

## ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

# The Difficult Integration of Liminal Individuals

François Bousquet<sup>1\*</sup>, Valérie Barbat<sup>2</sup>, and François Cooren<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Marketing, ESC Pau Business School, Pau, France

<sup>2</sup>Department of Marketing, Kedge Business School, Bordeaux, France

<sup>3</sup>Head of the Department of Communication, Université Montréal, Québec, Canada

## Abstract

In anthropology, a rite of passage is a process voluntarily initiated to allow an individual or a group move through a difficult stage of transformation. The liminal period is the intermediate stage of this process. The idea of liminality has been widely used in the social sciences and in management. However, although it initially had a strong operational dimension for carrying out a transformation, it has become a simple concept describing the situation of individuals who are disoriented and sidelined. Nonetheless, organizational management needs operational tools to facilitate the integration of individuals during transition phases. This article seeks to understand how rituals can facilitate the integration process of liminal individuals. We study a case of ritual passage within a highly ritualized nonreligious organization: a Masonic lodge. We identify several mechanisms, activated through the ritual, that help to integrate liminal individuals. We analyze them through the *ventriloquial* perspective of communication, borrowed from the theory called Communicative Constitution of Organization (CCO). The results show that the ritual favors (1) the integration of individuals by reducing the ambiguity of the liminal situation, (2) the affirmation of a temporality, (3) the alignment of individual and collective objectives, (4) the recognition of otherness, (5) the lesser hierarchization of individuals, (6) the reduction of *hyper-subjectivity*, (7) the use of *declarative statements*, and (8) the *rise in authority*. We discuss the discrepancies between these results and works on liminality in management and the possible transposition of these mechanisms to various organizations.

**Keywords:** *Liminality; Ritual; Organizational communication; Communicative constitution of organization; Ventriloquation*

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In a rite of passage, the liminal phase designates the intermediate period through which individuals pass during their transformation, which can mark the passage from childhood to adulthood, from life to death, or from one season to another. In his 1909 book, the French anthropologist Arnold Van Gennep describes this transformation in three stages: (1) a period of separation that isolates an individual from their everyday life (preliminary phase), (2) a liminal phase in which the individual no longer belongs to an order that is bygone for them but has not yet integrated a new order; and (3) a phase of integration (also known as aggregation or post-liminal) that enables the individual to reintegrate into a community. The liminal phase is often embedded in a rite or ritual,<sup>1</sup> that is, a formalized practice involving predetermined actions or words

<sup>1</sup> The distinction between *rites* and *rituals* is unstable. We adopt the terms used by different researchers, without differentiating between them. For a discussion see Kreinath (2018) and Smith and Stewart (2011).

(Kreinath, 2018). The simple performance of the ritual enables the expected effect to be obtained, such as. In management, the use of rituals as an operational tool has been highlighted (Berinato, 2020; Islam & Zyphur, 2009; Smith & Stewart, 2011). These may include, for example, company meals that help stabilize the organization (Plester, 2015), shareholder meetings that unite small shareholders (Chinyere & Jill, 2015), and so on.

The management literature has taken up the concept of liminality to analyze situations of organizational and individual transformation (Söderlund & Borg, 2018). This concept captures the substance of a chaotic, uncertain, ambiguous stage, such as a company undergoing reorganization (Howard-Grenville et al., 2011) and an employee between two jobs (Garsten, 1999). Putting some employees in a liminal situation sometimes appears to be an organizational solution for change. For example, a company can set up reflection workshops in order to question some of its practices (Howard-Grenville et al., 2011).

**\*Corresponding author:** François Bousquet, Email: francois.bousquet@esc-pau.fr

The employee leaves their department (separation phase) and temporarily joins a workshop in which they are no longer subject to the same rules and can act more creatively (preliminary phase). Then, they are reintegrated into a department. This process enables the organization to keep the benefits of the transformation without being destabilized. In some cases, liminality can become perennial, constituting a permanent adaptation strategy. This is how Goulart Szejnberg and Giovanardi (2017) analyze the role of consultants.

Frequently, the integration phase appears as a horizon hoped for by the individual but that is difficult to reach; the problem is then posed from the point of view of individuals living in a situation of painful marginality. This is the case of temporary employees, those on precarious contracts, or those looking for work. Their situation is portrayed as risky, full of uncertainty, self-questioning, and boring (Boland & Griffin, 2015; Esbenschade et al., 2019; Garsten, 1999). The position of employees in career transition is described as not only ambivalent, combining opportunity and freedom, but also anxiety, uncertainty, questioning, loss of identity, deconstruction, loss of control, and stress (Beech, 2011; Conroy & O'Leary-Kelly, 2014; Gray & Saunders, 2017; Ibarra & Obodaru, 2016; Pontefract, 2014; Tansley & Tietze, 2013). The same emotions are attributed to international executives who are neither here nor there (Guimaraes-Costa & Cunha, 2009), volunteers within an association remaining in search of meaning (Toraldino et al., 2019), consultants seeking a balance between professional and private life (Johnsen & Sørensen, 2015), and employees undergoing contradictory injunctions between respecting the rules (legality) and adapting to circumstances (illegality) (Cunha & Cabral-Cardoso, 2006).

In most cases, liminal individuals can escape their liminality only by their own efforts (Cunha & Cabral-Cardoso, 2006; Cunha et al., 2010; Esbenschade et al., 2019; Garsten, 1999; Ibarra & Obodaru, 2016; Johnsen & Sørensen, 2015). Some work highlights the need for continued interactions between individuals and structures (Beech, 2011; Conroy & O'Leary-Kelly, 2014; Daly et al., 2015; Frick et al., 2020; Guimaraes-Costa & Cunha, 2009; Wagner et al., 2012) without always explaining the nature of these interactions. The role of coaches and mentors is also emphasized (Carlone, 2006; Gray & Saunders, 2017; Pontefract, 2014; Prashantham & Floyd, 2019; Tansley & Tietze, 2013). Some research shows that a harmonious balance must be found between liminality and integration (Frick et al., 2020), but for others, the end of this phase involves real negotiation, facing resistance, confronting conflict, and, with hope, resulting in pacification (Esbenschade et al., 2019; Wagner et al., 2012). A few works mention the usefulness of symbols or rituals (Howard-Grenville et al., 2011; Ibarra & Obodaru, 2016; Johnson et al., 2010; Tansley & Tietze, 2013), but they provide little explanation of how these items or practices can enable integration.

