

as to whether or not their conclusions truly can be said to constitute a theory, that is another matter. It would seem that by only relying on a single case study, their notions would be more appropriately deemed an hypothesis. It remains to be seen whether it can be shown to elucidate ritual in other cultures beyond the Jain. But their ideas are certainly useful in giving yet another frame of reference for study.

RITUAL AND RELIGION IN THE MAKING OF HUMANITY ROY A. RAPPAPORT, 2004

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Roy A. Rappaport systematically presents an intriguing theory on ritual and religion in his book Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity. The book is a culmination of Rappaport's life's work. He insists that a reader should view this book as a work in progress, because it does not say exactly what he wanted it to say (p. xxi). Rappaport argues his theory on ritual and religion using an ecological and structuralist approach. He provides extensive cohesive descriptions using evolutionary theory, systems and communications theory, information theory, semiotics, and more. He provides illustrations from anthropology, history, philosophy, and comparative religions, such as Christianity, Buddhism, and Judaism. He cites from his own field work done with the Maring people from the highlands of New Guinea, and from other authors who have studied religion and ritual with other cultures, such as the Sioux, Navajo, or Australian Aborigines. Rappaport says, "Because ritual is taken to be ground from which religious conceptions spring, the preponderance of the book – chapters 2 through 12 – will be devoted to its analysis. These chapters will, as it were, "unpack" a definition of ritual..." (p.3). In the "unpacking," of his definition of ritual, Rappaport presents one successful piece out of the anthropological theoretical pie when his theory is kept within its ecological, structuralist, and evolutionary context. In this paper, I will focus on a few key elements that Rappaport uses in his literary style that make his theory cohesive and his book successful.

To "unpack" his theory, Rappaport provides the reader with a skillfully written definition of ritual. The literary style he uses to convey his definition seems to be a tool for understanding and he systematically defines ritual in an unfolding or evolving manner. Rappaport predominantly uses a formal causal or structural argument (p. 28). He defines ritual twice, first in a

condensed form and then in its entirety (p. 24, 27). The reader gets a taste of his theory in the first couple lines of the definition with a thorough explanation and this foreshadows what he will explain in depth as the book evolves. Rappaport says, "The most general aim of this book is to enlarge, if only by a little, our understanding of the nature of religion and religion in nature" (p. 1). He goes on to say, "This book is not a theological treatise but a work in anthropology" (p.2). He is "attempting not only to grasp what is true *of* all religions but what is true *in* all religions to claim" (p. 2). In defining ritual, Rappaport is developing an anthropological theory that he hopes will provide a better understanding of religion and the role it plays in the evolution of humanity. In this paper, I will predominantly focus on the ritual portion of the material that Rappaport unfolds. To justly credit Rappaport, I will provide his full definition of ritual (p. 27),...*the performance of more or less invariant sequences of formal acts and utterances not entirely encoded by the performers logically entails the establishment of convention, the sealing of social contract, the construction of the integrated conventional orders we shall call Logoi...the investment of whatever it encodes with morality, the construction of time and eternity; the representation of a paradigm of creation, the generation of the concept of the sacred and the sanctification of conventional order, the generation of theories of the occult, the evocation of numinous experience, the awareness of the divine, the grasp of the holy, and the construction of orders of meaning transcending the semantic.*

Within the almost five-hundred pages of this book, Rappaport unfolds his definition of ritual, sometimes explaining a word and other times a line. In each sentence, paragraph, section, and chapter, his definition is built, bit by bit, from a simple foundation of his theory into a complex, systematic, and cohesive whole. Rappaport begins his book from an evolutionary perspective, stressing that without religion, humanity would still be in a "pre- or proto-human condition...religion's origins are, if not one with the origins of humanity, closely connected to them" (p.1). He goes on to discuss the universality and role of ritual in the evolution of humanity after stating, "Religion's major conceptual and experiential constituents, the sacred, the numinous, the occult, and the divine, and their integration into the Holy, are creations of ritual" (p.3). Then, Rappaport begins to concisely "unpack" or unfold his definition of ritual through describing elements that he calls "features" (p. 24).

