

Emotions form a central area of subjective and social identity, and have major significance for the constitution of individuals, communities, societies, and cultures. This book investigates how emotions are generated in rituals, ritualizations and performances. Simultaneously, it explores the role that rituals play in the creation and communication of those emotions. In a unique approach to the study of emotions and rituals, it challenges the idea that rituals are static and emotions irrational, exploring the manifold qualities of emotions in ritual practices.

Focusing explicitly on the relationship between emotions and rituals, the book poses two central questions. First, how and to what extent do emotions shape rituals? Second, in what way are emotions created in and beyond rituals? As such, strong emotions are generally considered to be more spontaneous and uncontrolled, whereas ritual behavior is regarded as planned, formalized and stereotyped, and hence less emotional. However, as the volume demonstrates, rituals often reveal deep emotions among participants, are motivated by feelings, and are often intended to generate them. In examining this dynamism, the essays discuss the motivation for rituals; the healing function of emotions; the creation of new emotions through new media; mimesis; the intriguing role of trance and possession; the implications of emotions on stage; in the context of martyrdom; in dance traditions; in love, sorrow, fear, aggression, and devotion. Further, the study underscores the aesthetic and sensory dimensions of emotions in rituals as relevant in understanding social and cultural practice.

The volume will be of interest to scholars and researchers across humanities and social sciences, especially those in anthropology, cultural studies, sociology, ritual studies, Indology, art history, psychology, religion, medical psychology, and education. It will also appeal to the general reader.

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