There is a paradox here. Initially, liminality was theorized in anthropology as an operational tool that would enable an individual's smooth crossing into a new stage. In management, however, the concept of liminality is often mobilized to note the incompleteness of this transformation. Liminality has changed in nature: it has ceased to be an operational tool activated voluntarily through a ritual, enabling the successful overcoming of an obstacle and has become an analytical, or even simply descriptive, tool, making the observation of the incompleteness of a transformation.

The need to find solutions for integrating individuals who are at the beginning of their careers is a real organizational challenge, for example, to integrate new employees or to help employees evolve within the same company.

These observations lead us to ask what mechanisms, in a ritual process, favor the integration of liminal individuals?

To address this question, we return to the initial theorization of liminality in a ritual context and identify the successive alterations that the concept has undergone. Then, we mobilize a theoretical framework for considering rituals as a performative communicative form. We find this framework in the so-called Communication as Constitutive of Organization (CCO) approach (Cooren, 2010, 2012), particularly in its reinterpretation of the work of Austin (1962) and Searle (1968). This approach focuses on the notion of ventriloquation. It constitutes a grid for analyzing rituals in their performative and procedural dimensions.

Finally, in order to grasp the liminality within a highly ritualized contemporary organization, in which the integration process succeeds, we have conducted a case study based on a Masonic rite of passage. As we will see, a Masonic lodge is a full-fledged organization that can be singled out by the importance of the use of its rituals. It is an *intense* case, in the sense of Miles and Huberman (1994), in which the objects of study (separation, liminary, and integration phases) are strongly visible. Such a case makes it possible to highlight all the mechanisms at work for the integration of liminal individuals.

We analyze the ritual with the help of the ventriloquial perspective and the interviews of Freemasons on the way they appropriate this rite. The discussion then focuses on the mechanisms identified and their possible transposition to other organizations.

## Literature review

We reconsider Arnold Van Gennep's initial theorization to identify the alterations undergone by the concept of liminality. This approach fits into the research agenda of Söderlund and Borg (2018), who argue for a reappropriation, in management sciences, of this initial work. Finally, to understand how the particular form of communication that is a ritual of passage effects an organizational transformation, we mobilize the CCO approach.

## The alterations of the initial theorization of liminality

We consider four major alterations of the concept of liminality: the abandonment of the magic-religious dimension, the total or partial abandonment of the ritual dimension, the emphasis on a hyper-subjectivity of the individual, and the abandonment of a temporality.

### Abandonment of the magico-religious dimension in the works concerning the liminal period and the rituals in management

In the rituals described by Van Gennep, their operative power lies in the information communicated, its affective dimension, and its magical character. In management, the informative dimension is highlighted. The ritual refers to acquired knowledge, introduces others, and disseminates injunctions (Smith & Stewart, 2011). Hambrick and Lovelace (2018) point out that rituals accentuate or reduce the importance of certain themes. The affective dimension of ritual, both emotional and sensory, has been frequently emphasized (Smith & Stewart, 2011), for example, in business parties (Cayla et al., 2013) and theatrical performances within firms, increasing the suggestibility of employees (Clark & Mangham, 2004); in artistic performances in companies (Reinhold, 2017); and in Masonic practices (Bryon-Portet, 2011).

However, the magical component of the ritual is abandoned without, to our knowledge, being subject to discussion. We understand the impossibility of mobilizing magic-religious theories in a scientific approach to management, so it makes sense that rituals are, thus, reduced to informative and affective devices.

### Frequent abandonment of the ritualistic dimension in the work on the liminal period

As early as 1969, Turner underlined the mutations of the concept by distinguishing between the adjectives *liminal* and *liminoid*. If the term *liminal* (or *liminary*) remains faithful to Van

**Table 1.** Distinction between *liminal* and *liminoid* according to Turner (1969)

Liminary	Liminoid
Switching from one structure to another predefined structure	Passage from one structure to another, not necessarily predefined
Limited group	Large population
Compulsory action	Free action
Collectivity, expression of the history of a group	Individuality, idiosyncrasy (hyper-subjectivity, in our lexicon)
Limited duration	Possible permanence

Gennep's meaning, the term *liminoid* differs from it in several areas. *Liminal* corresponds to the liminal period within restricted groups. It is the characteristic of rituals in their archaic forms. It is a stage of limited duration, defined in a negative way (neither what was nor what will be), at the heart of a collective process, which translates the history of a group. Conversely, *liminoid* refers to a liminal period within a vast population. It is the characteristic of the rituals of postindustrial societies, especially during crises. It is a period of uncertain duration, positively defined by great freedom and creativity. It is idiosyncratic, possibly subversive. Turner engages in a metaphorical extension of the concept of liminality. It becomes any interval outside the normative structure. It is sometimes simply a decentered point of the institution. A movement of protest, a new artistic current, and a rupture with a social group are, thus, qualified to be considered liminoid. Table 1 synthesizes this distinction.

Turner's approach, which has been widely adopted in management (Söderlund & Borg, 2018), has fostered subsequent extensions of the concept, though without taking up its lexical distinction. These have led to the adoption of the concept in contexts with little or no ritualization (Thomassen, 2016). Smith and Stewart (2011) show that these range from highly formalized rituals with strong transformative power to activities with simple ritualistic components, which have less operative force.

In management, in most work on liminality, the ritualistic process is rarely mentioned centrally (Tansley & Tietze, 2013) and is now identified only as a background (Söderlund & Borg, 2018). It is replaced by a routine (Wilhoit, 2017) or even disappears. Thomassen (2016) argues for the use of the concept outside of ritual.

### Putting forward the hyper-subjectivity of the liminal individual

Liminal individuals are often described in a doubly subjective position. On the one hand, they have freedom of judgment. On the other hand, they are subjective in the sense of Turner (1982), that is, free from structures and rules. They have the power of initiative and of questioning. The group can take advantage of this freedom of liminal subjects, for example, consultants (Czarniawska & Mazza, 2003) to draw organizational dynamics from it (Clark & Mangham, 2004; Garsten, 1999; Howard-Grenville et al., 2011; Islam & Zyphur, 2009; Knox et al., 2007; Plester, 2015).

