

**Paper 88 — Fetishes, Magic, and Charms**

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*This chart is a revision of the 2012 and 2015 versions.*

Endnotes and most Urantia Book cross-references have been deleted to enhance readability.

**Sources for Paper 88, in the order in which they first appear**

- (1) William Graham **Sumner** and Albert Galloway **Keller**, *The Science of Society, Volume II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927)
- (2) William Graham **Sumner**, Albert Galloway **Keller**, and Maurice Rea Davie, *The Science of Society, Volume IV* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927)
- (3) Lewis **Browne**, *This Believing World: A Simple Account of the Great Religions of Mankind* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1926)

**Key**

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source author first appears, or where he/she reappears.
- (b) **Yellow** highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) **Tan** highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row.
- (d) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and the UB writer pointedly differ from each other.
- (e) **Blue** indicates original (or “revealed”) information, or UB-specific terminology and concepts. (What to highlight in this regard is debatable; the highlights are tentative.)
- (f) **Light green** indicates Bible passages or fragments thereof, which are not paralleled in the source text.

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## PAPER 88 — FETISHES, CHARMS, AND MAGIC

88:0.1 The concept of a spirit's entering into an inanimate object, an animal, or a human being, is a very ancient and honorable belief, having prevailed since the beginning of the evolution of religion.

XXVIII: FETISHISM (Sumner & Keller 979)

§247. **The Fetish.** (Sumner & Keller 981)

[contd] Out of the doctrines about souls, ghosts, and daimons, with the added idea of **possession**, there arises one of the most nearly universal of human beliefs: **fetishism** (S&K 981).

Wilken holds that "in fetishism the spirit is wholly identified with the object in which it is housed, is not distinguished from it, so that it is really the object which is worshipped as a possessed and powerful being. . . . Many Javanese assert very succinctly and definitely that they reverence no trees, rivers, mountains, but the . . . **spirit that lives in them**" (S&K 984).

When fetishes were first described and discussed, they were regarded as the product of the attribution of life to inorganic objects. This misapprehension was exposed by Spencer, who saw in the fetish an indwelling spirit which was, in origin at least, the **ghost of a dead man** (S&K 982).

This doctrine of spirit **possession** is nothing more nor less than *fetishism*.

The savage does not necessarily worship the fetish; he very logically worships and reverences the **spirit resident therein**.

88:0.2 At first, the spirit of a fetish was believed to be the **ghost of a dead man**;

We do not follow Lippert in his belief that fetishes are so predominantly ghost-possessed objects but think that fetishism rises from possession by a **daimon** or even an anima, that is, directly out of daimonism or even animism (S&K 982).

The nature of **soul, ghost, and spirit** has been surveyed; either one of the three may enter to possess some object, inanimate or animate; then fetishism has to do with the phenomena and results of such possession (S&K 984-85).

XXIX: FETISHISM: TOTEMISM  
(Sumner & Keller 1017)

§254.\* **The Extraordinary.** (Sumner & Keller 1017)

[contd] The object possessed by the spirit is always out of the ordinary. From this circumstance it readily eventuates that the **extraordinary** is accredited with fetish-quality (S&K 1017).

By some coincidence, let us say, an Indian is relieved of pain just after swallowing some substance which modern science has demonstrated to be quite ineffective, either for good or for ill... That is enough. The remedy in question becomes forthwith a fetish to the one who took it and to all who know his story.

It is not necessary to attach this incident to the Indian; the history of **folk-medicine** or of modern patent panaceas can be drawn upon in confirmation (S&K 1018-19).

later on, the **higher spirits** were supposed to reside in fetishes.

And so the fetish cult eventually incorporated all of the primitive ideas of **ghosts, souls, spirits,** and demon possession.

## 1. BELIEF IN FETISHES

88.1.1 Primitive man always wanted to make anything **extraordinary** into a fetish;

chance therefore gave origin to many.

A man is sick, something happens, and he gets well.

The same thing is true of the reputation of many **medicines** and the chance methods of treating disease.

Strangeness of appearance in an object; exceptionality of the circumstances attending its advent; the suggestion of its significance through a **dream** or other spiritual revelation—any such condition is enough to demonstrate fetish-quality (S&K 1018).

It is the **volcano rather than the ordinary mountain**, the **comet** rather than the planet ... that catch attention and seem to need, and so straightway receive, explanation upon the only basis possible under the circumstances (S&K 1022-23).

The [Solomon Islanders] think that **falling stars** are wandering spirits and are much afraid (S&K IV 450).

