: an audience may be asked to empathize with identifications with which it is unfamiliar. The topical example, one we see addressed in this play, as also in *Europe*, is, of course, the alternative or excluded identities of the new European super-state: Europe's Others.¹⁷ *Europe* will provide us with an example of an individual transformation of identity as depicted through various rites of passage: *Petra* may be said to be almost constructed from rites of passage—as movement through symbolic space, or as performatives of collective identity (in this play, the scenes dealing with "Independence," the filming, and the murder).

The first of many self-referential re-framings of the play's themes follow: the telling of the story of the death of Petra's husband and son, against a background of a national history, "the truth's always a good story," and the acting-out of scenes from this story, "we can act out scenes," constitutes a story within story, a play

within a play, a *mis-en abime* with all the usual meta-narratological implications of self-reference (6). The inner re-framing refers to the outer frame in an effect of repetition. Such effects always carry an uncanny charge or suggest extra significance. All add to the intensificatory effect. After the inclusion of a chorus, the play within a play (the re-enaction, as opposed to the telling, of a prior event) must be the oldest of the purely verbal ritual effects. Sound effects also frame the beginning of the story, another entry marker or ritual rite of passage (7).

These effects continue in the course of various mimes which accompany the alternating telling and re-enaction of the story within a story, the play within a play, among which are sumo-like wrestlers, ritualized symbols of struggle (9). The symbolic re-enactment, and calling up of relevant events and personages, necessitates a rapid role change that continues through the various maskings and un-maskings of the play: the ghosts, Jakob and Ivan, become the Southern and Northern Emperors (8). The singing of the National Anthem is itself a performance of loyalty, ideals, and identity (10). The play contains many other sequences of acting-out that occur during the telling of the story: including the patriotic “North,” “South,” and “Between” songs (17); the “we met our neighbors . . . the village in the middle of the field of blood” sequence (19-20); a rabble-rousing nationalistic oratory and choric mob chant, “Northland for Northerners” (26); and yet more dressing-up and role exchange in the course of acting-out the making of the film that will incite the murder of Petra’s family (28). The cumulative effect of these transformations is to intensify the texture of the play which, in performance terms, heightens the ritualistic atmosphere. The sharing of many roles by a few actors also introduces an “economic” dimension, where the concentration produced by the effective use of a few persons, also intensifies the mood of the play.

In effect, we are offered a story within a story within a story, a play within a play, within a play (for example, the interpolation of the story of Boris the Wily and his defeat of the Plain folk (21). This “Russian Doll” effect (in a regressive *mis-en-abime*, or internal metaphoric repetition of structure), suggests a process of getting back to the origin or cause of a given problem as each shell or layer is encountered and compared with previous ones. This formal (and poetic) technique, therefore, has a didactic function in terms of the play’s politics and intention (it confirms its form as a *Lehrstück*). However, the successive ritual re-enactments also act to intensify the otherworldly mood, especially the mournful or lyrical effects of loss that are part of the calling up of the dead and the past, and are part of the play’s function as a negative comparative, an exemplar to be avoided. The mood of loss figures an imperative; it functions as a warning. In rhetorical terms, the lyric effects achieved are due to the general effects of the trope of prosopopeia, the figure for the calling up of the absent or the dead (a form of personification). In *Petra*, the appearance of the ghosts, and the witness given by these ghosts, perform this tropological effect. If a subject containing this mood is called for, candidates

would include the expressive subjectivity of Petra, the implied expression of collective subjectivity, or choric voice within the play, or, doubling the latter, the audience itself.

It is the re-telling of the story of “Independence,” a re-telling that includes the enacting of its declaration (a performative and rite of passage), that leads to the murder of a father and his child and so the play’s moral climax. The actors, members of one national group, incited by alcohol and by the roles they have just played (a play within a play, within a play), find a member of another national group and, after a pursuit that leads them into his house, kill him and his young son: “I swung my sword. Just like I had in the film” (29). Yet the dramatic ironies, and hence the play’s critical effect, are heightened by the fact that the murder is not the direct product of war, but a spontaneous pogrom resulting from dressing-up and play-acting (the victory of one national group over another is commemorated by its ritual re-enactment before cameras). The negative effects of certain kinds of ritual lead to a criticism of the kinds of identity involved in such rituals. A double dramatic function is served by this moment in the play. First, there is the ritual sacrifice demanded by a collective identity; the actors, carried away by their parts, actually murder two people in the course of a dramatic re-enactment of a previous communal clash. This event functions as a critique of itself, that is, of similar situations across the world (the play’s symbolic use of ritual). Second, as the play-acting within the play becomes “real” (within the world of the play) and plays the ethical role of a negative performative, so the play’s acting out, or performance, may have a real, and this time positive, effect upon the world (the play’s message and *raison d’être*).