The liminal period for Turner (1969, p. 95) is 'necessarily ambiguous; the subject 'elude[s] or slip[s] through the network of classifications that normally locate[s] states and positions in cultural space'. The term *ambiguity* has come to occupy such a place within the concept in that any ambiguity in an individual's position in relation to a structure is sufficient to consider them

liminal (Söderlund & Borg, 2018). However, in Van Gennep's (1909) work, the words *ambiguity*, *ambivalence*, *equivocation*, and *uncertainty* are never used. A shift has occurred. The term *margin*, in which Van Gennep's work referred to the fact of being outside two pre- and post-liminary structures, gradually came to designate, after Turner (1969), a chaotic situation, devoid of reference points. Whereas the liminal individual was described by Van Gennep as integrating a process of transformation guided by a ritual, the individual is now presented as a disoriented subject within a disorganized space.

### Abolition of temporality

The liminal period is initially an intermediate period circumscribed in time. Turner (1969) emphasizes, for his part, the indefiniteness of its duration. In management, the rites of passage are, thus, sometimes considered a permanent process of transformation. Campos et al. (2015) propose, for example, the concept of a *longitudinal rite of passage*. Garsten (1999) shows that temporary employees may remain in a permanent liminal state that never leads to permanent recruitment by a company. Nissim and De Vries (2014) and Thomassen (2016) also analyze situations of permanent liminal periods. This abolition of the temporality inherent in the original conception of a liminal period is a final alteration of Van Gennep's theorization.

### Definition of the theoretical framework necessary to study the impact of these four alterations

Our goal is to understand how liminality has lost its nature as an operational tool. We envision that the alterations we have just identified have contributed to this. Söderlund and Borg (2018) recommend a return to the French anthropologist's original theorization to concretely study a liminality situation in an organizational comprehension and context that is as compatible as possible with the original theorization.

We need to mobilize a theoretical framework that enables us to understand the performative capacity of ritual – beyond a simple cognitive and affective action – as well as its communicative, organizational, and processual nature. We mobilize the CCO theory according to a *ventriloquial* approach. In the following section, we recall the main aspects of this approach and show its capacity to meet our objectives.

### The mobilization of the CCO approach to understand the operativity of rituals during the integration phase

The CCO approach, outlined by Canadian researcher James R. Taylor (1988), is essentially about conceiving communication in its performative and organizing dimensions (Boivin et

al., 2017; Brummans et al., 2014; Cooren, 2000; Hildwein, 2020). Although communication is typically approached as a phenomenon taking place in organizations, with Taylor's work, the perspective is reversed, leading us to study the organization as a phenomenon taking place and embodied in *communication* (Taylor & Van Every, 2000).

According to Nathues et al. (2021), the study of communication focuses on interactions by showing how they participate in the establishment or reproduction of a stabilized context in which we evolve and to which we contribute. Although close to the ethno-methodological perspective proposed by Garfinkel (1967), it differs from it in the place given to *other-than-humans* in the constitution of social and organizational forms. Echoing the actor-network theory (Callon, 1986; Latour, 2005), the CCO approach takes into account what is *active* in a situation: humans, technologies, tools, objects, procedures, and so on.

Rather than invoking an overarching structure that instructs or even determines human action, this approach attempts to identify everything that can *make a difference* through communication. In other words, there is no structure/action dualism (Parsons, 1968) or duality (Giddens, 1984), but rather a multitude of acting elements whose effects must be identified in a given context. To take just one example, a manager – let's call her Christine – who addresses a subordinate – let's call him Emilian – by asking him to take care of a client file is not the only one to express herself in this situation. If Emilian complies, it is because he recognizes that this is a request made not only by someone named Christine but also by his supervisor, and he must comply. From a CCO perspective, when Christine speaks to Emilian at work, it is also her status as a manager that is expressing itself and that makes difference in this situation. Christine is both an actor and a passer: not only *an actor* because she is asking Emilian to do something but also *a passer* because through her, Emilian and we recognize that it is the line of authority that is being expressed.

The CCO approach, thus, shows that what classical sociologists call a *structure* (whether organizational or social) is composed of other-than-human elements, acting or not, whose effects can be identified. This approach makes it possible to account for situations where, for example, the employee would say, 'That's more for Julie to do; she's in charge of those customers'. From this perspective, Emilian implicitly invokes the division of labor; a stabilized element, to indicate to his supervisor that he does not have to take care of this file. It is the definition of tasks that dictates, according to him, that this file should be entrusted to his colleague Julie.<sup>2</sup> If his supervisor agrees, we can conclude that this invocation,

<sup>2</sup> For a concrete example of this type of interaction, see Larsson and Lundholm (2013).

made by Emilian, makes a difference in the evolution of what happened in this interaction, by enabling Christine to recognize her mistake.

In order to analyze this organizational polyphony, Cooren (2010, 2018), thus, proposes to conceive of communication as a form of ventriloquation. By ventriloquation, we mean that human actors *constantly make* other actors *speak* in their exchanges (absent people, rules, protocols, facts, etc.). Thus, Emilian makes his task definition speak, which positions him as an actor and a passer. Ventriloquation places humans not only in the comforting position of the ventriloquist but also as puppets, animated by what they express (Hildwein, 2020). Ventriloquation, thus, involves *delegation* as a spokesperson. To argue is to convince by multiplying the *coauthors* of our position in order to *rise in authority* (Cooren, 2010). The link between authority and authoring is an essential element of the ventriloquial process. This process of decentering and delegating is also an essential feature.

Analyzing a ritual according to a ventriloquial approach leads to the identification of who or what is expressing themselves/itself by delegation and who or what organizes the passage from one state to another. The speech acts identified (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969, 1979) are produced by humans and other-than-humans (procedures, clothing, artifacts, etc.). They also get to *say and do things*. The ventriloquial approach makes it possible to account for the transformational and stabilizing dimension of ritual, insofar as these other-than-human elements ensure, *through the iterability of their actions*, the very stability of this process.

To analyze the organizing dimension of communication (Cooren, 2000) is to identify, in these speech acts, the different types of action-structuring activities, whether these speech acts are assertives, commissives, directives, expressives, or declarations, in the Searlian sense (Searle, 1979), and whether they are performed by humans or other-than-humans (Cooren, 2000). In our analyses, we will highlight, in particular, the contrast between *assertives*, which consist of affirming the existence of something, and *declarations*, which consist of *making something exist* by declaring it. As we shall see, one of the strengths of the CCO approach is specifically in showing how the strength of the ritual is born through the use of these declarations and of the ventriloquation that makes their effectiveness possible.

## Methodology

### **Justification of the interest of an intense case**

We seek to understand the articulations in a passage process, ritualistic actions, and an organizational context. As Smith and Stewart (2011) point out, the greater the effects of rituals are, the more accentuated their ritualization is. We need an

empirical case in which the mechanisms are strongly salient, what Miles and Huberman (1994) call *intense cases*, to refer to rich cases that express the phenomenon with intensity but without focusing on an unusual manifestation of the phenomenon under study. We selected a case of a contemporary organization in which the phenomena of liminality and rituals of passage appear clearly: a ritual of passage in Freemasonry (FM), more specifically, a ritual of the opening session.

