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Sommario/riassunto	This study affords an entirely new view of the nature of modern popular entertainment. American vaudeville is here regarded as the carefully elaborated ritual serving the different and paradoxical myth of the new urban folk. It demonstrates that the compulsive myth-making faculty in man is not limited to primitive ethnic groups or to serious art, that vaudeville cannot be dismissed as meaningless and irrelevant simply because it fits neither the criteria of formal criticism or the familiar patterns of anthropological study. Using the methods for criticism developed by Susanne K. Langer and other