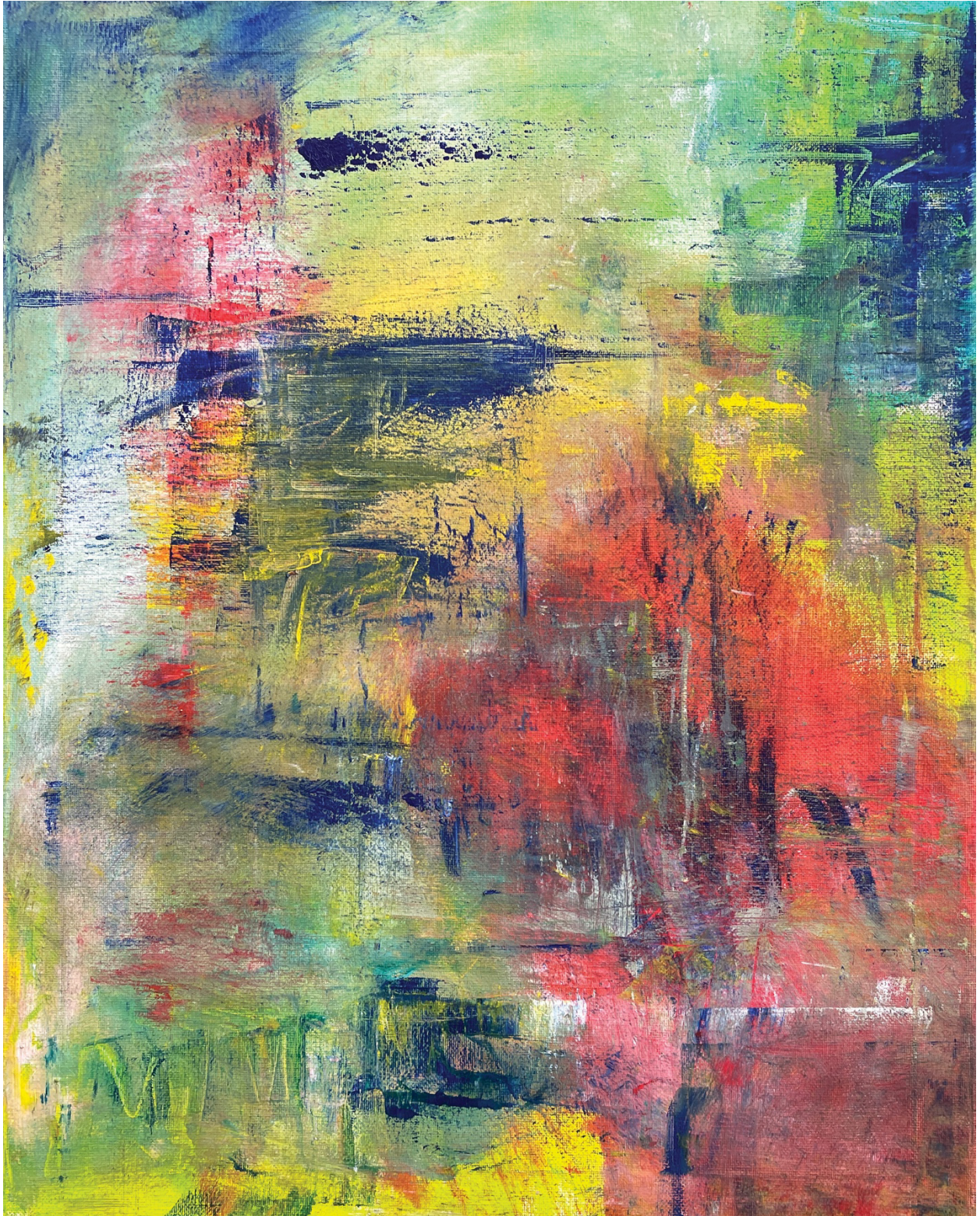


Robert T. Rogers. RELI E-1060 Section 1 (17391). December 12, 2025



Liminal Phase. 2025. Oil on canvas. 20 x 16 in.