The ritual forms continue through name-calling, to the evocation of ghosts, exorcism, and their exit-rituals; the stone-pile making near the end of the play is an exit-ritual for the ghosts who also leave a trace, or memorial in the “real” world (31). The play’s theme has by now become apparent: the negative role of the past as supporter of identities through ritualized remembering. We note that the past can disappear but that its effects, or more precisely, as we are not dealing with simple cause and effect, the effects of its remembering will remain. This is a critique of certain forms of remembering, calling up, or evocation: a critique of certain rituals of identity as constructed through the past. By contrast, the only part of the past Petra seeks to keep is her son—and this so she may care for him. This gift of self, however, is also an identity-making form of exchange (formative of “the good mother”). Petra’s identity, as constituted by care, is opposed to the collective identity constituted by the blood sacrifice of the Other, the murder of her husband and her son. The play’s rhetoric pairs—perhaps a little too easily—virulent nationalist collectivism with masculinity and counterposes the pairing of femininity and varying forms of self-sacrifice. It is important to note that Petra does not pass her grief through the circuit of sacrificial exchange of the other; she does not ask for revenge upon the “other” national group.

A ghost character (Ilka) observes: "There'll always be ghosts" (32). There will always be memories; the play poses the question of the proper way of dealing with them. A constructivist politics is suggested, which does not take the *laissez faire* option of leaving it all to fate, but suggests an active making of the next part of "the story." Moving from past to future Ilka remarks: "Think of the ending you want./ And make it happen" (33). This comment is an invitation to a ritual or performative re-telling (where words become events), a performance which may have different effects in the future, evoking and constructing different identities, different kinds of life. This optimistic temporal cue is reiterated by the play's ending; we are left with Petra's song, which ends on an intention aimed into the future. This is a personal ritual, invoking a very different future, a very different effect, from the implications of the past as cause and disaster. The play ends on a positive note of renewal, seasons and personal will are combined in the hope of change: "Remember in spring the stems rise from the earth,/And the seasons move round and round" (33-34).

If the entire play is to be read as a ritual, it is as a rite of passage into knowledge for the lead character and for the audience. The exorcism of a ghost becomes the exorcism of communal tension. In this sense of the dramatic manipulation of collective identity, the play is also a ritual for the audience. They encounter and experience an otherworldly place full of thresholds with their forms of entry, and exit, and rules of the game (of the trial, of story-telling). If all plays (as such) can be read as a form of ritual, then *Petra* must, over and above these factors, be considered ritualistic due to its own framing devices (the internal rituals then constitute a further layer of intensification). A reading of *Petra* which attends to ritual, therefore brings together the play's form, its message or thematic content, its performative aspects (in total and in part), and its own use of ritual forms to gain effect (dramatic, ethical), and to self-reflexively contrast "good" and "bad" rituals, destructive versus giving forms of sacrifice or identity exchange. If care (or *agape*), with respect to others and to the past, is the play's watchword, then the ecstatic use of ritual in sacrifice, for the effect of collective union (eros) is portrayed in negative terms—*this contrasts to the previous utopian use of ritual in drama which preferred the ecstatic mode as a positive.*

4

The problems of identity and ritual in *Europe* (1996), the second play by David Greig that I want to discuss, center around the two opposing poles of agonistic identity exchange identified in the general discussion above (Part 3). The first of these poles of identity construction is that of collective and sacrificial identity in full destructive mode, with the local unemployed turning to rightwing communitarianism and pogroms in their search for scapegoats. Unlike *Petra*, where the murderers feel guilt, the killing and burning in *Europe* makes the perpetrators

feel better. This understanding of the connection between ritual and collective forms of identity suggests that a slightly more ironic, more measured view of humanity has replaced the optimistic humanism of the earlier play where the future was open to redemption, and, in this way, held out hope of redeeming the past.