### **Justification of the choice of the site**

FM is an organization that gathers men and women together for moral and societal reflections. It is organized in autonomous associations, called lodges, which generally include 20–50 brothers or sisters. The lodges are federated by a national association, which is, in our case, a male Masonic obedience: the Grand Lodge of France (GLF). Each lodge has a status under the French Law of Associations, which is declared at the prefecture, informs the administration of the names of its representatives, must be able to justify the state of its accounts, has its premises inspected by safety commissions, and so on. It is an organization in its own right. Any person of legal age may apply to the GLF, if their address is public. After interviews, the lodge decides on the basis of the applicant's perceived motivation. The new entrant has the status of apprentice, then companion, and finally master, which makes them eligible for functions within the lodge.

Each year, a lodge elects a president, called Worshipful Master (WM) in Masonic language, a Treasurer, a Secretary, a First Overseer in charge of companions, and a Second Overseer in charge of Apprentices.<sup>3</sup> The working sessions take place every 2 weeks and focus on the exchange of ideas on various moral and societal themes. The particularity of the Masonic working method is the important use of symbols and rituals. The members of the lodge are workers building a symbolic construction, like their predecessors, who were builders of cathedrals. The opening ritual precedes each work session and enables participants to break away from the concerns of their daily lives. It is this ritual of passage that we propose to study.

What is commonly referred to as *Masonic secrecy* refers to the material impossibility of transmitting an experience to be lived. The only prohibition concerns the disclosure of the identity of Freemasons or their personal statements without their agreement. The GLF, like other Masonic obediences, has a library open to non-Masons, hosts radio programs and conferences, publishes Masonic works that are available in bookstores, and encourages academic work on the subject.

<sup>3</sup> The offices and denominations of the officers vary according to Masonic obedience. In English, we use a translation of the terms in use in the Grand Lodge of France.

Henri, 50 years old, <sup>4</sup> 15 years of Masonry, export company manager, 1 interview at the interviewer's home (8 h)
Pascal, 57 years old, 25 years of Masonry, lawyer, 1 interview through Teams (1 h 45 min)
Jules, 55 years old, 18 years of Masonry, managed a lodge, engineer in a large industrial group, 1 interview at his home (2 h)
Benoît, 50 years old, 18 years of Masonry, university student, currently runs a lodge, 1 interview through Zoom (1 h 30 min)

**Figure 1.** Nature and modalities of the interviews

The practice of a ritual does not require any magical or religious beliefs.

### Data collection

The first data that fed this case came from the prolonged contact of one of the coauthors with FM. An assiduous experience during 13 years within the GLF allowed him to participate in this opening ritual more than 300 times, to participate in the work of about 25 lodges, to be member of two of them, and to exercise several functions within the group. This database contributes to the credibility (Masonic expertise) and transferability (multiplication of Masonic environments) of the approach, but has two limitations. The data were collected prior to the realization of this study, and therefore without protocol. The restitution of these data to the other coauthors does not allow for a distinction between the observed data and its interpretation. Therefore, a complementary collection was undertaken to improve the reliability of the data by triangulating the information.

We gathered a lot of written data, in particular the text of the ritual for the opening of the First Degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, diagrams of the lodge layout, Masonic books (written by Alain Pozarnik, Oswald Wirth, Tort-nouguès, and Jules-Pascal Bayard), the magazine *Points de Vue Initiatiques*, published by the GLF, as well as several PhD theses on the GLF. Our non-Masonic coauthors were also able to immerse themselves in the Masonic context and its practice.

In addition, four semi-structured, anonymous interviews were conducted with GLF members who were informed about the project, for a total duration of just over 13 h (see Figure 1). These interviews allowed us to triangulate our interpretations and gather personal experiences. In their research program on liminality, Söderlund and Borg (2018) emphasize the necessary analysis of the lived experience, its ritualization, and temporality. Finally, as the vocation of the FM is to transpose outside the transformations that each person has accomplished within it, and as each of

our interlocutors had the experience of a specific professional organization, the exchanges also led to comments on the possibilities and difficulties of a transposition of the Masonic method to other organizations. These comments are part of the material we analyzed.

The interviews were conducted according to a guide with the following themes:

1. Interpretation of the ritual: analysis of each part of the ritual (texts, silences, symbols, and movements), analysis of the progression and sequencing, and purpose of the ritual
2. Personal experience of the ritual: effects produced by its practice, particular importance given to certain components, stability of these effects, variations and dysfunctions, and accounts of possible experiences of transposition of comparable methods to non-Masonic organizations

### Scientific nature of the approach

The credibility of our analyses lies in the fact that this ritual has been practiced hundreds of times by the Freemasons whom we interviewed, which reduces the risks of misinterpretation. Transferability is shown by the fact that the analyses were carried out in different contexts: the attendance of dozens of different lodges by the Masons interviewed. Reliability is proved through the important means of triangulation: interviews, collection of texts, and personal experience of one of the authors. Beyond the lived experiences and the comparison between them, the data could be cross-checked with documents, magazines, and books written by Masons. Confirmability is ensured by the fact that the non-Mason coauthors who participated in this research had access to all the data and were able to build their own analysis. Concerning the possible generalization of the results, Hlady Rispal (2002) notes that this is not based on statistical representativeness but on the plausibility of the reasoning leading to the results. What enables an analytical generalization is to take into account as precisely as possible the context in which the phenomenon was observed.

<sup>4</sup> The average age of GLF members is 59.

## Analysis of the ritual using the CCO approach

We present next our analysis of different sequences of the ritual by providing extracts, didascalies partly written by us, as well as the CCO analysis of this process. We then present excerpts of participants' interviews.

