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Image And Pilgrimage In Christian Culture



Synopsis

A classic work that examines the theological doctrines, popular notions & corresponding symbols & images promoting & sustaining Christian pilgrimage.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"This book constitutes an important foreshadowing of issues that have become prominent in more recent anthropology." -- "Culture"

Image and Pilgrimage examines in detail two anthropological important aspects of the practice of pilgrimage. One is the context-the theological background into which each pilgrimage is 'born' and the folk traditions through which the people recognize the implications of the initiating event. The other is the repertoire of symbols and images that embody that experience and continue to clothe the original vision in varying ways.

This is required reading in my Pilgrimage class and the first work done on the pilgrimage system. Very important contribution to the anthropological study of pilgrimages. Marian and Mexican pilgrimages are the focus of this work. Valuable!

Victor and Edith L.B. Turner's "Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture" addresses pilgrimage as an institution implicated in social processes and functions. Consequently, the Turners note that an

understanding of pilgrimage is key to comprehending a society's culture and its social, economic, and nationalist underpinnings. They illustrate this institutional perspective through a discussion of Christian pilgrimage in Mexico and Ireland. In Mexico, pilgrims trek to the Basilica of Guadeloupe to see the painting of the Virgin of Guadeloupe, a Catholic icon noted for the Virgin's dark skin. Because of her dark skin, the painting is part of Mexico's nationalist "root paradigm," and was appropriated as the symbol of Hidalgo's revolt in 1810. Accordingly, the image of the Virgin is not only a religious icon but also a "collective representation of Mexican society" (94). This careful entanglement between pilgrimage and social structures is also demonstrated in the Turners' discussion of Lough Derg, a pilgrimage site in Ireland associated with purgatory. The site's importance extends beyond religion, as it is also a symbol of Irish nationalism. The Turners quote Curtayne who said, "That which speaks to them at Lough Derg is race. In going there they are answering the call of blood" (125). Both pilgrimage sites demonstrate the institutionalized nature of pilgrimage since they highlight the ideological constructs like nationalism at work beneath the sacred façade. All in all, the art forms and iconography of pilgrimage sites hold religious significance but also reveal, "unrecognized and unlegitimized social values... if not [the] 'collective' unconscious, which persists in culturally transmitted... symbols" (101). Consequently, an understanding of pilgrimage sites will clarify religious beliefs, but will also allow for insight into the cultural institutions that structure a society.

Turner was one of my favorite teachers. This book is to replace a copy I misplaced.

great study

The book will be an answer to those who are looking for some reasons why such kind of phenomena, like pilgrimages are still observed in the modern world. Victor Turner repeatedly talks of signifiers and signified and in the book his focus is very much on Marian devotion.

This book is a classic on the anthropology of pilgrimage and the use of ritual and image in pilgrimage. Well written, clear, concise and admirably informative

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