

The anthropological view of religion

[Science](#), [Anthropology](#)



Dissecting Religion Full According to “ The Anthropological view of Religion”, religion is a “ system of beliefs involving worship of supernatural forces or beings” (Blass & Hartmann, 2006). The article mentions that there are four identified types of religion namely, the Shamanic, Communal, Olympian and Monotheistic. Whatever religion an individual practices, it has been observed that there are three elements which will always be present. These are magic, symbolism and ritual. Magic is believed to be the means to attain certain necessities or desires which may seem to be impossible in normal circumstances such as things that are out of one’s control. For example, when an individual is terminally ill, religions perform established practices where they often utter secret words to get rid of the sickness. This is said to be a means which religions resort to in order to meet psychological needs such as alleviating anxiety. Symbolism is another important element in religions because they are used to explain thee intangible such as love, hope and joy or those which are important emphases in the religion. For the Christians, the bread and wine are examples of symbolism of the body and blood of Jesus. Lastly, ritual is done by the different religions to fulfill psychological and social needs just like how the Shamans represent the removal of a disease by taking a feather and acting like it has been taken from the sick person’s body.

Religion is an interesting aspect of life because it does not only portray wisdom about observable things but also reflects on the things that are not observable. Indeed, the arguments of science are based from observable facts and could be easily understood. It could also be said that science can easily convince people to believe in it because the proofs can be seen.

However, religion delves in to the matters which are difficult to explain and thus, difficult to understand. These things are considered difficult because in comparison to what science can explain through evidence, some of the beliefs in religions are explained through imperceptible thoughts and ideas. For example, a person is infected with a disease which science claims to be hereditary or could be due to environmental conditions. However, the patient is observed to have no familial history of the disease, has healthy eating habits, has a job which allows her to be physically active and lives in a rural area where there is not much air, water and noise pollution. In other words, science cannot explain how the individual contracted the disease. Religion will try to explain this condition through the 'unseen' by claiming the person might have angered a god or a spirit. Therefore the spirit or god has to be pacified by certain rituals which the priests or the people in authority will need to perform.

People may have doubts about certain beliefs because obviously, some of the religious perceptions are twisted and unrealistic. However, it should also be accepted that there are indeed matters in this world which science and logic cannot explain. No matter how people will deny it, such matters that religion can effectively explain should also be considered. Of course not all religious views are correct but perhaps it is also time for people to really extend their studies and understanding beyond what is seen, the unnatural or the extraordinary. Surely, science conflicts with religion and this cannot surprise people because even religions conflict each other. Religion has always been a part of people and perhaps will always be. Regardless of the different views of religion, thankfully they bind people together, keep their

sanities and establish civilizations that are improved from generation to generation.

References

Blass, Laurie & Hartmann, Pamela. (2006). " Quest 3: Listening and Speaking Student Book". 2ndEdition. USA: McGraw-Hill.