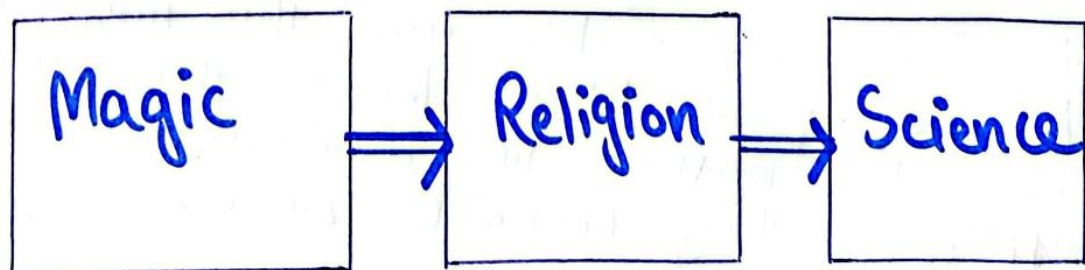


Give your critical analysis of the evolutionary scheme of religion given by James Frazer:

Explicating the Evolutionary Scheme of Religion given by Frazer

James Frazer's evolutionary scheme of religion as outlined in his monumental work "The Golden Bough" posits a progression from primitive magical beliefs to a more advanced religious systems. The next transition in the evolutionary sequence of religion, according to Frazer, was to science. According to him, the magic was primitive effort of a man to manipulate the world and dissatisfaction of humans with magic led them towards religion and the discontentment of humans regarding ^{its} being explained by reference to the activities of spiritual realities or divine beings led them towards their scientific explanations.



Evolutionary Scheme of Religion

Expounding the Concept of MAGIC given by Frazer

Magic in Frazer's view is a kind of pseudoscience where practitioners believe that they can influence or manipulate the world through "sympathetic magic" which operates under the principles of similarity (things that are alike can affect each other) and contagion (things that were once in contact can affect each other). This technique includes offering spells on someone's hair or piece of clothing.

Examples of Magic

- Casting spells on Voodoo dolls: If magicians want to harm someone, they can immitate that effect on an image like sticking pins in voodoo dolls.
- Trobriand sailing magic: Malinowski found the Trobriand sailers used this magic on their sailing expeditions because they could not control matters like wind, water, fish supply so they turned to magic.
- Baseball magic: Players believe in this magic when they find that things are gone out of their control so to overcome psychological stress and to manipulate the

the real world they start believing in this magic. Detroit Tiger first baseman Miguel Cabrera kissed his maple bat before hitting his 4th home run of 2012 at Comerica park.

→ Melanesian and Polynesian Mana: Beliefs in mana like forces also suit here as example of magic. Because people believe that those who have mana prosper in life. In Melanesia it was believed that anyone can acquire mana by chance; however in Polynesia mana was attached to higher political officials.

→ ^{Ancient} Heka in Egypt: Ancient Egyptians believed in the power of magic called 'Heka' that was believed to be a supernatural force permeat the world, accessible to gods and humans alike. "The Book of Dead," a funerary text contained spells that were thought to guide the deceased in afterlife.

→ Siberian Shamanism: Among indigenous people of Siberia, Shamans play central role in mediating between humans and spirits. Shamans try to manipulate the world and acquire the acquire of spirit forces and talk to them.

Illucidating the Concept of Religion given by Frazer

Frazer understood religion to be "a propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and of human life. Thus, he defined religion consists of two elements, a theoretical and practical element, namely, a belief in powers higher than the man and attempt to propitiate or please them."

Evolution of Religion According to E.B. Tylor

Tylor proposed that religion evolved in three stages beginning with animism, then come the polytheism and then monotheism. E.B. Tylor described animism as belief in spiritual beings in not only humans but also inanimate objects (Primitive Culture, 1871).

Examples of Animism

- **Shintoism in Japan:** Shintoism, the indigenous religion of Japan, is characterized by the belief in kami which are spirits or deities that inhabit trees, mountains and waterfalls.
- **Ancient Egyptian Religion:** In ancient Egypt, various objects were considered sacred and imbued with spiritual significance such as the sacred scarab beetle was believed to possess protective properties.
- **Mesoamerican Religion:** The ancient civilization of Mesoamerica including Maya cultures worshipped sacred objects like masks, statues as manifestations of divine power.

Examples of Polytheism

- **Greek Mythology:** Ancient Greeks worshipped a pantheon of gods and goddesses like Ra, Osiris, Isis, Anubis etc.
- **Norse Mythology:** The Norse religion, practiced by the Vikings and other Germanic tribes worshipped gods like Odin, Thor, Loki, Frigg etc.
- **Roman Mythology:** Ancient Romans worshipped a variety of gods. Important Roman deities include Jupiter, Venus, Mars and Neptune.

Examples of Monotheism

- **Islam founded in 7th century:** Islam, founded in 7th century, emphasizes the worship of Allah as the one true God.
- **Sikhism founded in 15th century:** Sikhism, founded in 15th century, emphasizes belief in one God known as Waheguru.
- **Baha'i Faith:** This faith established in 19th century by Baha'ullah in Persia teaches the oneness of God, oneness of religion and oneness of humanity.

Understanding the Concept of SCIENCE given by Frazer

This transition into scientific mode of thought occurred when humanity recognized the limits of its power of control and subsequently applied logical-experimental methods for understanding the world. The scientific explanations have supplanted religious explanations for natural phenomena, providing a deeper understanding of the natural world based on empirical evidence, observation and experimentation.

Examples of Scientific Explanations for Natural Phenomena

Theory of

→ **Gravity**: Before Issac Newton's theory of gravitation, many cultures attributed the movement of celestial objects and objects falling to Earth to the actions of gods.

Theory of

→ **Plate Tectonics**: The theory of plate tectonics developed in 20th century explained the phenomena of earthquakes otherwise they were believed to be symbol of god's wrath.

→ **Theory of Genetics**: Gregor Mendel's experiment with pea plants in 19th century laid the foundation for genetics otherwise it was believed that inheritance of traits was attributed to spiritual forces or divine will.

→ **Theory of Electromagnetism**: Development of Maxwell's equations of electromagnetism in 19th century cleared the beliefs of people regarding lightening who considered lightning as manifestations of divine power.

Concluding Thoughts

In the intricate tapestry of human understanding

Frazer's exploration of evolution of religion stands as a beacon that illuminates the timeless journey of human's quest for meaning.

In Frazer's vision, we glimpse not just the evolution of religion but the evolution of human spirit itself—a journey that continues to unfold, beckoning us towards ever greater understanding of the world.