Rappaport uses his explanation of the features as an expansion to his ideas on ritual form. The features he discusses are "performance, formality, invariance, inclusion of both acts and utterances, and encoding by other than the performers" (p.24). These features are included within the first couple of lines of Rappaport's definition of ritual. He dedicates all forty-five pages of chapter two, to the initial introductory explanation of the features in his theory of ritual, which follow

his explanation of ritual form. Rappaport uses and begins to build relationships and interrelationships with the words form, formality, performance, performer, performativeness, metaperformativeness, and other words with the term “form” within them in his explanations and definitions that will appear throughout the book. As he gradually unfolds his theory, he ‘unpacks’ meaning for the many words with the term “form” within them, as he progresses in complexity with his definition of ritual, chapter by chapter. To define Rappaport’s definition of all these terms containing the term “form” would be too extensive to explore in this paper. I will touch on a few of his ideas concerning the term “form,” which is the first ‘form’ word that he uses. To begin his explanation, Rappaport clarifies a few points for the reader. He points out that the term “symbol” is not included in his definition of ritual, he says he purposely does not state what ritual is “about” or “for,” and he is adamant that the relationship among the features will vary (p. 26). In chapter one, Rappaport says, ‘I will argue there that social contract, morality, and the establishment of convention are intrinsic to ritual’s form...’ (p. 22). In chapter two, he adds, “...the term “ritual” designates...a form or *structure*, and I will argue that, although none of the elements constituting this structure is unique to ritual, the relations among them are” (p. 26).

To clarify and paraphrase what Rappaport is saying, form and substance are inseparable, are conceptually distinguishable, and certain meanings and effects can only be expressed or achieved through ritual, which must mean that “these meanings and effects follow from ritual’s universal form” (p.30). Ritual form adds something to the substance of ritual that the symbolically encoded substances by themselves cannot express, ritual form and the metamessages intrinsic to that form are universal, and ritual does not have equivalents or satisfactory alternatives, so it can be taken to be the social act basic to humanity (p. 31). He is saying that forms and substances “shape” ritual (p. 30) and that ritual plays an important role in the evolution of humanity. To expand further on his notions of form Rappaport begins to unfold his definitions of the “features,” which includes an explanation of the role of language, communication, and how they evolved together along with ritual, and an ability to lie. He begins explaining signs, symbols, indexes, and liturgical order, which he will expand on later bit by bit as his theory unfolds (p.50-54). The unfolding and evolving process Rappaport uses in his definition and its unfolding expansion leads the reader from an explanation of form, to those of the features, on to his next level of skillful “unpacking” of his ritual theory, where he begins to use dichotomies.

Another literary strategy that Rappaport employs to “unpack” his definition of ritual even further is by using dichotomies or binary oppositions. In chapter two, Rappaport begins to define self-referential and canonical messages. These two types of messages present dichotomies. He says, “There seem to be two broad classes of messages transmitted in human ritual...the participants

transmit information concerning their own current physical, psychic or social states to themselves and to other participants...I shall refer to this class of messages as 'self-referential'" (p.52). There are other types of messages that are transmitted but are not encoded, and "these messages *cannot in themselves* represent the performer's contemporary state...states of those uttering and performing them...I shall refer to this class of messages as 'canonical'" (p.53). Together the difference between the two is that one is encoded and the other is transmitted; one is confined and the other is not (p.53). However, both self-referential and canonical messages are interwoven together (p.53). Generally speaking and from this perspective, human beings have inner messages that come from within his being and outer messages that come from other sources, and they both occur together. These condensed explanations unfold into expanded explanations later as Rappaport's definition of ritual evolves. Rappaport discusses how self-referential messages are transmitted and he introduces ordinal and cardinal messages into the "unpacking" of his theory (p. 82-84).

He says, "There is usually possibilities even in the most invariant of liturgical orders for variations of numerical sort, with possibilities for both their cardinal and ordinal characteristics to be significant (p. 83). To be brief, ordinal messages convey information (p. 83). The point is that Rappaport is again presenting two ends of a spectrum by using a dichotomy. When Rappaport begins discussing the time portion of his definition of ritual, he begins to outright state that he is referring to the "binary aspects of ritual occurrence" (p. 89), or binary oppositions. Rappaport says, "...binary signals are intrinsic to ritual occurrence, and they are, in their nature, free of ambiguity" (p. 89). Binary signals offer clarity, or a sharper distinction. They remove the vagueness and ambiguity that exists in daily life of human beings. "That is, or brings it to the binary, to the reduction of discrete units or states to two only. Any ritual...can at any given time only be occurring or not occurring. The occurrence of a ritual transmits a binary (yes/no, 0/1, on/off, either/or, boy/man, war/peace, etc.) signal" (p. 89).

