

temple ritual of the Gauóá Vaiavism. The work attempts to develop a theoretical approach to a particular set of empirical data by merging together various analytical concepts and theories from different levels of theorizing on ritual. The interpretation is based on a selection of empirical data from field research which was carried out in a local Gauóá Vaiava temple in Kolkata, West Bengal in 2007.

The thesis consists of two parts, descriptive and interpretative. The descriptive part is ordered according to the main analytical concepts employed further in the process of theorizing. It contains textual and audio-visual materials providing a detailed description of the studied ritual environment seeking to enable the reader to enter the field of research. The interpretative part attempts to view the data through a 'focusing lens' of the concept of 'field of ritual' which shows that the ritual environment can operate as a responsive matrix structuring the actions of ritual actors which is further structured by them.