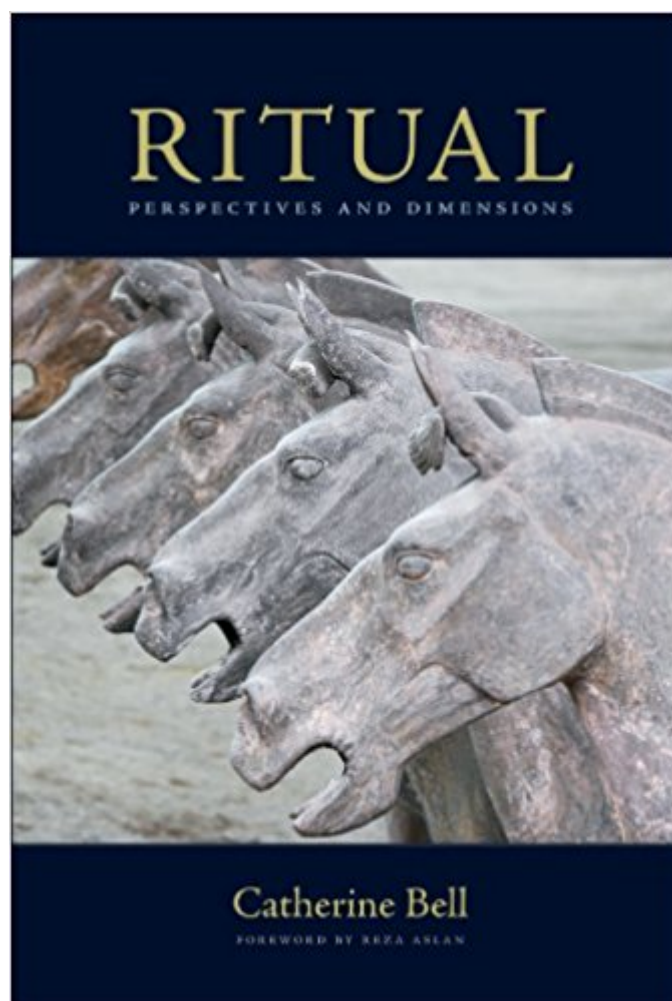


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Ritual: Perspectives And Dimensions--Revised Edition



Synopsis

From handshakes and toasts to chant and genuflection, ritual pervades our social interactions and religious practices. Still, few of us could identify all of our daily and festal 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 religion and ritual, the major categories of ritual activity, and the key debates that have shaped our understanding of ritualism. Bell refuses to nail down ritual 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, exigency, and self-expression that goes into constructing this complex social medium.

Book Information

Paperback: 368 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; Reissue edition (December 29, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0199735107

ISBN-13: 978-0199735105

Product Dimensions: 9.1 x 0.8 x 6.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 8 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #207,148 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #120 in [Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Religious Studies > Comparative Religion](#) #275 in [Books > Religion & Spirituality > Worship & Devotion > Ritual](#) #471 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Folklore & Mythology](#)

Customer Reviews

"A very impressive achievement....[Bell's] is one of the most interesting and important voices in the field of ritual studies today."--Worship "A rich and detailed interdisciplinary analysis of the nature and functions of ritual. Scholars in all fields will profit from this sound and probing study."--Religious Studies Review

Former Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies, Santa Clara University

If you take an interest in the power of ritual, this book will intrigue you. It offers incredible insights into various types of powerful rituals in life. Ritual is much more than we might realize! Read this book and see!

ITEM was as portrayed!

I would give this book 5 stars except the print is small, faint, and difficult to read. The book is right up my alley, otherwise.

The purpose of my purchasing the book in the first instance was to use it to prepare my Statement of Purpose for my PhD application. Apart from the fact that the book served this purpose, it also came the way the seller described the product. I think I am very satisfied with the book. Thanks
.Enoch

Catherine Bell is certainly one of the preeminent scholars of ritual studies. This book is a fantastic demonstration of why that is the case. It's a tour de force of scholarship and quite a tour of the vast territory covered by the term "ritual" as well. Ritual is one of those words (like "religion" itself) that we all think we can define easily until we're actually asked to do it. Bell gets around the problem of slippery and ethnocentric definitions of ritual by encompassing a wide range of activities she calls "ritualization." This strategic shift from noun to verb brings ritual out of the dusty display cabinet of pinned-down "things" and into the dynamic and contested realm of ongoing human activity. She sees the doing of "ritual" and "ritual-like" activities as well as the interpretation of those activities as acts of ritualization. A bit post-modern? Yes. If this discursive approach to understanding human behavior turns you off, then this isn't the book for you. If you're looking for a sweeping introduction to the field of ritual studies from a scholar at the top of her game who has an impressive command of work in that field and in many related ones besides, then this is a tasty treat indeed.

I beg to disagree with the other reviewer. I am a complete newcomer to ritual studies and this book is every novice's dream. Both detailed and wide-ranging, it gives sufficient exposure to the key questions to start using ritual in your own work, or to simply appreciate the pervasiveness of ritual in social life. The book is divided into three parts: Part one summarizes various theories of ritual from the mid 19th century to the present while discussing key aspects of ritual. Frazer, Durkheim,

Levi-Strauss, Van Gennep, Douglas, Turner are some of the many key figures presented. Part two examines types of ritual, while Part three explores "the broader relationships between ritual activities and social life." A wealth of examples and brief case studies complete this extraordinary volume. The coverage and precision of this book are outstanding but I was most impressed by the objectivity and fairness with which Bell presents thinkers and positions now dated. If you are looking for a single volume introduction to ritual look no further.

ANOTHER BOOK NEEDED FOR INTEGRATED STUDIES ON RITUALS. THIS BOOK WE READ BITS AND PIECES WITH QUIZES PERIODICALLY. ALL RELIGIONS HAVE DIFFERENT RITUALS EACH AND EVERY DAY ALONG WITH SYMBOLS. MANY OF US ARE NOT TOO FAR OFF OF WHERE WE WANT TO GO. WE ALL THINK ONE ANOTHER IS A LITTLE OFF, BUT SO CLOSE. KEEP AN OPEN-MIND AND SMILE!

I purchased this book for my research in ritual studies. Bell is a seminal contributor to the field and a must read. The book is a bit dense, but the theories presented are solid.

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