Rituals
Rituals

- Definition of ritual
- Definition of religious ritual
- Elements included
Types of Rituals

Classifications
I. Why Performed

- Prescriptive - required to be performed
- Situational - to meet needs in specific situation
II. When Performed

- Periodic - certain times, as part of religious calendar. Communal impact.

- Occasional (non periodic) - as needed or associated with critical life events for individuals.
III. What is the Goal?
Technological Rituals

- Goal: control nature

- Examples:
  - Divination
  - Rites of intensification
  - Protective rituals
Ideological Rituals

- Goal - control mood, behavior of group
- Examples:
  - Rites of passages
  - Social rites of intensification
  - Rites of rebellion
Therapy Rituals

- **Goal - control human health**
- **Therapy and anti-therapy rituals**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause of Illness</th>
<th>Therapy Ritual</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural causes</td>
<td>Herbs, bone setting, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul loss</td>
<td>Soul retrieval</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spirit intrusion</td>
<td>Exorcism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spirits and gods</td>
<td>Sacrifices and offerings</td>
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## Therapy Rituals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes of Illness</th>
<th>Therapy Rituals</th>
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<tr>
<td>Breach of tabu</td>
<td>Confession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object intrusion</td>
<td>Massage, sucking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witchcraft</td>
<td>Anti-witchcraft</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example - Asmat Bis Ritual

- Worldview
- Myth
- Symbols (including music, dance)
- Ritual
Rites of Passage
Rites of Passage

- Definition: move from one social status to another
- Examples: birth, coming of age, marriage, death
Functions

- Make everyone aware of transition
- Facilitate identity/role changes
- Strengthen/establish social ties
- Teaching and training
- Organize activities
Stages

- Separation
- Transition - liminal
- Incorporation
Rites of Passage in United States?

- What are they?
- What does it mean to be an adult?
- How do you know when you are an adult?
Coming of Age

Rituals for Boys
More Elaborate/ Intense for Boys

- Lack biological marker
- More valued in many societies
- Preparation to be warriors
- Discontinuity between childhood and adulthood
New Guinea

Examples

- Residential segregation of the sexes
- Gururumba and Wogeo
- Pain and body modification
- Artificial menstruation
Age Sets and Age Grades

- **Age Grade** - series of statuses defined by age
- **Age Set** - social group (single sex), in a specific age grade
- **Example** - Xavante (Brazil)
Example - Maasai

- East Africa - pastoralism
- Age class system helps balance stress created by polygyny
- Series of rituals - body modification
Girls Example - Apache

© Read in textbook
Body Modification
Types of Body Mod

- May be sacred or secular
- May be permanent or temporary
Pain & Body Mod in Rites of Passage

- New status more valuable
- Increased pride in membership
- Achieve altered states of consciousness
- More memorable/significant
- Bonding experience
- Body mod - permanently visible, unlikely to be faked
Genital Cutting
Genital Cutting - Boys Circumcision

- Judaism - prescribed (Genesis 17: 10-11); cuts covenant with God; ritual Brit Milah
- Spread in U.S.
- Current anti-circumcision movement
- Followed by Subincision in some groups
Female Genital Cutting

- Clitoridectomy
- Pharaonic circumcision - infibulation
- Cultural meaning
- Associated problems
- Cultural relativism / human rights issues
Ritual Observation Assignment

Posted on Class Haiku Site!
Next Class

- Sacred Pain
- Altered States of Consciousness