THE TIME-RESISTANT SYNTAX OF HUMAN RITUAL AND MYTH

Chris Knight

ON (hard/loud signals)
Seclusion
Eclipse
Thunder
Noise/chaos
Rebellion
Waxing moon
Night
Death
Other world
Incest/orgiastic sex
Wet
Bleeding/raw
Non-available/taboo
Hunger/being eaten
Animal mask
Gender inversion

OFF (soft/weak signals)
Emergence
Midday sun
Silence/calm
Harmony
Surrender
Waning moon
Day
Life
This world
Marital sex
Dry
Cooked
Available
Feasting
Human identity
Biological sex

• Signals of same polarity reinforce one another
• Signals of opposite polarity cancel each other out
• Purest possible OFF ideally alternates with loudest possible ON

Workshop questions

Examine each of the following combinations. Should it happen or not? (Remember, we are dealing with idealized ritual states, not physical or social ones). Now think about any fairy story or horror film…. How closely is the syntax followed?

Seclusion and cooking
Seclusion and incest/orgiastic sex
Seclusion and midday sun
Seclusion and waxing moon
Seclusion and marital sex
Animal mask and cooking
Animal mask and heterosexuality
Animal mask and thunder
Animal mask and rebellion
Thunder and cooking
Thunder and incest/orgiastic sex

Incest/orgiastic sex and cooking
Incest/orgiastic sex and being eaten
Incest/orgiastic sex and human identity
Incest/orgiastic sex and thunder
Incest/orgiastic sex and death
Death and cooking
Death and seclusion
Death and midday sun
Death and eclipse
Death and thunder
Animal mask and taboo
Thunder and human identity.....