### CCO analysis of the different sequences of the ritual

#### The separation period

*The brothers are outside the Temple, on the forecourt. They get rid of their personal objects [bags, phones, ...]. They have put on the apron of their rank, which is checked by the master of ceremonies; the masters wear a harness and some of them a saltire corresponding to their office. In some lodges, they have an identical gown covering their personal clothing. The Temple is dark, the door open. Silence is established.*

*Guided by the master of ceremonies, the brothers enter in silence. Each one is placed on a 'column', that is to say, on a side of the lodge, according to his rank.*

*The Worshipful Master (WM), who directs the work of the lodge, sits first.*

*The WM says: 'Take your places, brothers.<sup>5</sup> We will proceed to the opening of the lodge. Brother Second Overseer, what is the first duty of a lodge overseer?'*

*Second Overseer: 'WM, it's to make sure we're covered'.<sup>6</sup>*

*At the request of the WM, and then of the second Overseer, the Inner Guard placed near the door of the temple goes outside, sees that no one asks to enter, then returns inside by closing the door.*

*The Inner Guard: 'Brother Second Overseer, the lodge is duly covered'.*

*Extract 1 of the ritual and didascalies*

For some, the separation phase begins earlier. Benoît, for instance, states, 'It starts as soon as I leave home'. Ventriloquation is already at work on the forecourt. The new outfits and accessories worn by the participants, indeed, indicate that a transformation is underway. The Masonic aprons, sashes, and collars reduce the individual characteristics and emphasize the functions. To put on an apron is to *delegate*, in a process of ventriloquation, to this garment the task of expressing the transformation that is taking place and the new identity that these people are in the process of granting themselves. Henri is clear on this point: 'Everyone has a role; it is very theatrical'. Furthermore, these props actively

participate in the transformation but *anticipate* and *stabilize* it insofar as they guide the way in which this transformation is to take place. Henri spontaneously indicated: 'The ritual brings about a change, but by putting in order, *Ordo ab Chaos*,<sup>7</sup> it is a change that produces balance'.

This period of separation continues as the brothers are each guided by the Brother Second Overseer to a designated location, called a column, according to his rank. Here again, the protocol stabilizes the process. The Master of Ceremonies is *an actor*, because he designates each one's place, and a *passer*, because he becomes the instrument of a protocol that *dictates iteratively* where each one is supposed to stand. This logic of ordering, whose performativity anticipates and stabilizes the process, will be expressed throughout this ritual. If only one participant could not find his place on the column and remained standing, this stability would not exist, and the session could not be opened. This shows that all participants are performing the ritual because each of them has the power to make the goal of opening impossible.

This period of separation ends when the Inner Guard announces, 'The lodge is duly covered', that is, it is separated from what has remained on the forecourt. Benoît says, 'At that moment, we know that we are protected from any interruption'. There is, therefore, an inside and an outside. In closing the door of the temple, the Inner Guard acts in accordance with what the Second Overseer tells him, who, in turn, acts in accordance with what the WM tells him, who, in turn, acts in accordance with what protocol tells him. We, thus, observe here a kind of *cascading ventriloquation* in which the WM and the Second Overseer ventriloquize the protocol, which then leads the Inner Guard to act accordingly.

From a performative point of view, we note that the words of the Inner Guard have an assertive value because they consist of informing the participants of not only a state of affairs (i.e., that the lodge is, indeed, duly covered), but also a declarative one insofar as this assertion *formalizes* the closing of the temple and thus the possibility of moving forward with the ritual.

#### The liminal period

*The WM: 'Brother First Overseer, what is the second duty of a lodge overseer?'*

*First Overseer: 'WM, it is to make sure that all assistants are apprentice Masons in their place and office'.*

*The WM: 'In this case, Brothers First and Second Overseers, please make sure, each one of you, on your column and report to me! Stand up my Brothers, facing the East. You will be recognized as apprentices when the Brother Overseers pass'.*

<sup>5</sup> Here the term *sisters* would be used for a female lodge.

<sup>6</sup> To be cut off from the outside world and protected.

<sup>7</sup> Reference to the Masonic motto inscribed in the lodge.

The WM stands up. All the assistants do the same and turn squarely to the East. The two Brother Overseers carrying their mallets cross to the West. They slowly move up towards the East, each inspecting his column. Before crossing in front of the altar of the oaths, they stop for a moment, face each other and greet each other. They return to their tray. The Brother Expert puts himself in order.

Second Overseer: 'WM, all assistants who decorate the Septentrion column are FM apprentices, in their place and office.'

First Overseer: 'WM, all assistants who decorate the Septentrion and Midi columns are FM apprentices, in their place and office.'

The WM is getting into order. 'It is the same in the East. Brothers, you may face each other. Since the lodge is duly covered and all assistants are FM apprentices, let us enter the lanes that are marked out for us.'

*Extract 2 of the ritual and didascalies*

The WM validates participant compliance, not on his own but by soliciting the overseers and asking them to ventriloquize the ritual. This formula, thus, reinforces the iterative performativity of the protocol by appealing to a shared knowledge of the ritual. The hierarchical power of the WM's function is, thus, reduced to that of allowing the ritual to express itself.

It is noteworthy that the structure of the ritual is also punctuated by episodes that begin and end throughout the turns of talk. It is these episodes that operate the transformations. Thus, the participants first look toward the light, then they are recognized as Masons (as one would recognize the majority of a person by a presentation of their identity card; they are fit, conform). This recognition occurs before they have acted and gives them the ability to interact with each other and face each other.

The ritual is punctuated exclusively by predefined acts, without individual expression. It structures and stabilizes the ceremony. Henri remarks, 'There are very few brothers to whom the ritual gives a voice. Most have only a posture to hold'. Moreover, there is not on one side an overhanging structure (that of the protocol) and, on the other, the acts of the protagonists, but rather a joint and stabilized action of the protocol and of those who are animated by it and who animate it. The officers appear as brothers who simply know how to implement the ritual.

WM: 'Brother First Overseer, what did we ask when we first entered the Temple?'

First Overseer: 'The light, VM'.

In response to the WM's requests, the First Overseer lights up the lodge by placing three candles located on top of columns and surrounding the lodge board covered with various signs. He also places, in front of the WM, the book of the sacred law (often the Old Testament but sometimes a blank book), a compass, and a square. Book and compass are open. To move, the expert turns clockwise around the lodge.

*Extract 3 of the ritual and didascalies*

Here, the objects structure the ritual. Although the temple has remained dark until now, the candles begin to light up the lodge. They participate in the liminal period and thus in the passage from one structure to another. However, the book, the compass, and the square mark this same passage. In terms of ventriloquation, the First Overseer delegates to these objects an important part of the action of opening the session. The objects and movements perform the bulk of the ritual, which, in this sequence, lasts several minutes with few words. A new stage of ordering and stabilization is reached by verifying the alignment of each person's intentions with the intentions of the group: receiving the light. As Jules points out, 'To understand the meaning of the words, let's not forget that these rituals date back to the Age of Enlightenment ....'

