But, also the ceremonies, rites, formal festivities, traditional masquerades and dance sequences with which we are familiar are suitable to the method. It is of the character of traditionally patterned events of social concourse that they facilitate co-ordinated and synchronised action by a group of people, and act as symbols or outward expressions of socially accepted values, and as such are sometimes maintained in a degree of relative stability, even in the face of considerable social change. Therefore they may be taken as a whole, and understood in the context of the social relations surrounding them, the meanings they communicate, and the process of change which they undergo in counter-point with general social process. But specific difficulties emerge from the fact that each has diverse internal components differentially subject to modification, and interacting with one another; and because of the fictional nature of its internal relations, i.e. objects, roles and actions look like counterparts in the real world, but may (in extreme cases) be in inverse relation to them (e.g. the clown is a sad man in real life, etc.)

The Components

Before approaching the ensemble, it is well to observe, list and describe the place, people and things. The item may be located on a road as a procession, moving across significant boundaries between communities; or in a public place or private, in a tent, chapel or "yard" shared between several related families. The exact placing may be regulated by custom, and according to the points of the compass. The lay-out can also indicate the importance given to spectators — a crucial matter since form will change as an event becomes increasingly spectator, or audience, directed — of the same social level, or for visitors of higher rank. There may be an embryonic or well-developed stage.

The Programme

Having enumerated the components, the next step is to describe the procedure or action involving the elements in a spatio-temporal programme, along with preparations, making of apparatus and any initial rites or purification or dedication, rehearsals etc. For the event itself, several observers may be needed on account of simultaneous events.

The Legend

The external phenomena thus described are not dictated by the logic of technique or by other utilitarian principle, but they are supported and unified by a "charter" or "legend" which all participants agree to accept. It is this which gives explicit and immediate meaning to the actions and things and their ordering, and it is accepted as binding: 1. because it is believed to be sanctioned or commanded by supernatural powers, 2. because of shared respect for a tradition, and the values which it expresses, 3. because it serves as an effective framework for ordered competition in prowess, or for aesthetic enjoyment and expressive or creative activity. The legend is likely to specify the roles of the personages and the course of their actions, and it will be enunciated by some leader or organiser. It must be compared with actual performance for significant discrepancies. In addition to the legend there may be a parablewise meaning i.e. the actions executing the legend may be regarded as having a moral.