A reader must also keep in mind that Rappaport has a Durkheimian view in that they both share similar ideas on society and humanity. They both share similar ideas on sacred and secular. Rappaport discusses how time can be viewed in what can in an extremely general and condensed overview be called sacred or secular time, or sacred or mundane time, in chapters six and seven (p. 169-235). He says, "...rituals and sequences of rituals as 'liturgical orders'..." keep things in order; they establish and constitute order, rather than chaos or disorder (p. 169). These are orders that can be ranked and they are directives (p. 169). Overall, time provides a framework for conceptualization (p. 171). For example, in discussing the binary aspects of time, sacred time would deal with things such as a perception of eternity. Rappaport says, "...liturgical orders can and do organize, or even construct socially, the temporal orders of at least some

societies, and that ‘temporal’ orders, when organized by ritual, make a place for eternity as well as for mundane time” (p. 175). For both the individual and the society “...the public ordering of time, not simply to coordinate social life, but to provide a well-marked road along which each individual’s temporal experience can travel” (p. 177). The result is a separation in conception between time in daily life and other-worldly life, or secular and sacred. Rappaport expands on time notions to include such things as ritual, myth, history, life, death, birth, rebirth, being and not being in the complex unfolding of his explanation as the book evolves. Dichotomies or binary oppositions are proficiently addressed in the “unpacking” of Rappaport’s definition of ritual and they are aided by repetition, which contributes to the expansion of his explanation of his theory.

Although Rappaport does not state he is purposefully using repetition of material to “unpack” his theory, his skillful use of repetition is a successful literary tactic that is effective for comprehension. The repetition is a great literary tool that provides clarity and understanding. Rappaport uses many sentences that are similar, and he repeats some of his examples. Sometimes he repeats his arguments from chapter to chapter. Rather than be redundant and repeat Rappaport’s repetitions, I will simply say, to use the same quote about Christianity, or repeat what he has already said about pigs and the Maring people. This allows the reader to know that he may be offering a more detailed explanation of what he has already said. Often times this forewarns the reader that Rappaport is getting ready to “unpack” another level of his definition into a deeper context. I believe Rappaport is being intentionally repetitive and for very good reason. He is “unpacking” a definition and theory on ritual, bit by bit, and the repetition is the element that binds his extensive and complex definition and theory together into a unified whole.

He presents a great deal of information using explanations from various perspectives such as through evolutionary theory, systems and communications theory, information theory, semiotics, and more. Repetition is a useful tool for him to cohesively, explain his complicated definition of ritual, tie it in with religion, and the making of humanity, and then in to how they pertain to the evolution of humanity. Without repetition, the reader would become lost in Rappaport’s blending of theoretical sources from the fields of anthropology, history, philosophy, and comparative religions. The repetition also reminds the reader to stay within the context that Rappaport is presenting his theory. Rappaport constantly reminds the reader that his theory is an evolutionary theory, and that he is primarily concerned with the ecological and structural aspects. To make his argument and convince the reader that his theory is viable he must present the material in a systematic format that is easy to grasp and repetition is the tool that makes his argument strong and successful.

In conclusion, the literary style that Rappaport uses to present his ritual theory contributes to the success of his argument and book. By “unpacking” a definition of ritual, using dichotomies or binary oppositions to expand his ideas, and presenting systematized repetition for cohesive explanations, Rappaport takes a complex theory and makes it seem simple. The term “unpack” used by Rappaport is excellent and suitable. “Unpack” is an effective and the best term he could have used within his literary style to describe his evolutionary theory. I would not be surprised if future authors borrow the term “unpack” to explain their own theories. The book is successful when it is kept in its ecological and structural context, and an evolutionary theory as Rappaport consistently reminds us. His theory can become problematic if looked at from other anthropological theoretical perspectives, such as through cultural relativism. For example, a cultural relativist may have difficulties accepting Rappaport’s notions on “universality.” The term “universality” begins to appear in the introduction of the book and repeats throughout his book. From a cultural relativistic viewpoint, there is no “universality” between cultures. Each culture must be studied on its own terms. However, all theories have positive information to add to the field of anthropology, whether the theories are evolutionary or cultural relativistic.

Rappaport’s theory is successful as long as a reader keeps the content of his book within its ecological, structuralist, and evolutionary context, the context that it is written in. As previously stated, it took Rappaport almost five-hundred pages to present his theory and he used an effective writing style. Rappaport himself was not completely satisfied with his completed book. At the time of his death, he considered the book to be a “work in progress”. His book is a great contribution to the field of anthropology and it is Rappaport’s legacy for future theorists. Future theorists can continue to expand on Rappaport’s “work in progress,” because it is still evolving.