At the request of the WM, 'Take a seat, brothers', everyone sits down.

(...)

WM: 'Brother Second Overseer, how old are you?'

Second Overseer: 'Three years, WM'

(...)

WM: 'Brother Second Overseer, where is your place in the lodge?'

Second Overseer: 'At noon, WM'

(...)

The WM: 'Brother First Overseer, where is your place in the lodge?'

First Overseer: 'To the West, VM'.

(...)

The WM: 'Brother First Overseer, where is the WM placed in the lodge?'

First Overseer: 'To the East, WM'.

WM: 'Why is it placed this way?'

First Overseer: 'As the sun rises in the East to open the day's course, so the WM sits in the East to open the lodge and direct the work'.

(...)

WM: 'Brother Second Overseer, at what time do the apprentice Masons usually open their work?'

Second Overseer: 'At noon, WM'.

The WM: 'What time is it?'

The Second Overseer: 'It's full noon, WM'.

*Extract 4 of the ritual and didascalies*

This passage marks the establishment of a *new temporality*. The Second Overseer indicates that he is 3 years old, the age of a brother in the first degree of Masonry, and that he is at midday. These answers have not only an assertive value but also a declarative value by establishing a new temporality.

From a spatial point of view, the same is true. Before the ritual begins, the space is not ordered (there is chaos). Then, it is said that the temple has an east (where the WM sits), a west (the door of the Temple), a noon (the column of companions in the south), and a septentrion (the column of apprentices in the north). As Henri specifies, 'It is a setting in order of space (...)'.<sup>8</sup>

The Second Overseer's answers are assertive, except for the last one, which is declarative and establishes a new time. Here again, the ritual stabilizes this change of space-time.

## The integration period

WM: 'Since it is time, we are of age and everything is in accordance with the rite, Brothers First and Second Overseers, please inform the brothers who are on the columns, as I inform those who sit in the East, that I will open the session of this respectable lodge.

(...) Rise and order my brothers! Brothers Expert and Master of Ceremonies, form the square with the sword and the cane above the Altar of the Oaths. [The WM takes the flaming sword in his left hand and the mallet in his right hand and presents these tools.] To the Glory of the Great Architect of the Universe, in the name of Universal Freemasonry, and under the auspices of [name of the Masonic obedience], by virtue of the Powers vested in me, I declare open according to the Rite to the grade of Apprentice, this Respectable Lodge of St. John, constituted in the East of [name of the city in which the lodge is located] under the distinctive title [specific name of the lodge].

To me, my Brothers, by the Sign (gestures of the Brothers), the Drum (several strokes are struck simultaneously), and the Scottish Acclamation (the acclamation sounds three times), Liberty – Equality – Fraternity (invocations pronounced by all the Brothers at once). My Brothers, we are no longer in the profane world. We have left our metals at the door of the temple: let us raise our hearts in brotherhood and let our eyes turn towards the Light!

Following this opening ritual, the works of the lodge begins. They will end with a closing ritual.

*Extract 5 of the ritual and didascalies*

The WM announces that he will open the works of the lodge and insists on two points. First, he evokes all the acts that have been performed in the introductory period, which have brought the lodge into conformity. He further increases this rise in authority by demanding that the final ritual acts be performed. Second, he insists that the *I* he utters here for the first time is that of an officer who must act according to the ritual, by virtue of conferred authority, and is not a personal statement.

At the end of these reminders, he then produces a *declaration* that acknowledges the passage to a different world: 'We are no longer in the profane world'. The period of integration takes note of a complete change that has just taken place, affecting the outcome of a liminal period. Here also this expression allows, as we can see, insisting on what has already been accomplished and thus on what has already been stabilized.

## Participants' perception of the ritual

The Masons interviewed all agreed that the ritual is a method. Pascal and Jules used the term *mantra* and referred to a 'meditation'. It is about 'getting into condition'. Benoît spoke of a 'mental state' and about 'concentration'. All agreed that it is about creating the right conditions for work. As Henri explains, 'At the entrance, we are scattered. Everyone has had their day, their problems. The ritual serves to bring us together so that we can work together: (...) Gathering is also about gathering oneself, avoiding dispersion, going off in all directions (...)'.<sup>9</sup>

The ritual is calming. Pascal says, 'I don't feel a surge of power: it's a preparation, not an excitement'. Jules says that he does not attach too much importance to the specificity of this ritual and notes, 'I frequent other Masonic obediences, with other rituals. It works just as well'. Pascal says, 'I'm not addicted to words, I know it [the protocol] by heart', and he specifies, 'It's a ritual of silence, of the unspoken. (...) I close my eyes most of the time'. But, he emphasizes that he needs a ritual as an airlock to pass from the outside to the inside of the lodge. It is a true ritual of passage.

The nature of the room and the abundance of symbols are certainly useful and constitute a setting that helps the ritual to be operative, but they are not necessarily an essential point. Henri indicates that the session could be opened in any room, as long as the ritual is carried out.

Benoît indicates that he has found himself in significantly different states of mind depending on the functions he was performing. As a WM, he feels at the same time a vector in charge of transmitting a certain mental state ('If the lodge imposes silence, I will ask myself if I should break this silence') but also carried by the group. When he was Secretary,<sup>8</sup> he felt more like the 'receptacle of the lodge (...) more passive (...)'. His feeling is marked by the nature

<sup>8</sup> The Secretary embodies the memory of the lodge.

of the roles he took on. This shows a capacity of 'disidentification'. No more 'I, I, I!' explains Henri. One must leave one's ego outside, accept to reveal oneself to others, without pretense. This allows you to keep your free will. Several of the Freemasons interviewed mentioned the possibility for a brother exercising a function to say during the work 'I ask to speak for myself', thus expressing their desire to formulate a personal idea and not, for a moment, to ventriloquize their function.

All of our interviewees recognized that there could be dysfunctions, and that these were generally the result of egos that were too present, and sometimes there were difficulties in leaving aside everyday concerns. In all cases, these are obstacles to putting things in order: 'Putting order into disorder (...)', says Henri, who also admits, 'It doesn't always work. (...) there are evenings when I feel like I'm not there'.

### Summary of the analysis and discussion

In this section, we highlight the main mechanisms contributing to the integration of liminal individuals and their impact on the lodge. We discuss their possible transposition to other organizations.

#### **The implementation of a ritual reduces the ambiguity of the opening situation**

In the managerial literature, the term *ambiguous* is frequently used not only to describe the liminal situation (Carlone, 2006) and refers to the absence of a setting in which the liminal individual evolves and achieves freedom, but also to the suffering linked to this absence. This suffering sometimes directs management research toward the search for solutions to integrate liminal individuals.

