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## TRANSFER OF RITUAL

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### Abstract

This paper investigates an aspect of the dynamics of ritual which is so far unresearched and hardly systematized: the phenomenon of 'transfer of ritual'.<sup>1</sup> It attempts to bring order to the issues associated with this thorny problem, dividing them into two independent 'sets' (together also referred to as a 'matrix'), which can, in our opinion, be used as an analytical instrument. During the last three years, the possibilities for application of this instrument were tested and further enhanced.

### INTRODUCTION

The notion of 'transfer of ritual' (German: 'Ritualtransfer') primarily refers to the transfer of a ritual from one context into another, or—more generally—a change of the context surrounding the ritual. Processes of transfer can take place within time or space. As an example, the Parsis (Zoroastrians from India) are accustomed to placing their dead in 'towers of silence', where the bodies are consumed by birds of prey. When Parsis migrated to London, it was out of the question to continue this practice there. They thus adopted a form of burying their dead. This meant a significant change in their rituals for disposing of their dead. The adoption of the practice of burying their dead, however, was not a creation *ex nihilo*, but rather the transfer of an element from another ritual tradition: the practice, dominant in their London environment, adapted for use in their own belief system. Such a transfer of a rite (ritual building block) is also subsumed under the concept of 'transfer of ritual'. Since, moreover, the invention of new rituals usually consists, from an etic perspective, mainly of such a transformative transfer of a number of rites from already existing ritual traditions, the invention—and also the disappearance—of rituals are included under the concept. It thus covers the (re)invention, reception, transformation, and compensation, as well as the loss of rites or rituals.

The concept 'transfer of ritual' offers a new perspective on the development of rituals under such circumstances as migration or the emergence of transnational communities, globalization, pluralism, the information society, world-wide integration, or the re-emerging of 'primal identities' (such as ethnicity or 'religion').

### 'TRANSFER OF RITUAL' AS AN ASPECT OF RITUAL DYNAMICS<sup>2</sup>

The research executed within the Heidelberg project on 'Ritual Dynamics' so far has provided substantial evidence to support the thesis that, from an etic perspective, rituals are always changing: they are dynamic *per se*. All changes in rituals vary between modifications and transformations: "modifications are minor changes, which do not affect the identity of the ritual, whereas transformations challenge the rituals' identity."<sup>3</sup> The invention of rituals on the one hand, and their abolition on the other, may be regarded as the extreme cases of 'transfer of ritual', and of ritual dynamics alike. This perspective is in sharp contrast to the emic one, which usually regards rituals as basically (or 'essentially') unchanging.

Whereas 'transfer of ritual' is always a form of 'ritual dynamics', not all 'ritual dynamics' is also 'transfer of ritual'. When rituals are changed, following their transfer, then there are two kinds of changes involved: change(s) in the context (as a result of the transfer), and change(s) in the rituals themselves (as a response to the change(s) in the context). But changes in rituals are not always a response to changes in their context; they may just as well result from the internal dynamics of the rituals themselves.<sup>4</sup> Examples of such internal dynamics include the always present variation from performance to performance, which, over longer periods of time, tend to alter the rituals substantially. This process is sometimes influenced by 'errors', which may unintentionally create forms which are appreciated by the participants, and thus may become included into the scripts of the rituals.<sup>5</sup> Another aspect of the internal dynamics of rituals is the creativity of the participants, who may introduce alterations—such as new gestures—which have nothing to do with the context of the rituals concerned.

The cases of ritual dynamics, which are covered by the concept ‘transfer of ritual’, are only those which result from a change in the context of the rituals.

### CONTEXTUAL ASPECTS AND INTERNAL DIMENSIONS OF RITUALS

Rituals are not isolated phenomena, they are performed within a specific cultural context.<sup>6</sup> In every process of ‘transfer of ritual’, a rite or a ritual is transferred from one context into another. Several aspects can be distinguished in the context of a ritual. Together, these aspects form that context. Also, each of them is in interaction with the ritual itself. By definition, ‘transfer of ritual’ takes place when one or more aspects of the context of a rite or ritual is changed. The following empirically observable, describable and scientifically interpretable contextual aspects can be discerned:

- The media in which the script and the performance of the ritual are materialized (e.g. oral tradition, written text, real life performance, film, television, Internet).
- The geographical, the spatial, the ecological, the cultural, the religious, the political, the economic, the social, and the gender-specific context aspects.
- The group carrying the tradition to which the rite or ritual concerned belongs.