The second, and opposite, pole of identity construction involves minority and “other”-type identities and their own forms of self-affirmation and survival. The forms of ritual employed in this case include the rite of passage; a “becoming” that is a discovery and affirmation of a new type of self, including the symbolic rejection of prior collective ties in favor of these new (more tenuous, if sexually specific) identities. The politics of the play, the aim of its rhetoric, is the contrast of these two forms of identity exchange. If the first pole offers a case of collective identity which is reactionary or unacceptable because it is exclusionary and sacrificial of the other, then the second (certain negative aspects notwithstanding) is progressive or acceptable in its—often explicit—affirmation of different modes of being and of life (“cosmopolitan”).

Greig also appears to have changed his politics of difference since *Petra*, where the demand for difference against the Same is read only as a cue for communal violence. In *Europe*, this monism seems to have been rectified. By contrast, a recent play by a political dramatist of the previous generation, David Edgar, *Pentecost* (1994), finds, contrary to the affirmation of difference in *Europe*, that a mythic “same” must be found to support the difference-in-unity of the besieged refugees in his play. However, all unities based on a past “same,” on a real or imaginary shared past, or point of originary unity, no matter how tenuous, only serve to exclude those who *do not come* from this “original” stock. A better alternative comes from the constructivist unity-in-difference of the refugee group’s forward-looking self-making, which takes place in the course of negotiation and cooperation, than from the reversion back to mythic archetypes with its attendant risk of a new exclusion.¹⁸

Europe also tells the story of refugees, who arrive at a small border town in Eastern Europe. The town has just lost its main industry and employer and is in the process of losing its railway station. Some of the unemployed leave, becoming economic refugees themselves, others look for scapegoats among the new arrivals. Although less full of ritual effects than *Petra* (it saves the full effect of the ritual form for the ritual sacrifice at the end), *Europe* does begin with the collective voice of the chorus as the performance of a collective identity and its problem: “History has washed across us” (1-2). In what follows, two poles of identity exchange suggest two responses to this problem; two lines of flight are suggested. One into the reconstruction of unity by exclusion, into neo-fascism, or right-wing communitarianism; the other is a literal geographic flight, an escape into the unknown of a self-chosen exile, which will entail the construction of new forms of strategic identity in alliance and allegiance.

As the play opens the character of Adele is about to choose the latter path. This step involves a change or transformation that effectively constitutes a rite of passage. For Adele, this passage will take her from a small dying town and a heterosexual husband to the world (or to Europe), and to a homosexual partner. For Katia too, Adele's partner to be, the death of her father, signals a new beginning. This death is symbolic for her, marking her parting from him and from one way of life, and literal in his murder by the neo-fascists, (as the two plot strands combine, also the two kinds of identity exchange, at the play's end). Adele begins the process that will end in her changing her relationships, her sexual orientation, and her place, perhaps even, in the end, her culture and her language; in sum, all aspects of her identity (her desire to be truly cosmopolitan will be realised, but perhaps not quite in the way she envisaged). Watching a train together, an activity which is a sacred act for Adele and which brings together all her ideals and hopes (it excites her, it is the high-point in her day), has, unknown to Katia, involved them both in a ritual which binds them together: "*grabs her hand and points it in the direction of the train./ Look. Follow my hand. A chain of lights, look for a chain of lights. . . a chain of Amsterdam diamonds*" (35). If, for Adele, the repeated action is a ritual fraught with intense meaning, then, in inviting Katia to share her sacred moment, Adele is initiating her friend into an alliance between them (a rite of passage). Adele is intimating to Katia that they are more similar than she might think, that they do, after all, share an identity, or that they might. Katia recognizes this when she finds Adele "gazing" at her: "You can look if you want. But I can't bear gazing" (35). Sharing Adele's sacred experience begins a relationship which will become intense and represent a shared identity which will be "other" socio-culturally, geographically, and sexually: ". . . ever since I was small I've stood here to watch. . . a train full of everything. Every kind of thing from everywhere's inside it. Everything from everywhere is on that train and its coming through here . . . stay still. (*She's shouting now.*) Hold still and feel it . . . can you feel it? Can you feel it . . . /*The train's noise is at its peak. The train passes* (42).