We do not observe this ambiguity in the lodge. The Masonic ritual enables an orientation of the participants. This is expressed by the definition of cardinal points, a direction of movement, and a work plan (lodge board). The ritual captures and directs the action. At the same time, it stabilizes each of the transformations.

The introductory situation does not appear ambiguous in itself. It is the absence of accompanying elements for this situation that creates ambiguity. The implementation of rituals in an organization can encourage such support. This observation is in line with management studies that show that, in various organizations, the use of rituals can accompany changes and stabilize the organization (Smith & Stewart, 2011).

#### **The adoption of a temporality provides a horizon to the expected integration**

Many uses of the concept of liminality in management mark an abolition of time, or an indefiniteness; the liminal phase can be endless (Thomassen, 2016).

The Masonic ritual defines a precise temporality (age of the brothers, symbolic hour of the work, etc.), which underlines the phase of separation by leaving the ordinary time and guarantees a process that one knows, from the beginning, will lead to an integration.

The importance of temporality is underlined in certain transformative actions in companies, such as design thinking workshops that are organized on the fringe of daily work time. Creativity actions are carried out through exercises occurring during a limited time. The definition of a schedule, rhythm, and deadlines helps to give a horizon to people living a transformation. For example, it is possible to ask whether the establishment of a time frame (schedule, deadlines, and timetables) for employees who are temporarily away from their company can facilitate their subsequent reintegration.

#### **Verifying compliance allows for the alignment of objectives**

Managerial literature shows a frequent mismatch between liminal employees' expectations and their organization (Boland & Griffin, 2015; Esbenshade et al., 2019; Toraldo et al., 2019).

In FM, ritual ensures that participants are *compliant*, that is, that they are able to become a part of a group effort (dressing up, tidying up, etc.). Shared aspirations are often explicit ('What did we ask when we first entered the Temple?'). This leads to an *alignment* of individual and group aspirations.

This practice of constantly checking the alignment of objectives exists in a number of organizations. The annual employee appraisal interviews are usually the occasion for this. The formal reminder of common objectives is a practice that can easily be transposed. However, we agree with the interviewees in identifying two difficulties. First, verifying the sharing of objectives is not a simple routine. It requires a real willingness to 'play the game' on the part of the organization and trust in the sincerity of others. Second, Masonic objectives touch the very essence of the human being and federate more easily than financial objectives. The search for alignment of objectives, therefore, leads to a deep reflection on shared values and the meaning of the work accomplished within the organization.

#### **Recognition of otherness promotes collective action**

The term *recognition* is polysemous and must be clarified. In business, being recognized frequently refers to the recognition of a skill, a merit, and a singularity. The idea is close to that of social recognition. Recognition then gives prestige, which distinguishes one from others and separates.

In Masonry, recognition refers, on the contrary, to the cognition of alterity. One does not call oneself a Freemason; one is recognized as such. This recognition of legitimacy comes at the

beginning of the ritual and not at the end of individual actions that are judged valuable. 'Take your place, my brothers' is a prerequisite. This acceptance of recognition is the mark of a fraternal order. The liminal individual is not defined as an in-between, frequently referred to in the managerial literature (Ibarra & Obodaru, 2016), but as having a place.

In many organizations, the adoption of this mode of recognition is a profound paradigm shift. It is no longer a question of distinguishing individually but of integrating ontologically. This approach favors the constitution of a collective. One may wonder about the coherence of a practice frequently observed in companies, which consists of multiplying the signs of distinction (in the sense of individuation) while claiming to want to *work as a team*.

### **The officers are the ventriloquists of the functions of the lodge and not only the holders of a hierarchical power**

Hierarchy within an organization combines distinct components that are often confused: the specificity of a function, the power it confers, and the associated prestige.

In Masonry, the officers express their office by being constrained by the exercise of a ritual. This distinguishes between offices and persons. For example, the power of the WM is attached to his office and not to his person. Moreover, it is possible that, for reasons of convenience, another brother replaces him and becomes WM for the time of a session (WM pro tempore). Hierarchy is part of an organizational apparatus, not an individuation. It is not only the hierarchy that activates the ritual but also the whole of the individuals making a community. Pascal evokes what is the opposite of a ritual: 'the kind of mass, where the big boss comes on stage ... I even saw one who asked the managers to applaud the employees! ...'

The transposition of this approach to hierarchy (affirmation of the hierarchy of functions and not of people a priori) to other organizations should not be equated with greater horizontality, that is, the empowerment of subgroups and the reduction of levels. It corresponds to the will to work collectively and to suppress egos. This exercise can be facilitated by a constant reminder of the distinction between the function and the person: to be a director is above all to occupy the function of a director. The difficulty of the exercise is clear. Our interlocutors have all mentioned the gaps between this stated ambition and certain realities of Masonic practice.

### **The word of the lodge ventriloquizes the group and reduces hyper-subjectivity**

The managerial literature presents the liminal worker as enjoying a great deal of freedom and approaching the environment

from their sole point of view (Howard-Grenville et al., 2011), a situation we refer to as hyper-subjective.

In FM, each participant may have their own point of view but they express it with the unique word of the lodge. An Overseer says, 'a Brother asks for the word' and not 'Peter wants to speak'. As Benoît points out, 'The worst enemy is the individual word. (...) Each person's word is worth what it is, not for the person who spoke it; (...) [each word] corresponds to a facet of the spirit of the lodge'. A single word makes it impossible for two brothers to speak at the same time. Pascal specifies, 'Speaking up is a reminder of the respect we owe to others'. The hyper-subjectivity of the liminal subject has no place in FM because the ritual constitutes a reference and the individuation of ideas is rejected. When a brother speaks, a priori it is, above all, the lodge that speaks to itself.

The transposition of this mechanism to other organizations is also a strong paradigm shift. Most organizations favor the appropriation of ideas, the individualization of speech, value the fact of assuming one's opinions, and so on. Perhaps we can find approaches similar to the Masonic approach, that is, blurring individualities, in certain artists' collectives, in sport teams, or, again, in design thinking workshops.

### **The rise of authority and the declarations reduce debate, negotiation, and conflict**

Similar to other authors (Clark & Mangham, 2004; Hambrick & Lovelace, 2018; Reinhold, 2017; Smith & Stewart, 2011), we noted the affective, cognitive, and normative dimensions of rituals, but more importantly, we noted that the dynamics of this ritual lie in the performance of *declarations*.