Particular attention should also be paid to the historical connection between these aspects which forms the specific historical context aspect of the ritual.

Rituals are not only performed within a context, composed of the mentioned aspects, which affect them ‘from outside’. A number of other aspects can be distinguished with respect to the rituals themselves. These can be interpreted within ritual theory as the different internal dimensions of a ritual.<sup>7</sup> We can mention for example the following:<sup>8</sup> its script, its performance, its performativity, its aesthetics, its structure, the transmission of its contents. The use of rituals often pursues (a) specific intention(s), realized in their application, strategic use and instrumentalisation. They often have elements of self-reference. Interaction, communication, psychological and social functionality, mediality, symbolism, and the meaning(s) which is/are ascribed to it by its participants, are further internal dimensions.

Contextual Aspects
Media
Geography / Space
Ecosystem
Culture
Religion
Politics
Economy
Society
Gender
Group carrying the Ritual Tradition
History

‘Internal’ Dimensions
Script
Performance
Performativity
Aesthetics
Structure
Transmission of Ritual Contents
Intentionality (Strategic Use, Instrumentalisation)
Self-Reflectivity
Interaction
Communication
Psycho-Social Functionality
Mediality
Symbolism
Ascribed Meanings

### THE THEORY

Our theory is, that when a ritual is transferred, i.e. when one or more of its contextual aspects is changed, changes in one or more of its internal dimensions can also be expected. However, just as not all contextual aspects need to change (equally significantly), it is to be expected that not all internal dimensions will be modified (equally intensely). Reversely, if a modification of an internal dimension is observed, it is warranted to ask if this might be caused by a change in one or more of the contextual aspects. This, however, need not be so: as stated above, changes of internal dimensions may be caused by internal dynamics as well.

To research changes of ritual contexts and modifications of internal dimensions, as well as their interactions, the program suggested by the matrix ‘transfer of ritual’ has been developed, consisting of the

set of contextual aspects and the set of internal dimensions.

## **THE ROLE OF THE PARTICIPANTS**

When regarding the relation between ritual contextual aspects and internal dimensions, a special position must be admitted to the participants, i.e. the actively and passively participating persons (actors, recipients); without them a ritual can not be performed. Different degrees of involvement can be distinguished: at one extreme there are the main actors, playing an almost independent role in the enactment of the ritual; in the middle, there is the 'chorus', acting as a group—as in the classical Greek tragedies—while at the other end of the scale there may be passively onlooking spectators. Such spectators may not only be part of the community, but sometimes can even include outsiders, scholars among them. Also that part of the community which is not present, but still has influence on the ritual and its arrangement, has to be taken into consideration.<sup>9</sup>

However, there are also rituals, which exist only as scripts which were never performed, aiming at a potential or fictive participants group. In this case the medial contextual aspect and—because of the influence the script may have (had) on later ritual praxis—the historical perspective come to the fore.

Furthermore, the actors form the interface between the above mentioned context aspects and internal dimensions, which interact in the ritual via the participants. Here we expect in the first place a dominant role of the main actors. For long term changes or modifications of the ritual, however, the acceptance by participants of other degrees of involvement is also required.

Moreover, power relations within the group of participants form a specific aspect of the social context. They have significant influence on certain internal dimensions, such as instrumentalisation.

Also the indigenous terminology, expressing the emic perspective and self-definitions of the actors, who perceive ritual as static, are to be examined explicitly from the etic perspective which regards ritual as dynamic: How and why is the emic perception of ritual as static constructed?

It is clear, then, that the contextual aspects, the internal dimensions, and the participants are interrelated in a complex way.

## **THE TRANSFER OF ELEMENTS OF RITUALS**

As was indicated in the introduction, not only whole rituals, but also individual rites (ritual building blocks)—or sequences of rites—may be transferred. In that case, there is an additional context aspect: the ritual in which the rite is embedded. This phenomenon—the transfer of (sequences of) rites—was the subject of a paper by the German historian of religions Burkhard Gladigow.<sup>10</sup> He defines a 'ritual sequence' as a constellation of a restricted number of discrete rites. Such sequences may recur in different more complex rituals. They may be mixed and ordered in different ways, but they are recognized as units by the participants. Such ritual sequences cannot only be transferred unaltered, but can also be changed (e.g. rearranged, shortened, or partly omitted) in this process.