The second chorus details the exacerbation of the town's collective problem: "Autumn's arrived in our town . . . our place slipped away while we were asleep" (43-44). It has lost its place, and so its identity, whilst, paradoxically, remaining stationary. Transport and industry have moved on; yet, the people remain. The collective voice of the community speaks its wound. One response to this loss will be the turn to an exclusionary and sacrificial communitarianism, which will make reparation to the invisible (and so sublime) god of the market, and to the new national logics of the new Europe, by the sacrifice of those labeled as the Other. Foreshadowing Adele's departure is that of Billy (a newly unemployed worker), whose leaving not only functions as a highly symbolic rite of passage, but also forces a differentiation between those left without work or hope. Some leave, some stay—some of those who remain become neo-fascists. In the play's symbolism,

Billy is exchanged for Sava (Katia's father); Billy will become a Sava somewhere else, and other friends of other Billys will treat him as his own friends will treat Sava: "foreigners out" (55). Adele makes her own move with an appeal to Katia to take her, sexually and geographically, with her. Katia will exchange sex for her papers and this arrangement raises the question: does Adele offer a sexual liaison with Katia in order to find a traveling companion, a protectress, and so a way out? Has she already grown cynical in her need to escape? Probably not, in the story she offers more than just her body; but, it is certain that complimentary sexual exchanges do occur (61; 67; 69). The vulgar sex for papers incident (between Katia and black-marketeer Morocco) suggests that the survival of certain identities will require behavior that most citizens would find degrading or criminal; however, the important contrast to note here is the one between Berlin's sacrificial exchange of another for his place in a collective identity and Katia's sacrifice of herself for her own survival, and so for the continuance of her identity as a stateless traveler (as opposed to remaining in one place as a prostitute or wife, for example).

The sacrifice of Sava and Fret, by fire, begins a sequence of ritual effects that are maintained until the end of play. The firebombing constitutes a cure for the sickness of the participants of the ritual, for the perpetrators of this crime: "the pleasant, reassuring sound of bottle on concrete and the flame taking" (81). This is a ritual which is performed for the collective assertion of a threatened identity, the ritual burning of a scapegoat will propitiate a loss and assuage a wound (the scapegoat takes the place of the invisible hand of market and other sublime, that is absent, unreachable, unchangeable, or incomprehensible, forces). We do not need to remind ourselves that this type of collectivist-inspired murder happened with appalling frequency in the new Europe, East and West, of the early 1990s.

In contrast to the sacrificial identity exchange of the ritual, the play offers the other pole of identity exchange. Adele changes sexuality, partner, place, and stable home for a semi-legal identity (sexually and geographically) and a precarious existence. Her destruction of her old self is purely symbolic, and may even include an element of self-sacrifice, or care, for Katia; she also offers her body to Katia, another form of sacrificial self-giving. This personal affirmation through the destruction of a particular form of self is opposed to a collective affirmation by means of the destruction of others: "we could feel it warm . . . It was comforting," the "we" is all-important, spoken by the murderer and incendiary, Berlin, it takes on a choric function, which continues to the end of the play (80). The act of destruction has sutured Berlin back into his community; having acted (as he would see it) on their behalf, he speaks as if he were their spokesman.

Two kinds of identity are counter-posed at the end of the play; a burnt offering is contrasted with the sexual union of Katia and Adele. Eros as sublime union, as sacred unity, is presented in both its forms: the sacrifice as symbol and sexual union. Two kinds of identity are affirmed: one is nationalist, exclusive,

communitarian; the other, minoritarian, represents everything that the former wishes to exclude. Yet the play's contra-positioning of the two leaves the latter with the ethical positive; the former is read as under criticism. A sacrificial ritual and a rite of passage underscore the dilemma of those who find themselves in such situations. All are victims, but the audience will ask itself which victims will go on to perpetuate fresh victimizations. At the end of the play, the effects of the ritual sacrifice are continued by Berlin's choric voice in a (for the audience, ironic) affirmation of an "us" and a "we;" a place, a home town, a way of life, and a nationality. As for them in their town, so for Europe also: "They know that, in our own way, we're also Europe" (85). The irony carries a warning as to the exclusionary effect of the borders of a new Europe, and the concomitant creation of new "others" to function as scapegoats for the self-confirmation of an oppositional difference defined by exclusion.

