

report

by Nn Nn

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Relationship between magic, witchcraft, and healing from an anthropology perspective

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Relationship between magic, witchcraft, and healing from an anthropology perspective

Anthropological studies suggest some relationship between magic, witchcraft, and healing. Though magic and witchcraft bear different meanings, both concepts have, at some point, been linked to healing. An anthropologist would define magic as the use of charms to gain supernatural powers over natural ones. Others refer to it as the stage performed by illusionists (Moodley et al. 2008). On the other hand, witchcraft is the belief that some harm has been perpetrated by a malicious individual via mystical means. Though the reality of both believes is highly questionable, they have been linked to healing especially in the traditional society settings.

Magic and witchcraft, however, are believed to play opposing roles towards the process of healing. For the case of magic, the illusionists would be called upon to perform a stage in order to finish some harm that could have been caused by witchcraft, curses, or other community-based beliefs (Moodley et al. 2008). For example, in some societies, it is believed that sickness results from such doings as destroying property belonging to other people, lack of respect for the older members of the community, among several other sins. In such events, it is believed that the realization of cure is subject to magic.

In the case of witchcraft, the perpetrator may not necessarily be out to cause harm. There are specialized witchdoctors who are believed to alleviate any harm caused through malicious witchcraft (Levack, 2014). This belief was particularly common in the traditional settings before the evolution of contemporary medical procedures. Indeed, witch doctors are still called upon to treat patients in different parts of the world up to this date. Besides using powers perceived to be superior to those of the perpetrator, witchdoctors also use a wide array of herbs for treatment.

Witchcraft, in different historical, anthropological, spiritual, and mythical circumstances, is the use of forces or powers conceived as supernatural or magic. Historically witchcraft has frequently

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been linked with bad and this infliction of damage upon members of the group or their place, but this term is now also used in the setting of virtuous activity involving healing. Conceptions of witchcraft as innately toxic are frequently treated as products of social orientation, as a way of explaining human fate by blaming it either on the metaphysical entity or the known person in the community.

Conclusively, though not very popular in the modern world, magic and witchcraft have been linked to healing. While magic utilizes charm, witchcraft makes use of superiority of powers, and also traditional medicine. Both magic and witchcraft were extremely common in the traditional societies.

References

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