When the same ritual sequences occur in different rituals, they point in each ritual to their occurrence in the other rituals. Sometimes they are discernible by the participants as 'ritual quotations': "As opposed to the merely historical relation between an earlier and a later application (which is the usual perspective), the 'ritual quotation' is characterized by an intention, connected to the expectation, that the quotation is recognizable as quotation, that it will be recognized".<sup>11</sup> Gladigow points out, that a ritual sequence needs not be included in full length in the new ritual context; instead it may be 'abbreviated'. If the few elements which are included are sufficiently recognizable by the participants, they may still—and even more powerful—function as a ritual quotation. Gladigow refers to such phenomena as ritual quotation as 'interrituality' ('Interrituität').<sup>12</sup>

Not only complete rituals, or individual rites can be transferred. Other features of rituals, such as symbols, clothes, or objects can be transferred as well.

## **SYNCHRONIC, DIACHRONIC, AND RECURSIVE 'TRANSFER OF RITUAL'**

As stated before, in order to speak of 'transfer of ritual', not all contextual aspects necessarily need to be changed. For example, when part of a group changes its geographical, and therefore in most cases also its

social and cultural context, the religious context of its rituals could still remain unaffected. In that way, certain rituals become practiced by two groups, existing simultaneously, and sharing the same religious tradition. Such situations are often found in diaspora contexts, for example in the case of the Zoroastrians, when part of them migrated from Iran to India. In such cases one could speak of 'synchronic transfer of ritual'.

'Diachronic transfer of ritual' occurs when a group has a considerable continuity of location and composition of its membership, whereas the historical context changes. An example of such a development is the change in Western European culture, resulting from the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era (1789-1814). Such dramatic historical changes may in their turn result in changes in, for example, the religious or political contextual aspects, or in the media involved in the praxis or transmission of a ritual. Other forms of diachronic 'transfer of ritual' are the re-adoption or re-invention of a ritual after a break in its practice by the group to whose tradition the ritual belongs, or other reception processes of (elements of) (real or assumed) 'historical' rituals, also by other groups than that which (is supposed to have) practiced it originally.

Sometimes 'transfer of ritual' does not proceed just from one context into another. There may also be repercussions on the performance and/or understanding of the rituals in the group of origin. This process could be referred to as recursive 'transfer of ritual'. In those cases, the transfer is a reciprocal process. An even more complex case of 'transfer of ritual' can be seen again with the Parsis. Here we have in fact to do with a case of a double migration: from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>13</sup> Zoroastrians migrated from Iran to India—where they became called the Parsis—while more recently a part of this Indian ritual community migrated to Great Britain, North America and other countries. Both migrations caused changes in the rituals, and at least several of the resulting traditions have influenced each other reciprocally. For example, in the course of re-intensified contacts between the Indian and Iranian Zoroastrian communities in the 19th century, several Parsi ritual customs and objects were transferred to Iran.<sup>14</sup> The most prominent example is the abolition of bull sacrifice in Iran—a horror to persons of Indian origin—which was implemented by a Parsi envoy to Iran in the second half of the 19th century. On the other hand, the lighting of incense sticks was imported from India and became a common custom in Iran, too, during the 20th century. The fire vase—developed as a means to hold the 'sacred fire' within the Indian community—was also introduced from India into Iran at that time, replacing the older stone altars. Furthermore, during the 20th century Iranian fire temples were rebuilt following the architectural concept of Indian fire temples, including specially prepared precincts for conducting the Yasna ritual, which were not present in that distinct form in older Iranian temples. A recent Iranian influx into the religious practice of the Zoroastrian community worldwide is the propagation of shrine visits and pilgrimages (in Iran), which were not known to Indian Zoroastrians until recent times. In recent years it has become common for Parsis and Zoroastrians from the Diaspora visiting Iran, to perform pilgrimages to Zoroastrian shrines there.<sup>15</sup> Another example of such a double migration is provided by the Alevi of Turkey, who migrated after World War II from the rural regions of Turkey to major urban centers, and shortly afterwards also to Western Europe (mainly to Germany). The resulting developments in their rituals show again complex reciprocal relations.<sup>16</sup>