5

In conclusion, I would like to venture some reflections on the relationship of dramatic ritual to performativity. I would like to begin by posing the apparently rhetorical question: is there anything, in the world of the drama, that is more real than ritual? A reference to something that has happened in the (real or imaginary) past may be dealt with as a form of citation or a telling, alive only to the extent it is a ritualized telling (Classical Greek Drama understood this well with the action off-stage retold by a chorus or other witnesses). Indeed, from outside of the frame of the play, the dramatic action of the present is always a representation of something else (real or imaginary). Historical, or referential, drama represents the "real," and just as fictional events or fantasy are covered by the term "imaginary," so dream sequences also are but representations, are citations of absent (other) events.¹⁹ Ritual, however, is never just representation or citation; it is also performative, and hence, self-referential as well as referential, figural and symbolic as well as literal.²⁰ Ritual may, however, be employed to enframe, and so enliven, or intensify, "realist" or "dream"-type passages. It is in this way that dramatic ritual is more "realistic," in the sense of most present, more "now," more intense, than representational narrative, than the citation of other material, or dream episodes in drama.²¹

It is in the movement between mimesis, or representation (a relation to the past or origin, no matter how fictional), and the performative (the presence of a present action, the "now"), that the key to the power of ritual in drama appears to subsist. The usual distinction in literature of "real" versus "dream," for example in "realist" versus "romance" fiction, or epic versus lyric poetry, is supplanted in drama by the performative character of ritual. Contrary, or complementary, to those who maintain that ritual is both "real and not real," and it is from this combination that it draws its dramatic power, I would suggest that all text has both

a referential and a performative element (an absent referent, especially if an imaginary—or fictional—referent, and an always present performative element). In the case of drama, however, two further aspects deserve consideration. First, all drama (or all of *the* drama) may be read or experienced as real in the performative sense (as happening now), if we choose to define the entire drama (or the entire genre) as a form of performative. Drama is read as its own referent, over and above the sum of its allegorical significances (if one may, in practice, distinguish fictional referents from significances). Second, as in literature, the performative element is often foregrounded or framed in the form of ritual episodes as in the case of rites of passage, sacred forms, and moments of self-referentiality combined with sacred effect. These sections of the drama may seem more real than others (in the sense of being more vivid, more intense, more lived, more affective, and so more evocative). Furthermore, it is this very intensification of, and by, the play's performative element, that constitutes the most affective, or most emotionally manipulative, of the effects of drama—as in the case of sacrificial scenes, ritual bondings and separations. Indeed, if the entire play itself is chosen to be read as a ritual form then, the inclusion of further ritual forms will produce the effect of a ritual within a ritual.²² If all drama is ritual in the first degree, and contains intensified ritual in the second degree, the result is the figure of the *mis-en-abime*, a self-reference to the status of the play as performative representation, a magnification of dramatic signification and affectivity.

The tendency of ritual is, therefore, to bring about the intensification of the “now” experience. This experience is reality-forming for the audience, the implied readers, or witnesses, who in this light may be redefined as the non-acting participants of the play (although perhaps “acting” the part of an audience). We find in ritual the operation of the trope of proximity or presence, with the present as participation in an alternative “real.”

Where problems of identity obtain, the form of ritual we can expect to find will be the sacrificial variety. These sacrificial forms function as a kind of identity exchange (the suture of the I/we), or as identity conferring or confirming, through a combination of the Other and Sacrifice, taking the form of destruction (sacrifice of the other) or of gift-giving (self-sacrifice for the other). These distinctions reflect the ancient categories of *Eros/Agape* (ecstatic union versus service, as modes of being, or identity forming) as well as the anthropological categories of gift-exchange (potlach, kula, fête, generosity, alms and their role in collective identity formation). If the distinction between destruction of, or care for, the other is important for a politically engaged drama, so are their degrees of presentness or the overtness of their rituality (that is, the degree of presentation, or performance, of ritual). However, in terms of political differentiation, the most productive difference probably still lies in the real/symbolic distinction as applied to the representation of destructive agonistics, a distinction which counterposes the depiction of the ritualistic sacrifice of the other, with the symbolic self-

representation of those, who for whatever reason are designated as “other,” against the dominant.