Reintegration Phase. 2025. Oil on canvas. 20 x 16 in.

On October 31, 2025, I sent a one-page creative project prospectus with requested information to Professor David L. Carrasco and instructor Pedro Morales for the Harvard course Religious Dimensions in Human Experience. Later I uploaded the document to the learning management system Canvas. I shared my intention: to answer the question, “How does one express two phases of Victor Turner’s social drama model using oil paint, knowledge, and experience?” I said that I have the ability, materials and time, and interest in this religious studies topic to succeed. The deliverable: two 16 x 20 in. abstract oil paintings and a 2-page description/interpretation. The project was approved. I created 5 paintings. I had planned on presenting the Redressive and Reintegration phases, but I decided upon review of the art that the paintings of the Liminal and Reintegration phases were more successful visually. Foremost a painting project, I prioritize the visual outcome.

Inspiration for *Liminal Phase*

The source of the anthropological term “liminal” is Arnold van Gennep’s 1909 book *Rites of Passage*. Later British cultural anthropologist Victor Turner (1920-1983) expanded on liminality in his social drama model presented in “Are There Universals of Performance in Myth, Ritual, and Drama?” (1982). This transitional phase in rites of passage is described as “betwixt and between,” where individuals or a group move away from their former status but haven’t taken on a new one. Transformation often happens. The liminal phase may be stressed more during crisis. The model of rites of passage is a framework for analyzing ceremonies that move individuals between social statuses: separation, liminality, and incorporation.

In 9/30 lecture, Prof. Carrasco listed words associated with this term: stateless, disorder, equality, flow, confusion, ambivalence, ambiguity, nudity, potential, and open. Prof. Carrasco said the character Frank Money in the jazz club in ch. 12 of Morrison’s *Home* (2012) is an example of liminality. We’re told his mood matched the sound, and the drummer “kept on and on. After a while his fellow musicians turned to look at him and recognized what they must have seen before. The drummer had lost control. The rhythm was in charge.” While “lost control” suggests disorder, “in charge” implies order. There is a current of dynamic duality. When I paint, I immerse myself in a creative state, tolerating disorder until finalizing the artwork. Visual evidence of this phase is this painting.

Inspiration for *Reintegration Phase*

In Turner's social drama model, reintegration follows breach, crisis, and redress and is distinct from liminality. If a viewer wonders, "What inspired this painting?" I can answer, "Stage Four, Turner social drama." Perhaps the viewer says, "I'm sorry to hear that—the suffering. Life's tough." That motivates the reply: "In context of Turner, it's actually good. It's arguably better than schism." After redress (the effort to resolve a crisis, to stabilize matters, often through healing) schism or reintegration happens, not always binary states. The outcome schism is permanent breaking of relationships. Conflict is not resolved. With reintegration, on the other hand, the outcome is unifying social order. Conflict is resolved, structure restored. Personally, from initial through continued transition from hurt to joy (recognizing, of course, that hardship is never entirely gone, something unavailable to take on), transition undertaken by implementing best healing methods for trauma at a Harvard Medical School affiliated establishment in Massachusetts, personal agency called me to reintegrate not in the capital of Texas, where I had lived for fifteen years, but in Brookline, Massachusetts, in Greater Boston. I answered that call with a reasonable degree of confidence, neither unfairly low nor tarnished by over esteem, and such answer demanded the I bid unnecessary burden adieu, and that is what I did, a decision that at least changed my story, still unfolding and developing with gained wisdom guiding, reinforced by faith strengthened through the hurt and joy experienced thus far.

Works Cited

Morrison, Toni. *Home : A Novel*. 1st ed, Vintage, 2012. *EBSCOhost*, research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=21a7517f-3b06-3818-8fbd-bf4f8786547e. 18 November 2025.

Turner, Victor, "Are There Universals of Performance in Myth, Ritual, and Drama?" In R. Schechner & W.A. (Eds) *By Means of Performance: Intercultural Studies of Theatre and Ritual*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp 8-15 (course website)