## EXAMPLES

### *The Transfer of the Alevi cem ritual from Anatolia to Istanbul and from Turkey to Germany*

Before World War II, the Alevi of Turkey were a mainly rural community. They were scattered all over Anatolia and the former Ottoman territories of the Balkan peninsula. In the Western and central parts of the Turkish Republic they speak Turkish while the majority of those living in the Eastern parts speak mainly Zaza or Kirmanji-Kurdish. Their congregational ritual—the so called *cem*—was performed traditionally within the village community on the occasion of a visit of one of their spiritual leaders (*dede*), which occurred once or twice a year. It had the function to confirm their Alevi identity and communal solidarity, for example by conducting within the *cem* a legal court (*görgü*), led by the *dede*, in order to solve all internal quarrels.<sup>17</sup> In this complete form, the so called *görgü cemi* ('the *cem* of witnessing [in front of a court]'), a *cem* lasted for several hours during the night.

From 1950 onwards, in the context of the urbanization and industrialization of the Turkish Republic, large parts of the rural population of Anatolia migrated to urban centers (mainly Ankara and Istanbul). A considerable proportion of them were Alevi. Until 1980 *cem* rituals were very rarely conducted in the city centers. Until then, Alevi tried to visit their village of origin when a *cem* was conducted there. However, many younger Alevi in Ankara and Istanbul got affiliated to left-wing political movements (instead of being engaged in ritual praxis) and there was a major break in the ritual tradition. But after the *coup d'état* of 1980, religion became an important marker of identity again, in reaction to the growth of political Islam among the Sunni majority. There was a growing interest in rituals, which were transferred then from the villages to the cities. Associations were founded, which established 'cultural centers' serving as places to conduct the *cem* rituals. Consequently these buildings were from then on referred to as *cemevîs* ('*cem* houses'). The new economic context aspect of the ritual was—in contrast to the agrarian village life—the industrialized large cities. Also the religious context changed from the homogeneous Alevi villages to cities with a majority population of Sunni Muslims.

This affected the ritual in structure and form. From a ritual of a small village community—traditionally held in concealment—it became a more open, 'representational' ritual, serving a more amorphous city community with a fluctuating group of participants. In reaction to the contextual factors of modern economic city life, the *cem* ritual was, moreover, given a shortened form, since the participants—being laborers—could no longer afford to participate in a night long ritual (as was the case in the villages, where the ritual took place during periods, free of agricultural work). As the group of participants was no longer consisting of a homogenous village population, the *görgü* ('court') lost its importance and function. The internal dimension of functionality shifted from confirmation of group cohesion to a means of identity politics (against the Sunni Turks) and representation of the modern 'Aleviness' (*alevilik*). Also a tendency to conduct the ritual on a weekly basis—in reaction to the again growing importance of the Sunni Muslim Friday prayer—can be observed. Parallel to the shortening of the ritual, its frequency was dramatically increased and detached from the year cycle.

From the 1960s onwards, a large proportion of Turkish Alevi migrated to Western Europe, mainly to Germany (in many cases via Ankara and Istanbul). In the late 1980s, they started to re-launch their religious life and rituals, in parallel to the development in Turkey. Although the change of the economic context was comparable to that which occurred in the Turkish cities, the change of the religious and cultural context was significantly different. In Germany they were now situated in the context of a nominally Christian society. So the changes of the internal dimensions of their rituals were in some cases comparable (for example, the shortening of the ritual), but in other cases significantly different: Ascribed meanings were sometimes adjusted to the Christian surrounding (e.g. the triad of Allah - Muhammad - Ali was here compared with the Christian trinity, the suffering of Hüseyin with the passion of Christ, etc.), and forms of European culture were included in the *cem* ritual. A striking example is the use of chairs in German Alevi rituals: traditionally people were sitting on the floor. Since in many cases, Alevi *cem* rituals were in Germany first performed in such places as university lecture rooms or even churches, that change of architectural context paved the way to the acceptance of chairs being used by the participants during the ritual.

Modern means of transportation and communication caused the development of a transnational Alevi community, since Alevi from the European diaspora and those still living in Turkey (either in the cities or in villages) can easily communicate or visit each other much more often than was the case in former times. This 'post-modern' context of transnationality also affects internal dimensions of the *cem* ritual, when, for example, religious specialists living in Germany transfer practices developed in the diaspora back to Turkey, when they conduct rituals there (recursive 'transfer of ritual').

