



Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity (Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology)

Roy A. Rappaport

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Roy Rappaport argues that religion is central to the continuing evolution of life, although it has been displaced from its original position of intellectual authority by the rise of modern science. His book, which could be construed as in some degree religious as well as about religion, insists that religion can and must be reconciled with science. Combining adaptive and cognitive approaches to the study of humankind, he mounts a comprehensive analysis of religion's evolutionary significance, seeing it as co-extensive with the invention of language and hence of culture as we know it. At the same time he assembles the fullest study yet of religion's main component, ritual, which constructs the conceptions which we take to be religious and has been central in the making of humanity's adaptation. The text amounts to a manual for effective ritual, illustrated by examples drawn from anthropology, history, philosophy, comparative religion, and elsewhere.

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