Notes

1. I want to express my thanks to Nicole Boireau for help and support during the inception of this article. See Christopher Innes, *Avant Garde Theatre: 1892-1992* (London: Routledge, 1993), for a description of the influence of the literary theorist, Mikhail Bakhtin, and particularly his notion of the “carnavalesque,” upon theories of drama. Bakhtin traces the tradition of the “carnavalesque,” a (symbolic) “world turned upside down,” from Roman Saturnalia, through the Medieval “Feast of Fools,” to the modern Mardi Gras or carnival.

2. See for example, the plays of the English dramatist, Howard Barker, and his “theatre of catastrophe” which incorporates shock and ritual to pose utopian questions. When ritual takes the form of subversive parody, with citation acting as inversion, then the effect of grotesque transgression and ambiguity of value (no simple positive or negative ethical position) may result in an inversion of prior values, or at least their unsettling. Ritual as “inverted religious ceremony” has been used as a celebration of sexuality (here homosexuality)—but by means of shock and inversion (Innes 122). Plays in this tradition include Oscar Wilde’s play, *Salomé*, the drama of Jean Genet, and the productions of Lindsay Kemp—in literature similar effects are found in the writings of Dennis Cooper. In reader or audience terms, this means that all readings are permitted; the choice of privileging of some above others becomes a politically contested act. Also interesting is the notion of certain kinds of drama as examples of Bakhtin’s other key category: the “dialogic.” Here the presence of irreducible differences or contradictions introduced by genre-mixing and other citational effects gives the effect of expressionism, points-of-view may be potentially infinite so allowing the audience a range of subjectivities to empathize with, or reject.

3. See especially, Richard Schechner, *Performance Theory* (London: Routledge, 1988) and Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre* (New York, Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982). See also Richard Schechner, *Between Theatre and Anthropology*, Forward by Victor Turner (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1985) 35-36 for the concept of ritual as “restored behavior,” that is, the acting out of collective memories or the renewal of forms of collective identity (35-36). For Turner, the concept of “*communitas*” is the community-producing effects of carnival, or other forms of community celebration (a celebration and affirmation of belonging). The ambiguity of the real/unreal relation fostered by the combination of play with ritual is supposed to allow an attack upon this very notion of community (a change of community is perhaps suggested) up to, but before the point of violent rejection by the audience (Turner, 1982, 47). This stopping short is intended to produce the most effective results in audience manipulation, but only if the “not-real” element of the drama is to be used to question the real identity of the audience. I will take a different view of the relation to performativity as will become evident in what follows.

4. The lineage of ritual in drama (also the lineage of the avant-garde) with its utopian, liberationist, or authenticist agenda, would run from Expressionism through Antonin Artaud and Jean-Louis Barrault, to the sixties, with Richard Schechner and the “Environmental Theatre,” and Judith Malina and Julian Beck’s time with “The Living Theatre” with the direct use of exorcism, communion rituals, etc., a tradition continued in to the seventies with Ralph Ortiz, and into the nineties with the “Roy Hart Theatre” and the “Wooster Group.” In the UK, David Rudkin has employed the sacrifice of an outsider figure (a tramp) in *Afor Night Come* (1962), his other plays of this type include *Sons of Light* (1976), and *The Triumph of the Dark* (1981); Peter Schaffer has experimented with ritual forms in his “Patria” cycle, see for example, *Patria One: The Characteristics Man* (1987). Even the latter, however, remain firmly within the overall ideological remit of the quest for authentic nature and utopian solutions.

5. See Anthony Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (London: Routledge, 1990), for definition of communities by exclusion and inclusion, especially in using, and being seen to use, the “right” symbols (verbal, dress) and rejecting or abjecting the “wrong” things. For a discussion of “primitivism” in twentieth century western cultures, see Marianna Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1990), and I. M. Lewis, *Social Anthropology in Perspective*, Second Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985) 207-210.

6. For the role of transgression in American literary history and especially in recent American culture and its links with questions of identity, see Peter Nesteruk, “The Incest Theme in American Writing,” *Borderlines* 4.4 (1997) 358-380 and “The Transgressive Turn: American Writing of the Late 1980s and Early 1990s,” *Borderlines* 2.4 (1995): 331-350.