#### *The Transfer of Masonic Rituals to Mixed and Female Orders*

Also the transfer of masonic rituals from the traditional male to mixed and female orders, which took place since the middle of the 18th century, illustrates and substantiates our theory.<sup>18</sup> A clear example is the case of the Women's Grand Lodge of Germany ('Frauen-Großloge von Deutschland'). Founded shortly after World War II as a group of women under the protection of two of the German Grand Loges then in existence, it started with a ritual, made for the women by some male masons. It was composed of rites, taken from masonic rituals for different occasions, then in use in different German Grand Lodges,

but the ritual as such was not in use in this form in any male masonic order. The central object was a huge pedestal in the middle of the lodge room, on top of which was a large bowl with salt and spirits, which was lighted at the beginning of the ceremony. This bowl-with-flame did occur in several German masonic rituals at that time as well. Here, then, we have a case of ritual invention, triggered by the change of the gender contextual aspect, and involving the transfer of a rather large number of rites from a wide range of masonic rituals into the new—though certainly masonic—ritual for the women. Internal dimensions which were changed (compared to the rituals used by the men) included the form of the ritual (script, structure, performance, aesthetics), its function (e.g., since there was only one lodge yet, it was considered unnecessary to have ‘traditional secrets’—a word, sign, grip, and some standardized questions and answers, enabling a member to show that s/he is a member of a particular order when visiting a lodge where s/he is not known—a central element in the male rituals), and its symbolism (there was, e.g., no building-symbolism in the ritual for the women). The participants involved were those Brethren who wrote the new ritual, in the first place Brother Willy Giwan.

Ever since, the women tried to change their ritual in such a way as to assimilate it to the rituals used by the men. But of roughly each two changes they made, one had to be reversed again under the pressure of the highly influential males, trying to protect the women from the majority of the men, who wanted the female group to be abolished. Thus the ritual itself became the field for the battle between the men and the women for the hegemony over the ritual.

In 1975, the men had the lodge building renovated, which included the lowering of the ceiling of the lodge room. As a result, the huge pedestal with the flame on top of it could no longer be used. The women—especially the Master of their lodge, Sister Heipcke—now succeeded in getting permission from the men to use their ritual, though in modified form, of course. The context aspect changed here was the renovated lodge room. This change caused the old ritual to be abolished, and, as a compensation, the transfer of a different ritual from the men to the women. In that transfer, several internal dimensions of that ritual were changed again, including its form (the members were to be addressed, for example, as Sister in stead of Brother) and function (the communication of the ‘traditional secrets’ was struck out again as unnecessary). The participants creating these changes were the Master of the lodge, Sister Heipcke, and the ritual specialist among the women, Sister Von Puttkamer, probably in cooperation with some of the leading men.

Only seven years later (in 1982), when the original influential protectors had died, and the majority of the German Grand Lodges had merged, while the form of the ritual of the women had come rather close to that used by the men, the women were ‘granted their freedom’, i.e. they lost the protection from the male Grand Lodge, and had no choice but to become an independent female Grand Lodge. As was to be expected, the women now finally adopted the ‘undiluted’ male ritual. So, again, the change of a contextual aspect (the masonic political decision by the men to expel the women) resulted in further changes of internal dimensions of the ritual, such as its form (the women, e.g., choose now to wear aprons, in stead of sashes) and function (two additional lodges having been founded, it was decided to have the ‘traditional secrets’ from now on). Again, these changes were made under the agency of some of the participants, including Sister Von Puttkamer again. Ten years later, the women were also practicing the second and third degree.

Interestingly, however, the original goal of using the ‘real’ male rituals for all three degrees being reached (another change in the context), there are now discussions going on among the members of this women’s Order (i.e. the participants) about the desirability to have rituals of their own, which are more adapted (i.e. a further change of the internal dimension ‘form’) to their use by women (which pertains i.a. to the internal dimensions ‘psychological functionality’ and ‘symbolism’).

#### *The Transfer of Ritual Elements into the Medium Internet*

A third example illustrates ‘transfer of ritual’ in the case of change of the contextual aspect ‘medium’. In the World Wide Web many ritual prescripts are presented, for example on German homepages of Wicca and solitary witches. The term Wicca refers to a brand of neo-pagan and esoteric movements, which originated in the middle of the 20th century, but sees itself as a continuation of pre-Christian, Celtic and Germanic cults and mythologies. The so-called ‘magical rituals’, such as love or healing rituals, are designed for situations in daily life. In contrast to such rituals as the celebration of Samhain, initiation, or

birth, magical rituals offer guidance for managing one's personal life. They constitute the majority of rituals presented on the homepages of solitary witches. These are individuals who do not belong to a particular Wicca-tradition, nor to a 'coven', but do regard themselves as witches.

