

Human Energy Field and Art-Ritual in Dynamic Humanism 2021

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Introduction

I have written three essays describing how art and ritual – the primary focus of my professional career as a social scientist – are accommodated and illuminated in the view of reality proposed in Dynamic Humanism. For access to these essays, go to: www.dynamic-humanism.com/topics/art/ . In this essay, I will discuss the importance of the more recent research on the human energy field in supporting the view of art-ritual presented in those essays.

Comment on the Term “Art-Ritual”

I use the term art-ritual for two reasons. First, in band and tribe societies, which constituted the human societal condition for 96% of human history, art is not distinguished from ritual; they are “fused” and share a mutual subjective/spiritual function. Second, in this same band-tribe context, ritual, which supports the experience of a spiritual or “sacred” principle in all of nature/reality, is universal but religion perse is virtually non-existent. So, I avoid using the term “religion” because religion as an institution – with its elaborate belief system and bureaucracy – only arises in more complex societies. And often such religions function much more to support the social and political structures of complex society than they do to facilitate access for the common citizen to the experience of the spiritual understanding of self and reality. In addition, it is in the context of emerging complex societies – where secular and spiritually oriented activities get more clearly separated – that a continuum develops between art and entertainment and between ritual and ceremony. In this regard and from my viewpoint, much “art” in modern complex society is actually hyper self-indulgent, sensational entertainment. So, I utilize the term art-ritual to refer to the mostly unified condition of art and ritual in traditional human society.

The Energy Perspective

For a number of years now, I have highlighted the relevance of the energy perspective in physics and cosmology in supporting the subjective-intuitive-spiritual perspective on reality, with this perspective set in opposition to the objective-rational-material perspective in Dynamic Humanism. Key in relating the energy perspective and the subjective-spiritual perspective are the following features and facts about energy: 1) it is immaterial, existing in a wave/field form, 2) it is present everywhere at all scales in reality, 3) it is primary in the origin of the universe – all material phenomena emerge later and secondarily from energy [Big Bang theory], 4) it accounts for 70-80% of reality – with the material reality that is the focus of most modern humans constituting only 4-5% of that

reality, 5) matter and energy are transforms of one another – so all material phenomena can be legitimately viewed as organized bundles of energy, 6) as a wave-field phenomena existing everywhere at all scales, it is totally connected and integrated to the point where its “web” exists as one unified phenomenon, 7) reality viewed from the energy perspective is very different from reality viewed from the material perspective where all phenomena are regarded as separate in time and space and engaged in causal interactions that result in lawful changes in material conditions or locations.

The Role of Art-Ritual

In Dynamic Humanism, I contend that the realm of art-ritual is the primary zone of human behavior where humans engage and experience reality from the energy perspective, which shares most features with the spiritual perspective. In this regard, it is my view that art-ritual serves essential functions in human culture and society – confirming an expanded, unification identity for individuals and supporting social cooperation and responsible ecological engagement.

Human Energy Field Supports the Role of Art-Ritual

Why is the human energy field important in this context? For a long time, both the sciences and the dominant western worldview of secular materialism have emphasized the objective-rational-material perspective. But research, especially in the last twenty years, has demonstrated the presence of a comprehensive – and entirely immaterial – human energy field operating from within cells, to tissues, to organs, to bodily systems, to the individual as a whole, to groups of humans, and beyond. This human energy field research reveals that humans ultimately participate at a fundamental level in the overall energy-field system of the planet, solar system, and cosmos. In short, the characteristics of the energy perspective apply directly to humans and to understanding all aspects of human physiology and behavior. In this context, art-ritual plays a critical role in helping to keep human systems and societies in connection with the energy-field / spiritual-unification perspective of who they are and how reality can be understood.

[For overviews and indications of some of the implications of this human energy field research, see my essays, “Energy Perspective in Science, Human Energy Fields and Medicine” and “The Energy Perspective and Resistance to Change in Science” in: www.dynamic-humanism.com/topics/science/].

Support in the Aesthetic Philosophies of Non-Western Cultures

The worldviews of many Asian cultures incorporate basic spiritual principles originating from their shared ancient Indian Sanskrit aesthetic – Jainism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, etc. In the Middle East, Islamic countries also adhere historically to these traditional principles. And in these cultures, through

their shared concept of “rasa” – or its equivalent, art and ritual are viewed as both major expressions of and accesses to spiritual experience and spiritual understanding of self and reality. So, of the major religions of the world, only Christianity-Judaism of the Western world does not directly support these spiritual fundamentals and their association as primary in art-ritual. Now, in the form of the energy perspective, Western science itself has emerged to support the validity of the subjective-spiritual-unification perspective. It turns out that the energy perspective is virtually identical to the spiritual perspective espoused in these long standing non-Western worldviews. And with evidence – again from Western science – for the comprehensive participation of humans in this energy based reality, the contention that art-ritual plays an integral part in human access to reality understood in energy/spiritual terms is supported. Science promotes East meeting West on a major worldview principle!

[See the following three works for presentations of the Sanskrit based concept of “rasa” and the spiritual perspective in the art of the East: two articles in Susan L. Feagin, editor, Global Theories of the Arts and Aesthetics, 2007 – Susan Pratt Wilson, “Aesthetic and Spiritual Correlations in Javanese Gamelan Music,” especially overview pages 31-33, and Kathleen Marie Higgins, “An Alchemy of Emotion: Rasa and Aesthetic Breakthroughs,” pp. 43-54; and J.L. Masson and M.V. Patwardhan, Santarasa and Abhinavagupta’s Philosophy of Aesthetics, 1969]

The Need for Perspective Balance in Modern Western Civilization

Human societies only survive long term if they keep the objective-material-discrete perspective in proper balance with the subjective-energy-unification perspective. In this regard, the many ecological, social, economic, and political problems that modern western civilization currently exhibits reveal the fact that the inputs from these two perspectives are out of balance – in the main due to this civilization’s conduct of virtually all human affairs in terms of an excessive individual-secular-material focus.

Conclusion

The immaterial human energy field plays a significant role at all levels in human physiology and behavior. This fact supports the importance of the immaterial energy perspective for humans in understanding the nature of reality and their participation in it. Art-ritual supports the subjective-spiritual-energy perspective as humans seek to balance the material versus the spiritual perspectives in the dynamic that exists at the core of self, society and culture. In Dynamic Humanism, this is the essential role that art-ritual plays in the overall perspective dynamic in all human societies. This is also the role of art-ritual that has long existed in most Asian cultures. The time is overdue for all of the relevant Western academic disciplines to incorporate this overall point of view.