

My thesis is about the ritual of Christmas, focusing mostly on modern, Czech Christmas. I start by presenting the radical change which Christmas has gone through since 19th century, and then I proceed to the analysis and interpretation of the contemporary form of the ritual. Based on my own observations of malls and faire markets during Christmas time I discuss the symbols used in those environments, interpretating them with the help of Victor Turner's distinction between the normative and the sensory poles of symbols. I continue with an analysis of gift giving, probably the most important part of whole ritual. Here I rely on the interpretation of James Carrier and several other anthropologists. I show Christmas as a ritual maintaining the relationship between family and commercial world. I also mention other possible themes that concern Christmas, such as their relationship to the modern national state and the various modes in which Christmas may evoke what Victor Turner calls *communitas*.