7. Hubert and M. Mauss, *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function* (1898), (London: Cohen and West, 1964 reprint), trans. W. D. Hall, note the difference between, and evolution from gift-sacrifice (in exchange for some required end or thing—this category includes the gift exchanges between groups, variously classified as *Potlatch*, *Kula*, or *Fête*) and homage-sacrifice (with no apparent material return or exchange, but where—as with the gift exchange above—communal identity is re-consecrated—another form, renunciation, the sacrifice of the self, can also be read as a species of identity exchange) [2]). In essence: “Sacrifice is a religious act which, through the consecration of a victim modifies the condition of the moral person who accomplishes it.” I might add that the “victim” may also be an aspect or possession of self (collective or otherwise), and that the “moral person” may be plural. Again, “the condition of the moral person” clearly points to identity as the key beneficiary (13). Whatever the beliefs involved, the function appears to lie in the bonding together of a collective identity through ritual sacrality in order to facilitate collective survival.

8. See, for example, the novels of Dennis Cooper, for a playful use of figurative sacrifice in a negative assertion of gay self-identity.

9. In a famous example from fiction, the (white Southern) literary critic, Cleanth Brooks, has read the murder of the character, Joe Christmas (who may be, and who regards himself, as black, despite his ability to “pass” as white), in William Faulkner’s *Light In August* as a communion, and a healing of the community—this in all innocence. See Cleanth Brooks,

William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha County (London: Yale UP, 1963), chapter 4, "The Community and the Pariah" 47. If Faulkner's intention had been to expose the psychology of a racist Southern white identity, it certainly fell upon deaf ears.

10. The anthropological tradition which underpins my key category of "identity exchange" is that of Durkheim and Mauss, their followers in the 1930s in the *Collège de Sociologie*, and the influence of the latter on post-structuralist and (in America) critical anthropological thought. Texts worth mentioning are: Emil Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (New York: Free Press, 1965) translated by Joseph Ward Swain; Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (London: Routledge, 1990) and with Henri Hubert, *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function* (1898); Georges Bataille, *L'expérience Intérieure* (Paris: Gallimard, 1954), and *The Accursed Share: Volumes II & III* (New York: Zone, 1991). On "sovereignty," see 198-200 of *The Accursed Share: Volumes II & III*. Roger Caillois, *L'homme et le Sacré* (Paris: Gallimard, 1950), see 130-142 on *la Fête*. See Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (London: Fontana, 1993), chapter 5, "Ethos, World View, and the Analysis of Sacred Symbols" on ritual and the sacred (126-141). Geertz notes the anthropological tradition of Durkheim, that it, "emphasizes the manner in which belief and particularly ritual reinforce the traditional social ties between individuals; it stresses the way in which the social structure of a group is strengthened and perpetuated through the ritualistic or mythic symbolization of the underlying social values upon which it rests" (142).

11. For a possible precursor, one who uses ritual exchange both for a particular identity and for a general idea of utopia, for identity as becoming a discrete part of society and utopia as the possibility of its whole, see the work of Caryl Churchill, *Top Girls* (1983). In Churchill's work, the eponymous heroines describe the sacrifices made in exchange for their success. However, in this play, there is no such ritual as such. Effects of re-framing and political allegory are achieved through the dream (a form popular in the 1980s) and in Churchill's *A Mouthful of Birds* (1986), where a collective sacred is evoked in the course of a sequence of "ritual" possessions, the latter provoking changes in the individual identities of the "hosts."

12. Wood's plays contain ritual on two levels: (i) on a mythic level (performing the usual holistic and temporal anchoring functions of synecdoche and metalepsis), and (ii) through ritual within the plays, in the use of mummies, pantomime, or of a play within a play. Northern Ireland, as the site of communities or collective identities in conflict, is a good example of ritual as sacrifice to identity, or the performative of a collective suture, as a sign which differentiates one from other communities—and of the proof of loyalty as the participation in destruction of the other. In plays, of course, this destruction takes place in symbolic form, as a critique of the very real forms of murder of the other that take place in the actual life of the province.

13. Both plays take the problems of the New Europe of the East as their topic. Other Eastern European plays by Western European playwrights include: David Edgar, *The Shape of the Table* (1990); Timberlake Wertenbaker, *Three Birds Alighting in a Field* (1992) and *The Break of Day* (1995), and Caryl Churchill, *Mad Forest* (1990).

