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the review „Andréa Belliger / David J. Krieger (Hg.): Ritualtheorien. Ein einführendes Handbuch“ by Peter J. Bräunlein, was originally published in *Journal of Ritual Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 1999, page 71

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Ritualtheorien. Ein einfuehrendes Handbuch [Ritual Theories. An Introductory Handbook].

Andréa Belliger & David J. Krieger (eds.). Opladen/Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1998. 485pp, 49,80 DM (paper) ISBN 3-531-13238-5.

No doubt the field of ritual studies is continuously expanding. Ronald L. Grimes' 'Beginnings in Ritual Studies' (1982) and Catherine Bell's volumes on 'Ritual Theory - Ritual Practice' (1992) and 'Ritual - Perspectives and Dimensions' (1997) are cornerstones in that regard. Theoretical attempts, analytical and taxonomic concepts, diverse modes of perspectives on ritual/s and ritualization are evolving, the output of related studies is steadily increasing. Meanwhile, ritual studies as a distinct field of inquiry reaching across disciplinary boundaries is part of the humanities--in many US-American universities and colleges at least. In the German-speaking countries a growing and broad interest in 'ritual' or 'ritualization' among scholars of the humanities is discernible, too. However, ritual studies as a cross-disciplinary academic endeavour is absent, and the progress and developments in ritual research of the last 15 years are not really known. Therefore, the need for an introduction to the field of ritual studies is evident. The collection of 22 articles (and chapters of monographs), edited by Andréa Belliger and David J. Krieger, both scholars of theology/religious studies at the University of Luzern/Switzerland, exists to meet that need. This well-informed introductory text guides the reader through the multiplicity of concepts framing the current main approaches to ritual. There are chapters on 'ritual and ritual research' in general, 'ritual as performance', 'ritual as communication', and 'perspectives' on future ritual research in a pluralistic society. Part One focuses on general theories of ritual, and part Two on ritual in society and culture, studies that contextualize rituals.

Among the essays of part One are classical texts of authors such as Mary Douglas, Clifford Geertz, Victor W. Turner, and Stanley J. Tambiah, whose ground-breaking work provided the basis for the emergence of ritual studies of the 80s and 90s. Other authors of part One covering the spectrum of recent developments, major trends and original contributions in ritual theory are Catherine Bell (constructing ritual), Albert Bergesen (ritual order), Ronald Grimes (modes of ritual sensibility), Caroline Humphrey & James Laidlaw (the ritual commitment), Theodore W. Jennings Jr. (on ritual knowledge), Jan Platvoet (ritual in plural and pluralist societies), Roy A. Rappaport (the obvious aspects of ritual), and Jonathan Z. Smith (the bare facts of ritual). The authors in part Two include Albert Bergesen (political witch-hunts as national rituals), Christian Bromberger (soccer as world-view and ritual), Gregor T. Goethals (ritual and the representation of power in high and popular art), Erving Goffman (interaction rituals), David I. Kertzer (ritual, politics, and power), Lesley A. Northup (women's ritualizing), Richard Schechner (ritual and theatre), Peter A. Winn (legal ritual), Patrick Vandermeersch (psychotherapeutic rituals), and Richard F. Hardin (ritual in recent literary criticism). All of the essays of this omnibus volume are translated into German, mostly for the first time. The main part of translation work was done by the editors themselves. The selection of essays is in no way arbitrary, but well considered. The articles included trace the wide field of contemporary ritual studies in an exemplary manner. Belliger's and Krieger's handbook will find its place in the classroom as an helpful instrument, and it will be welcomed by anyone interested in rituals as a significant contribution to a cross-disciplinary understanding of that subject.

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