Student Name

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Reading Response 4

**“Perspectives: An Open Invitation to Cultural Anthropology” edited by Nina Brown, Laura Tubelle de González, and Thomas McIlwraith of the University of Guelph, explained the importance of supernatural beliefs for reshaping the culture. The reading summarizes the theories developed by the anthropologist and identification of four elements of religion. Overall, I felt that the chapter provides an understanding of supernatural belief and its connection with the behavior of the people. In addition, the reading is useful to understand the rites of passage, intensification, and revitalization to know their purpose in our lives.** The reading starts with a discussion of supernatural beliefs. Supernatural beliefs are part of the society from the past (Brown et al.). It is therefore easy to relate the reading with the real-life examples. The distinctions between the beliefs in different religion were explained. For instance, some people have faith on afterlife while some does not. "Religion" is not just a word it is a distinct form of the faith. The reading does not have weak points on which question can be raised. It is because the reading consists of facts and terms taken from the real world. The author has explained different terms like religion, magic, sorcerers, and their role in the culture. In addition, theories of religion have presented which is also totally based on the philosopher's perspective. Although theories developed by Freud, Marx, and Durkheim are described in the chapter but I have found Marx theory more realistic. The point he raised that, “religion created an illusion of happiness that helped people cope with the economic difficulties of life under capitalism” is true and can be identified in the real world (Brown et al.). The common elements of religion that the author explained include cosmology, supernatural, rules governing behavior, and ritual. I can identify the two elements that are supernatural and ritual around me present in almost every religion including Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and, Judaism. However, the author discussed the concept of animism which I found incorrect. For instance, Islam does not believe in animism, they have faith in God only not on any object, animal or weather as the author discussed.

Another issue that I have with the reading is about the rules of behavior. According to the author, Buddhism has a strong connection between rules of everyday behavior and spiritual beliefs (Brown et al.). This is true but I think not only Buddhism every religion provides people a way of life that can make God happy along with making their life easier. Other religions not only distinguish between good deeds and sins they also connect behavior with the spiritual belief just like Buddhism. Section under rituals and religious practitioners is well explained with numbers of examples related to the present world. The most thought-provoking part was the explanation of “prophet” and the difference between profit and priest. For me, this reading is very informative as it is significant to understand the emotional, spiritual, and social contribution of the beliefs and religion to make the culture and human experience (Brown et al.).

Word count: 507

Work Cited:

Brown, Nina, et al. *Perspectives: An Open Invitation to Cultural Anthropology*. 2017.