14. All references are taken from the TAG version, rehearsal draft.

15. See Boris Uspensky, *A Poetics of Composition*, translated by Valentina Zavarin and Susan Wittig (Berkeley: U of California P, 1973), on the semiotic importance of “beginning” and “ending,” and on marking out “the boundaries between the world of everyday experience and a world which has special semantic significance” (137-138).

16. Together with the *mis-en-abime* effect (self-reference, metaphor in miniature, or play within a play), the most popular form of ritual in drama is probably the rite of passage. Here, we must also ask ourselves the methodological question we asked of the relationship between ritual and drama: the some/all question. Can drama as such be read as a rite of passage or should this question only be directed towards episodic rites of passage contained within a particular drama? Again, I would suggest that the most rewarding answer is: both. Plays which are political or didactic rely on the “all” position as part of their dramatic strategy or intention—this is clearly the case with *Petra*. At this level all of the play is a performative ritual. This is especially the case with plays in the Brechtian *Lehrstück* tradition. Although it must be noted that the emotional, and, indeed, disturbing effects of some ritual types—“rebirth” or self-sacrifice, or both as in the drum scene from *Mother Courage*—are the very antithesis of the pure “alienation effect” with its rational distance allowing of an internal “dialectical” debate within the spectator. In practice, such effects were never so pure or unemotive: indeed, the nearer to ritual they came, the more emotive they became.

17. The question of the play’s power to intervene in the world, that is to change minds and, potentially, to effect events, has been discussed in terms of “performance efficacy,” where the play’s success is judged by the impact of the play upon an audience—who might even be hostile to the play’s message. See especially the “Conclusion” to, Baz Kershaw, *The Politics of Performance: Radical Theatre and Cultural Intervention* (London: Routledge, 1992).

18. See Stanton B. Garner, Jr., “Rewriting Europe: *Pentecost* and the Crossroads of Migration,” *Essays in Theatre/Etudes Théâtrales*, vol. 16, no. 1, November 1997, 3-14, where the author notes that, “Edgar’s strategies . . . close of more radical ways of imagining cultural encounters” (11).

19. If theatrical tradition has primarily used the dream as an indicator of the inner self, as a window onto subjectivity (as a dramatic equivalent of the lyric genre), then this particular usage remains firmly in referential mode. We are shown something that happened, or is happening, elsewhere. Insofar as dream is used to figure “other places,” with a potential future deixis (as a critical political allegory, for example), then we also have a reference to “another place,” even if sublime or imaginary. Therefore, these examples are not performatives in any special, sub-generic sense; although they may frame a scene in a ritual-like fashion.

20. “Performativity” or “performance” may admit several meanings: (i) in the discourse of drama criticism, the reference is to the actual performance, as opposed to the written text (when apposite—one of the contentions of this article is that, the world of interpretation, performance, or realization, and text may be discussed as one, with exceptions being allowed only when the specific mode of consumption produces notable differences in meaning); (ii) in the discourse of literary and cultural criticism, “performativity” refers to speech act-type situations where form enacts content, or (a version of the same thing) where

text becomes self-referential (also, all text may finally be read as “performative,” as enacting its meaning on the level of the signifier); (iii) half-way, as it were, between the first two definitions, between dramatic practice and literary rhetoric, we find ritual as a special case of performativity; both “real” and “unreal,” enacted and non-acted, literal and figural, present and non-present, ritual is two-faced, or double-headed on all levels, thus effectively bridging all levels. Lastly, it is worth noting that sacrificial relations and exchanges of the type I have called “identity exchange” are an important part (if not the single most important part) of the notion of ritual.

21. The performative tension in the idea of “dream” in drama, comes from the ambiguity between dream as a report of a dream (we are not dreaming) and dream as dream-like episodes (it is “as if” we were dreaming). The intensification implied by the latter has ritual resonance (one way of making sense of, or “naturalizing,” *Petra* would be to read the contents of the play as Petra’s, the character’s, dream).

22. See Richard Schechner, *Between Theatre and Anthropology*, forward by Victor Turner (Philadelphia, PA: U of Pennsylvania P, 1985) 35-36. See also the definition of all acting as ritual, 54-55.