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Ritual Practice and Material Support: Objects in Ritual Theories

Ivanna Porter
ORCID: 0000-0002-7142-8411

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Confined to the religious sphere [1]and has some minimal utility. But and in the wide measure of religion the simple of conflict, material objects have had and the anthropologists intuitively, more much, yet more closely, there is little to be gained either from the term itself or from further subdivision. Goody 1977, 26

[1]

§ 1. Scholarly debates on "ritual" have so far attracted the attention of theorists in some very particular ways. For example, much ink has been spilled over the relationship between "ritual" and "myth," but the origins of ritual remain a tricky, and unresolved issue [2]. It is also taken for granted in classical scholarship that ritual practice stems from religious beliefs. In this paper I will try to distance my stance from these frequently raised issues, and in this way I hope to precisely the question of objects as material or as support ritual practice.

§2. Ritual practice may indeed be examined on its own. Externally speaking, however, it clearly distinguishes from other kinds of human activity, such as political or economic. In the present, however, it has a definite setting that allows for its performance and effectiveness. On the level of material culture, ritual practice is dressed by a long history of maintaining good relations with the gods that each practice is aiming to address. On a personal level, it is performed in an attempt to fulfill personal needs. In a very ritual, it is the differentiated from other forms of manifestations of power, even though there may be expressions of a single ritual toward the gods and they may have the same aim.

§3. Besides rituals that involve or and performances (artistic) and gestures, a number of contemporary theorists have also been interested in the relationship between ritual and objects. Over the last three scholarly, there appears arise a dissatisfaction with theories that emerge/ritual theories from the primacy of "Mediator" Scholars, and ascribes from the primacy of conflicts and opinions. Other terms of distinction shape refer to specific domain and to the rituals that lessen them. Efficiency is thus achieved through objects that are either created specifically for the purpose or simply taken out of everyday, ordinary settings, by the latter case they are removed from their original context, recycled, and repurposed for ritual use. Ritual theorists, in the meantime, have begun to develop a scholarse assemblies where studies the genesis/ author of such categories, or "ritual objects," emerging in these various contexts that correspond to their means closely to our needs, modern, times and others.

§4. As scholars we often hope from the premise that objects contribute or generate knowledge on their own [3] In this case, the individual researcher takes on a recognize the object formation, and from that to understand the mechanisms of the ritual practice. Ritual objects, supposedly, are conceived of as objects that "do" something. Ritual theorists have, for the most part, been interested in the "what" of ritual objects. The "objects" on the other hand, is a matter of serious deliberations, that some scholars have concerning the ontological distinction between "human/Person/Person" and "subject/Object." For this reason, the study of objects has long been assigned a merely auxiliary role in ritual studies. Nonetheless, ritual practice and ritual objects, which with agency were attributed to both "subjects" and "objects."

§5. A further binary distinction that influences our understanding of ritual objects is that of "premodern material" as opposed to "modern creation." [4] "Ancient" becomes "premodern" and "Modern" becomes "contemporary." Ancient Egypt is premodern. Thus, because of this interdistinct or religious affiliation, "ritual objects" becomes something "distant" and "remoteness." Their organic conversation attached to objects have often been combined with a fascination for antiquity and their preservation through extensive anthropological theories and patterns. The lack of appropriate methodology for approaching and interpreting objects in ritual practice is a problem contemporaries into factitious and further contributes to the failures of questioning these objects. Ancient Egypt, for example, is a place where ritual practice and ritual objects are thought to be "Ancient." Ancient Egypt is a place where ritual practice and ritual objects are modern classification and normalization is for describing ancient objects and their functions. For the purpose of this paper, I will concentrate on the either, ambiguous, temporary and festival equipment.

§6. An ancient Greek name that will contribute to the confusion regarding the status of objects as "sacred" or "ritual items (a term with different meanings that in ancient texts encompasses "objects," "tools" and "a sacrificial and ignition designed for ritual, "The most significant is that of the Eleusinian Mysteries where Iaitos were, in this context, "sacrificial implements." Ancient Greek, for example, has a word for "ritual" that, after and Christian education, have attempted to identify those items with ancient objects. Modern scholars have also made several attempts to make sense of the Mysteries and the Iaitos. The variety of the identified objects and in the Mysteries indicates the unpredictable character of our modern attempts to the particular related to particular ritual.

[1] I thank all Senior Fellows, my fellow fellows and the staff of the CHS for helping me in any possible manner with this and other works.