*Declarations* give ritual discourse a performative power by transforming the order and nature of things. This component has been analyzed by anthropologists and historians of religion as a characteristic of the magical dimension of rituals (Kropp, 2005). The use of declarations makes the ritual performative and allows, for example, the rules to be changed when the WM declares, 'We are no longer in the secular world'. This declaration causes the *structure*, in the sociological sense, to be transformed. However, a change of rule in an organization requires the development of an argumentation and is subject to a deliberation at the end of which this change will be more or less accepted. If there is an agreement, it comes *afterward*.

However, the transformative power of the liminal period, in a ritual setting, is not argumentative but declarative. The ritual constitutes a preparatory procedure for a declaration that will be accepted a priori, without debate, and all the better because the game of ventriloquation in cascade will have allowed a rise in authority. The WM expresses himself because he is a WM; he is a WM because he is invested with this power by the ritual; the ritual is itself activated by the participants.

From this point of view, the action of the ritual has to do with a quasi-magical act insofar as it is not an exercise in conviction. It is based on a performativity of the word (and of the objects) and operates a non-negotiated transformation, which is anticipated, thanks to a procedure that stabilizes it.

The components of this process can be transposed to other organizations, but the practice can be misused. This is the case when the rise in authority aims to have morally questionable declarations accepted, for example, in a sectarian context.

### **The gap between the observed mechanisms and the managerial literature requires a lexical clarification**

The preceding comments encourage us to reinforce the distinction between the liminality observed in our case study and the liminal situations described in the management literature. In the latter, issues of liminal individuals' freedom, their hyper-subjectivity, and the ambiguity of the situation are central (Cunha & Cabral-Cardoso, 2006; Goulart Szejnberg & Giovanardi, 2017; Howard-Grenville et al., 2011; Ibarra & Obodaru, 2016; Nissim & De Vries, 2014). In our observations, these aspects disappear. The ritual accompanies, guides the process, and stabilizes the transformations. The integration of the liminal individual takes place without negotiation, due to a combination of the use of *declarations* and *ramping up* phenomena. It appears that the integration of the liminal individuals is acquired a priori, from the beginning of the process.

These distinctions complement Turner's (1969) attempt to clarify the distinction between liminal and liminoid, a clarification that has been largely ignored in management

**Table 2.** Extension of the distinction between liminal and liminoid, initiated by Turner (1969)

Liminary	Liminoid
<b>Turner's distinctions (1969)</b>	
Switching from one structure to another predefined structure	Passage from one structure to another, not necessarily predefined
Limited group	Large population
Compulsory action	Free action
Collectivity, expression of the history of a group	Individuality, idiosyncrasy (hyper-subjectivity, in our lexicon)
Limited duration	Possible permanence
<b>Additional distinctive elements</b>	
Accompaniment through ritual and cues	Disorientation, loss of reference points, and ambiguity
Non-negotiated integration (ramping up and declarations)	Negotiated integration (debate and conflict)
A priori agreement on the transformations made	Ex post-agreement on the outcome of the transformation process

sciences. We encourage researchers to refer to them in order to better specify the nature of the object studied (see Table 2).

### **Conclusion**

We sought to identify mechanisms that promote the integration of liminal individuals, that is, people who are no longer in a structure but have not yet integrated into a new structure.

Because the concept of liminality is derived from anthropological work on rituals of passage, we wanted to carry out a case study in an ideal ritual situation enabling us to distinguish each phase in a salient way. We studied an *intense case* (in the sense of Miles & Huberman, 1994): that of a Masonic opening ritual.

In this situation, liminality is strongly distinct from other situations described in management. We were, therefore, led to take up and reinforce, on a theoretical level, the distinction between the terms *liminoid* and *liminal*.

This study identified mechanisms to facilitate the integration of liminal individuals. These cannot be taken as recommendations that can be immediately transposed to other organizations. In particular, they make sense only for organizations that are concerned about integrating people with disabilities, for example, or those that wish to move some of their members to new functions, or that have staff who are relocated, in training, experiencing integration difficulties, and so on. These mechanisms can nevertheless constitute avenues of reflection for organizational adaptation.

Some of them seem to be easily transposable: for example, setting up rituals to keep a close link with people at the beginning of the process or reinforcing the temporality in order to accompany a process from beginning to end and to allow everyone to be in unison with the group. Monitoring the regular alignment between the group's objectives and those of the individuals is also a choice. However, this is a complex choice because it can only be about fundamental objectives that are meaningful to the individuals.

There are other mechanisms that are truly a paradigm shift for many organizations: the muted hierarchy of people and the promotion of a hierarchy of functions, the recognition of individuals a priori and not with regard to their individual results, and the non-individuation of actions within a collective work. It is clear that companies are often very far from these organizational principles. They seem to be more easily transposable to small structures, such as teams or departments within a larger organization. In the case study we conducted, we observed these mechanisms in small groups of a few dozen people.

Finally, the relevance of the implementation of a mechanism that we describe as the avatar of the magical power of rituals, and which is made up of *rise in authority* and *declarations*, must also be considered from an ethical perspective.

Other limits must also be taken into account. A Masonic lodge only gathers individuals who show a willingness to participate in a collective work and who do not act out of necessity. These are mature people because lodges generally want their members to be mature before they join. The interviewees were all educated and had privileged professional situations, which may influence the nature of their concerns. A final limitation is that our case study focuses on a male Masonry. However, there is nothing to suggest that the observations would have been different if they had been conducted with female or mixed lodges. Indeed, the rituals may be identical as well as the sociological profiles. Furthermore, interactions take place between the Masonic obediences.

In terms of future research, and in line with Hildwein's (2020) recent work, a promising angle of analysis of rituals would be to study how their performance contributes to the very constitution of an organizational identity. In other words, if we show that rituals could effectively contribute to the integration of liminal people, it is most likely because their performance also contributes to the reaffirmation of the very identity of the organization, notably through the principles, values, and norms that are ventriloquized.

Furthermore, future work could explore cases that are less intense (and therefore less atypical) than FM. In particular, comparative studies could examine how the transformative and stabilizing effects of rituals can make a real difference in the accompaniment of complex processes of transition, such as a corporate restructuring, the transformation of the social role of an institution, the change of eco-responsible practices of the inhabitants of a neighborhood, or the development of a balanced mix within a highly gendered or ethnicized organization. The ventriloquial approach to ritualistic practices opens up possibilities for analysis and experimentation.

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