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Drawing on two and a half years of field work, Victor Turner offers two thorough ethnographic studies of Ndembu revelatory ritual and divinatory techniques, with running commentaries on symbolism by a variety of Ndembu informants. Although previously published, these essays have not been readily available since their appearance more than a dozen years ago. Striking a personal note in the introductory chapter, Professor Turner acknowledges his indebtedness to Ndembu ritualists for alerting him to the theoretical relevance of symbolic action in understanding human societies. He believes that ritual symbols, like botanists' stains, enable us to detect and trace the movement of social processes and relationships that often lie below the level of direct observation.

In The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure, Victor Turner examines rituals of the Ndembu in Zambia and develops his now-famous concept of "Communitas." He characterizes it as an absolute inter-human relation that allows the breakdown of a status in which people act as peers or equals. Turner examines how this concept is used as a knowledge to understand social structure and processes. He extends Van Gennep's generic "liminal phase" of rite of passage to a notion of a "liminal" phase of the body and the mind as a metaphor for contemporary society. Once thought to be the "fetishal" organs of social connection, rituals are now seen as arenas in which social change may emerge and be absorbed into social practice. As Roger Abrahams writes in his foreword to the revised edition: "Turner argued from specific field data. His special eloquence resided in his ability to lay open a sub-Saharan African system of belief and practice in terms that took the reader beyond the exotic features of the group among whom he carried out his fieldwork, translating his experience into the terms of contemporary Western perceptions. Reflecting Turner's range of intellectual interests, the book emerged as exceptional and eccentric in many ways yet it achieved its place within the intellectual world because it so successfully synthesized continental theory with the practices of ethnographic reports."

The Ritual Process - Victor Turner - 2009-12-09
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Along an African Border - Sonia Silva - 2011-06-01
Along an African Border: Lunda and Liwale People, Zambian Angolan refugees in Zambia, use lipele divination baskets to cope with daily life in a new land and maintain connections to their past.

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Ritual - Catherine Bell - 2009-12-29
From handshakes and toasts to chant and genefication, ritual pervades our social interactions and religious practices. Still, few of us could identify the ritual and facial ritual behaviors, much less explain them to an outsider. Similarly, because of the variety of activities that qualify as ritual and their many contradictory yet, in many ways, equally legitimate interpretations, ritual seems to elude any systematic historical and comparative scrutiny. In this book, Catherine Bell offers a practical introduction to ritual practice and its study; she surveys the most influential theories of ritual and religious activity, and the key debates that have driven ritual scholarship over the past few decades. Bell explains the role of ritual and its many meanings in terms with any one definition or understanding. Instead, her purpose is to reveal how definitions emerge and evolve and to help us become more familiar with the interplay of tradition, expertise, and self-expression that goes into constructing this complex social medium.

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The Lunda-Ndembu - James Anthony Pritchett - 2001
Bridging history and anthropology, this richly documented account of the Lunda-Ndembu people of northwestern Zambia has as its center the paradox of continuity and change. To legitimate and justify innovations to their cultural identity and practice, the Lunda-Ndembu propose that such innovations have conceptual similarities to long-standing traditions. While framing the discussion around classic anthropological oppositions--the individual vs. the group, old vs. young, females vs. males, rich vs. poor, us vs. them, people vs. the natural environment, the political world vs. the metaphysical world--James A. Pritchett also offers a work of historical imagination. It is at the shifting boundaries of these relationships, he argues, that change is actually confronted on a daily basis, spoken about, and negotiated into conformity with widespread and enduring traditions. In juxtaposing Victor Turner's ethnographic data on the Ndembu from the 1950s with his own fieldwork in the 1980s and 1990s, Pritchett demonstrates that, by restudying areas already well known, it is possible to generate richly nuanced answers about social change that more accurately reflect local sensibilities.

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Many Tables - Dennis E. Smith - 2001-01-31
Wide-ranging study of the church and its liturgy. It is there that life and fulfillment should be found, but too often the liturgy seems stale and lacking in vitality. The problem is not a lack of faith so much as it is a lack of life in the liturgy itself. In our liturgies we have let our emphasis on preserving traditional forms and expressions override attempts to give vital expression to the life and faith of contemporary participants. This is especially true when we see the liturgy that is witnessed at the Lord’s supper or eucharist. The current form of the rite is still central to the party of Most Christians today, especially there is often a lifelessness and lack of vitality in the liturgy at life as it is conducted in the pew. Many Table’s do have too often overlooked. And liturgy can more effectively address the contemporary situation if we can learn better to offer it to the aesthetic and symbolic language of today’s culture. -- from chapter 1