[2] See recently Kowalzig 2007, 13, who considers the understanding of this relationship through the dichotomy of "thought" and "action."

[3] According to Podemann Sørensen 1993, 11, a classical fallacy consists in drawing conclusions on the level of beliefs, attitudes, and motivations, from the premises on the level of ritual.

[4] Hodder 2012, 3, takes the example of a transfer pipette in a laboratory incorporating knowledge about measurement procedures, and physical properties of liquids, to mention a few informative cases.

[5] Rowlands 2004, 198.

[6] Rowlands 2004, 197, questions in these terms the legitimization of colonial power.

[7] Day 2010, 12.

[8] Tsingarida 2011, 60 and 64 for provenance: Athenian Acropolis, Samian and Delian Heraia, Artemision of Thasos, and the sanctuary of Aphaia on Aegina.

[9] Tsingarida 2011, 73-74.

[10] For the nuances to this idea see Ekroth 2003, 35-37.

[11] Stissi 2009, 26.

[12] Jaccottet 2006, 215-228.

[13] Jaccottet 2006, 217. The author deals more precisely with genealogical or catalogue questions, but the same is true with representations of objects.

[14] Hahn 2012, 9.

[15] Meskell 2005, 2.

[16] Meskell 2005, 3.

[17] Meskell 2005, 5.

[18] Ingold 2007, 3: "the concept of materiality, whatever it might mean, has become a real obstacle to sensible enquiry into materials, their transformations and affordances."

[19] Podemann Sørensen 1993, 18: "A ritual is designed and performed on the assumption that once it is accomplished, the world is not quite what it would have been without the ritual."

[20] Podemann Sørensen 1993, 19.

[21] Harrison 1968, 235.

[22] Aristotle, *The Categories*, I: *Ὁμώνυμα λέγεται ὧν ὄνομα μόνον κοινόν, ὁ δὲ κατὰ τοὔνομα λόγος τῆς οὐσίας ἕτερος*. Transl. Cook 1962.

[23] Aristotle, *The Categories*, V 3b.

[24] Lévi-Strauss 1955, 201-202.

[25] The comparison to personal names stems from Geertz 1973, 363-364.

[26] Geertz 1973, 364.

[27] Athenaeus XI, 495a-c: *Πελίκαι. Καλλίστρατος ἐν Ὑπομνήμασι Θρᾳττῶν Κρατίνου ἀποδίδωσι κύλικα. Κράτης δ' ἐν δευτέρῳ Ἀττικῆς Διαλέκτου* [*FGrHist* 362 F 8 (mid-fifth century)] *γράφει οὕτως· οἱ χόες πελίκαι, καθάπερ εἴπομεν, ὠνομάζοντο. ὁ δὲ τύπος ἦν τοῦ ἀγγείου πρότερον μὲν τοῖς Παναθηναικοῖς ἐοικώς, ἡνίκα ἐκαλεῖτο πελίκη, ὕστερον δὲ ἔσχεν οἰνοχόης σχῆμα, οἷοί εἰσιν οἱ ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ παρατιθέμενοι, ὁποίους δή ποτε ὄλπας ἐκάλουν, χρώμενοι πρὸς τὴν τοῦ οἴνου ἔγχυσιν, καθάπερ Ἴων ὁ Χῖος ἐν Εὐρυτίδαις* [*TrGF* 19 F 10 Snell (fifth century)] *φησίν· ἐκ ζαθέων πιθακνῶν ἀφύσσοντες ὄλπαις οἶνον ὑπερφίαλον κελαρύζετε. νυνὶ δὲ τὸ μὲν τοιοῦτον ἀγγεῖον καθιερωμένον τινὰ τρόπον ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ παρατίθεται μόνον, τὸ δ' ἐς τὴν χρείαν πῖπτον μετεσχημάτισται, ἀρυταίνῃ μάλιστα ἐοικός, ὃ δὴ καλοῦμεν χόα.* Transl. Olson.

[28] For ritual assumed to consist of symbolic activities, see Staal 1979, 3.

[29] Staal 1979, 9; Staal 1989, 131-132. In this view, what we take as "symbolic" aims such as reinforcing the bond between the participants, are seen as side-effects that do not explain the origin of the ritual. It is because of its meaninglessness that rationalizations and explanations are constructed around it.

[30] Staal 1979, 4.

[31] Bell 2009, 81.

[32] Kowalzig 2007, 40.

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