In addition to offering interaction and communication during the performance of so called 'Online-Rituals', the internet also offers much information about rituals, and instructions on how to perform particular rituals both within and outside the internet. This varies from the publication of—seemingly—fixed ritual prescripts to instructions on how to design a ritual yourself. The ritual prescripts are often presented as old traditional texts, whereas analysis shows explicit or implicit transfers from various modern religious traditions. An example can be seen on the homepage of the solitary witch 'Keltica'<sup>19</sup>. As her 'name' indicates, she refers to the old traditional Celtic religion as the source of her rituals. However, analysis of this homepage shows that her 'Celtic traditions' are no other than the famous myth of Avalon taken from Marion Zimmer Bradley's book. They are not acknowledged to be quoted from that book, but are, on the contrary, presented as an extremely old Celtic tradition.

The analysis of ritual prescripts on homepages of solitary witches shows that they are often copied from the medium of 'printed books'. Texts from books of such famous witches as Thea, Starhawk or Ravenwolf are quoted, though not always acknowledged as quotations. Subsequently, these texts may be discussed and even changed. The analysis also shows that interactivity, commercialization and market-orientation on the Internet encourages the homepage designers to combine diverse ritual elements in order to attract as many users as possible. Compared to the presentation of rituals in 'classical' media (such as printed books) we can observe here a change of the internal dimension 'form', as a result of a change of the economical context aspect, which resulted from the change in the 'medium'.

But processes of 'transfer of ritual' can not only be detected on the large scale described above. Already the choice of a pseudonym of the owner of a homepage, or of the name of a domain-address, often shows religious reflections and certain transfer processes. An example is a solitary witch named Endoria.<sup>20</sup> This name is derived from 1 Sam. 28. The woman at Endor—in the German translation she is called a 'Hexe' (witch)—has "a familiar spirit", and she conjures up the spirit of Samuel for king Saul. Another example is the often used name Morrigan,<sup>21</sup> borrowed from an Irish-Celtic deity.

Interestingly, the majority of the homepages analyzed use the German word 'Hexe' (witch). As a result of the history of witch trials, this word used to have a very negative connotation, but among German solitary witches it has been re-evaluated. On their homepages the history of witches is often referred to, which contrasts markedly with those of Anglo-American Wiccans and solitary witches, as well as with those of German Wiccans organized in Covens. Reference is not made to the different Wicca traditions (such as those initiated by Gerald Gardner or Alexander Sanders), but to the time of the witch persecutions. This illustrates an, at least perceived, diachronic transfer, accompanied by a change of the internal dimension 'meaning' of the term 'witch' in the rituals found on these sites.

On most homepages it was also possible to identify processes of reception within the medium Internet itself: the 'transfer of ritual' from one homepage to another is a very common phenomenon, usually without giving credit to the source. The transferred ritual prescripts often remain unchanged, but they are put in a new context, such as an other ritual category with an other function.

Further instances of processes of 'transfer of ritual' into the Internet are the combination of several religious feasts and festivals stemming from different cultures into one calendar of celebrations and, particularly, the reception of elements from different religious traditions (recent and historic)—such as diverse deities or a particular conception of magic—which result in modifications in the internal dimensions content and function of rituals.

## CONCLUSIONS

'Transfer of ritual' refers to a shift of a (rite or) ritual into another or a changed context. Such a change of context—whereby the different contextual aspects may influence each other—causes modifications of the internal dimensions of the ritual. This process is accomplished by the participants. The study of such processes, therefore, should concentrate on the interactions between the context aspects, the internal dimensions and the participants of the rituals concerned.

When modification of one or more contextual aspects is observed, changes in the internal dimensions of a ritual are also predicted by our theory. Conversely, when changes in the internal



dimensions of a ritual are found, one should verify if maybe one or more contextual aspects have changed as well, which might be the triggering factor(s).