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Theoretical Explorations In Africa - Van - 2013-10-28
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Ritual Passage, Sacred Journey - Richard P. Weinberg - 1989
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Volume one of Theorizing Rituals assembles 34 leading scholars from various countries and disciplines working on the nature of ritual, particularly ritual as a cultural, historical, anthropological, symbolic, sociological, and religious phenomenon. The book is dedicated to the memory of the late Professor Edward W. Said. It brings together a diverse group of scholars with a wide range of understandings of the nature of ritual, including ritual as a process, as a performance, as a symbol, as a social institution, as a cognitive framework, and as a cultural phenomenon. The book is divided into four parts: The Rituals and the Mythos of the Feast of the Goddes Gods of Kulacat, The Taurisch Rituals as Ethnographic Evidence, The Rituals and the Mythos of the Goddes Gods of Kulacat, and The Rituals and the Mythos of the Feast of the Goddes Gods of Kulacat. The book is a valuable resource for students and scholars of anthropology, sociology, and religious studies, and it also features a comprehensive index of names and topics, a glossary, an appendix annotated bibliography, and a guide to myth on the Internet. Presenting all major myth theorists from antiquity to the present, Mythography is an encyclopedic work that offers a cross-disciplinary approach to the study of myth. By reflecting the diverse interests in myth among myth scholars and general readers, since publication of the first edition, it remains a key study of modern myth and faith as an essential guide to mythological interpretation, including the work of mythologists and anthropologists. The book is a valuable resource for students and scholars of anthropology, sociology, and religious studies. The book is a valuable resource for students and scholars of anthropology, sociology, and religious studies.
Religious communication extends beyond collective religious expression. It is an intrinsic part of everyday interactions, ceremonies, theatrical performances, shamans' chants, political demonstrations and rites of passage. Doing Fieldwork is largely defined by how we engage in the participatory process. The ritual is shaped by time, space and the individual body as well as by language ideologies, local aesthetics, contents of use, and relations among participants. Ritual Communication draws on a wide range of comparative cultural materials to interpret the ritual process. The authors argue that such concepts are necessary for understanding better the rise and dynamics of the modern world to reopen the dialogue between anthropology and sociology. Using concepts developed by a series of 'maverick' anthropologists who were systematically marginalised as their ideas fell outside the standard academic canon, such as Arnold van Gennep, Marcel Mauss, Paul Radin, Lucien Lévy-Bruhl and Gregory Bateson, the authors argue that such concepts are necessary for understanding better the rise and dynamics of the modern world, including the development of the social sciences, in particular sociology and anthropology. Concepts discussed include liminality, imitation, schizogenesis and trickster, which provide an anthropological 'toolkit' for readers to develop innovative understandings of the underlying power mechanisms of globalized anonymity. Aimed at graduate students and researchers, the book is clearly structured. Part I introduces the 'maverick' anthropologists, while Part II applies the maverick tool-kit to revisit the history of sociological thought and the question of modernity.

From Anthropology to Social Theory - Arjun Singer - 2011-03-31

Presenting a groundbreaking revitalisation of contemporary social theory, this book revisits the rise of the modern world to reopen the dialogue between anthropology and sociology. Using concepts developed by a series of ‘maverick’ anthropologists who were systematically marginalised as their ideas fell outside the standard academic canon, such as Arnold van Gennep, Marcel Mauss, Paul Radin, Lucien Lévy-Bruhl and Gregory Bateson, the authors argue that such concepts are necessary for understanding better the rise and dynamics of the modern world, including the development of the social sciences, in particular sociology and anthropology. Concepts discussed include liminality, imitation, schizogenesis and trickster, which provide an anthropological ‘toolkit’ for readers to develop innovative understandings of the underlying power mechanisms of globalized anonymity. Aimed at graduate students and researchers, the book is clearly structured. Part I introduces the ‘maverick’ anthropologists, while Part II applies the maverick tool-kit to revisit the history of sociological thought and the question of modernity. The Spiritual Quest

Ritual Practices in Congregational Identity Formation - Timothy D. S. - 2014-05-08

Ritual Practices in Congregational Identity Formation investigates the educational roles of ritual practices in the process of congregational identity formation. The volume includes chapters on all current major world religions, as well as material on ancient religions of the Middle East, South Asia, Africa, and the Pacific. To present a rich and diverse study for students and scholars of anthropology, sociology and social linguistics. Ritual Practices in Congregational Identity Formation

Explanating Mantras - Robert A. Yelle - 2004-03-01

First Published in 2003. Routledge is an imprint of Taylor & Francis, an informa company. Ritual Practices in Congregational Identity Formation

Sex, Death and Witchcraft - Douglas E. - 2014-05-22

Faunal sacrifice in Panamanian Pagan festival with a reputation for being wild and emotionally intense. It lasts five days, 80 people attend, and the two main rituals run most of the night. In the tantalizingly exotic Baphomet rite, participants encounter a performance art featuring the explicit enactment of the act. Underworld rite participants role play their own death, confronting grief and suffering. These rituals are understood as "shadow work" - a Jungian term that refers to practices that creatively engage repressed or hidden aspects of the self. Sex, Death and Witchcraft is a powerful application of relational theory to the study of religion and contemporary culture. It analyses Faunals’s rituals in terms of recent innovations in the sociology of religion and contemporary culture. The book also provides a critique of a number of myth types, such as the Virgin Birth and the Gay Jesus, as well as an analysis of the development of the women’s movement. Ritual Practices in Congregational Identity Formation

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African Voices, African Lives - Philip M. - 2004-03-01

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African Voices, African Lives - Philip M. - 2003-09-02

African Voices, African Lives explores the world of ‘Mohammed’, a SWAHILI PEASANT LIVING ON MAWA Island, Tanzania. Through his own words - some written, some spoken - and those of his relatives, including his six wives and two of his children, he enables us to see the world through his eyes, including the invisible world of spirits which plays a significant role in his life. This information is gathered by Pat Caplan, the anthropologist, who almost exclusively relies on this mode of writing, in conversations with his informant, who is both an interpreter, bringing in her own knowledge gathered from field data as well as comparative material from other sources, and a ‘guide’ reader, who is able to ‘read’ the data provided by the ‘author’ and with refexivity, to do the same. Ritual Practices in Congregational Identity Formation

The Spiritual Quest - Robert M. Terrace - 1997-10

This treatise argues that the quest for the spirit is not a rare mystical experience, but a frequent expression of life and death, rooted in our ontogenetic and phylogenetic histories and religious practices of tribal peoples throughout the world. Ritual Practices in Congregational Identity Form...