

NotebookLM

A Critical Realist Definition of Religion (Christian Smith)

What is Religion

- Less about what's in your head
- More about what you do because of those beliefs
- Not about beliefs themselves, but the practices behind them
- A framework for addressing needs (essential aspect in the human experience)

Rituals, ceremonies, prayers

- About connecting with something bigger than yourself (superhuman powers → capacities beyond human reach)
- To receive goods or avoid bads
- More action than just thought
- Certain actions can influence certain outcomes (possibly beyond our control)
 - Actively participating in the process
- Has real word effect → force shaping lives, societies, big cultural movements

The Problem of Evil (Nagasawa & Ricoeur)

Nagasawa

- The potential limitations of an all powerful God
- Some argue that evil is necessary for a greater good
- If God prevents all suffering → it would remove freewill (agency)

Ricoeur

- Evil ≠ proof that God doesn't exist
- Doesn't explain evil away → focuses instead on responding to it
 - acknowledging the suffering and facing it
- Evil → Challenge (forces to re-examine belief and dig deeper) (individually and communally)

Religious Faith and the experience of trust (Marcel)

Faith as a Leap

- A lived experience
- less about blind trust
- more about deep trust beyond proof
 - deep expectation of goodness
 - even if not right now
 - takes a lot of surrender
- Can change things
 - can inspire people to live up to that trust
 - its not passive (trust = active force)
- What we believe changes how we see the world
- Trust is the key ingredient in faith and religion

Faith as Love

- To love someone is to expect something from someone
- Something that can't be easily defined or predict
- Empowers them to live up to that expectation

Faith in religion

- Isn't passive
- Actively engaging with something bigger than yourself
- Choosing to trust even with doubts
- Its not about knowing, its about hoping

"I hope in you" to "I hope in Thee for us" (Marcel)

"I hope in you" → personal

"I hope in Thee for us" → communal

- sharing a commitment to something bigger than self-interests
- shared good
- taking action together

Secularism (Charles Taylor)

- Not just atheism
- Loss in trust
 - Stopped believing that those superhuman powers can still help us
 - Where there used to be
 - Rules→ Cosmic Justice
 - Actions with consequences

- Less supernatural
- More physical
- More emphasis on individual freedom
 - Harder to get that "I hope in Thee for us"
 - Self-interest ≠ Group-interests
- Rituals could build back that trust
 - Being a part of something bigger
 - New rituals that make sense in modern times