With this model, processes of 'transfer of ritual' through time and space may be analyzed, since the contextual aspects and internal dimensions of rituals in their different variations, differentiations and interactions can be described, using the tools provided by the methods of the cultural and social sciences, and by ritual and communication theories.

Further research possibilities in the context of, and in connection with, our theory of 'transfer of ritual' concern the questions about the authorship—who or what causes the selection, the transfer, and/or the adjustment/modification of a ritual—and the intention and instrumentalisation of 'transfer of ritual'.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> This concept, as well as a first draft of this paper, was originally developed at the University of Heidelberg in order to be part of the application for a large research program on "Ritual Dynamics" (SFB 619), which was granted by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (DFG) in 2002 (see <http://www.ritualdynamik.uni-hd.de> (31.12.2004)). The original, unpublished, paper, "Ritualtransfer" was written, on the basis of an idea by Michael Stausberg, by Robert Langer, Dorothea Lüdeckens and Jan Snoek within the Emmy-Noether project 'History of Religions and Ritualistics' (2000-2003), (see <http://www.religionswissenschaft.uni-heidelberg.de/DFG1.htm> (06.05.2004)) likewise funded by the DFG. Some parts of it are transferred into the current text without major change.

<sup>2</sup> For a sketch of the emergence and further development of the term 'dynamics of ritual / ritual dynamics' see Schenk 2004. See also Podemann Sørensen 1993, 20, where the term 'ritual dynamics' is already used.

<sup>3</sup> Kreinath 2004.

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. Platvoet 1995, 29/30.

<sup>5</sup> Hüskens (ed.) forthc.

<sup>6</sup> "The Ritual, independent of all historical, regional, or linguistic contexts, exists as little as an essence of ritual". ("Das Ritual, losgelöst von allen historischen, regionalen oder sprachlichen Kontexten, gibt es ohnehin ebenso wenig wie ein Wesen von Ritual.") (Michaels 2003, 10).

<sup>7</sup> As we understand 'rituals' to be a polythetic class, most of these dimensions may be regarded as characteristics, every one of which can be observed within many rituals, but no single one has to be detected in every ritual. Also, each ritual should possess many of these characteristics, but none needs contain all of them. See Snoek forthc. a. See also Snoek 1987, 29 ff. and Michaels 2003, 6.

<sup>8</sup> We made use of Platvoet's 'dimensions' for an 'operational definition of ritual'. They were to some extent revised and extended for our purpose. See Platvoet 1995.

<sup>9</sup> Houseman 1993.

<sup>10</sup> Gladigow 2004. See also Stausberg 2004, esp. 23-31.

<sup>11</sup> "Im Unterschied zur 'bloß historischen' Verbindung zwischen einer früheren und späteren Verwendung (dies ist die übliche Perspektive) ist das 'rituelle Zitat' durch eine Intention charakterisiert, die mit der Erwartung verknüpft ist, dass das Zitat auch als Zitat erkennbar ist, erkannt wird". Gladigow 2004, 61.

<sup>12</sup> Gladigow 2004, 63.

<sup>13</sup> The relevant date for the arrival in Gujarat according to one of their indigenous traditions is given in a New-Persian text from the year 1600 which is known commonly by the name "Kisseh-i Sanjan" (*Qesse-e Sanjân*): "Samvat 772, day 9th of Shraavan Shud, Friday, Parsee year 85 Y: day 2nd (Bahman), month 4th (Tir). (716 A. D.)". The interpretation of the arrival date is controversial in modern science and varies from the traditional 716 to 936. Furthermore, the traditional interpretation as one single migration is challenged by Michael Stausberg. See Stausberg 2002, 380-385.

<sup>14</sup> Until about the 16th century Iranian customs were regarded as authoritative by the Indian community. This changed in the 19th century, when the politically and economically more successful Parsi gained also authority over ritual matters.

<sup>15</sup> See: Langer 2004, and more detailed: Langer forthc.

<sup>16</sup> See in detail: Langer / Motika 2005.

<sup>17</sup> Alevi, being a marginalised 'heterodox' community, traditionally tended to avoid 'state courts' which, during the Ottoman period, were dominated by Sunni religious law.

<sup>18</sup> Snoek forthc. b.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.kelticas-hexenwelt.de/> (available 03.03.2005)

<sup>20</sup> See <http://www.endoria.de> (available 16.02.2005).

<sup>21</sup> See <http://www.magieheim.at/morrigan> (available 16.02.2005).

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