I, I: MAGIC (**Browne** 27)

4. Fetishism. (Browne 36)

The first fetishes were **probably pebbles with markings** which happened to attract the eye of the savage because of their extraordinary color or shape.

(Millions of people in the most civilized lands still believe in such **“lucky stones.”**) (B 36)

The savage gathered a whole **collection** of such fetishes on a **string**, and hung them around his neck, or fastened them over the door of his hut (B 36-37).

5. Idolatry—the beginning of sacrifice—of prayer—of the church. (Browne 38)

[contd] **Tribal** fetishes, like private ones, were originally natural objects: for instance, **boulders** of a peculiar color, or trees of a strange shape.

Objects connected with **dreams** were likely to be converted into fetishes.

**Volcanoes, but not mountains**, became fetishes; **comets**, but not stars.

Early man regarded **shooting stars** and meteors as indicating the arrival on earth of special visiting spirits.

88:1.2 The first fetishes were peculiarly **marked pebbles**,

and **“sacred stones”** have ever since been sought by man;

a **string** of beads was once a **collection** of sacred stones, a battery of charms.

Many **tribes** had fetish **stones**,

(The **Kaaba** Stone, still worshipped by Moslems in Mecca, was originally just such a tribal fetish.) (B 38)

but few have survived as have the **Kaaba**

and the Stone of Scone.

XXVIII: FETISHISM (**Sumner & Keller** 979)

§248.\* **Types of Fetishes.** (Sumner & Keller 988)

**Fire**, **water**, precious stones, and many other natural elements may come, through possession, to be fetishes of great significance.

**Fire** and **water** were also among the early fetishes,

That fire may become a fetish in a country where cremation is practised can be easily understood; then **fire-worship** on the Persian lines is not far off (S&K 989).

and **fire worship**,

together with belief in holy water, still survives.

In animate nature, the **tree-fetish** figures extensively; trees in which receptacles for the dead were lodged and those planted over graves have been regarded as the abodes of ghosts (S&K 989).

88:1.3 **Tree fetishes** were a later development,

In Melanesia certain **spirits that are not ghosts** (*Vuis*) are generally associated with stones, less commonly with snakes, owls, and sharks. "It is not that the stone is a *Vui*, or that a *Vui* is in the stone, but that there is such a connection between the *Vui* and the stone that the stone is the spirit's outward part or organ" (S&K 988).

but among some tribes the persistence of nature worship led to belief in charms indwelt by some sort of **nature spirit**.

When plants and fruits became fetishes, they were **taboo** as food.

The **“apple”** (a sort of generic name for the **tabooed** fruit), says Gubernatis, “has come to be considered in all the Oriental traditions as a symbol of seduction”; and he mentions Eve, Atalanta, and also Athena and Hera who, in the case of the Judgment of Paris, departed so widely from their matronly and virginal austerity, as its victims (S&K 989).

The **apple** was among the first to fall into this category;

[?]

it was never eaten by the Levantine peoples.

There is enough evidence concerning the fetish-quality of **animals which eat or are supposed to eat the flesh of men** to warrant the inference, without at all ignoring transmigration, that connection with the ghost is at least one of the prime reasons for that quality (S&K 990).

88:1.4 If an **animal ate human flesh**, it became a fetish.

The **Parsee** thought the fly the evil spirit of the northern tribes and the ancient epics represent it as assailing the dying. The vanquisher of the fly is the **dog** of a certain breed; by devouring the body, he saves the soul from the evil fly-spirit and thus becomes a fetish of the first order (S&K 993).

In this way the **dog** came to be the sacred animal of the **Parsees**.

The topic of fetishism links on to many that have preceded but scarcely anywhere more closely than to the idea of transmigration or **reincarnation**. Any animal into which the soul of an ancestor has been reborn is in an unmistakable sense a fetish (S&K 992).

If the fetish is an animal and the ghost is permanently resident therein, then fetishism may impinge on **reincarnation**.

XXIX: FETISHISM: TOTEMISM  
(Sumner & Keller 1017)

§256.\* **The Animal-Fetish.** (Sumner & Keller 1026)

[The savage] does not feel himself to be the “lord of creation”; to him the animals have enviable **superiorities** which he cannot rival. They can outfight him, outrun him, outclimb him; they have self-preservative instincts, not to mention fighting weapons, which arouse his respect and **envy** (S&K 1028).

There is no doubt, however, that men intensely admired the beasts, **named themselves after** them, gave their gods titles of honor such as “Conquering Bull,” and felt a sense of affection and obligation toward the animal world before they had come to harbor any sympathy for men outside the local group (S&K 1030).

XXVIII: FETISHISM (Sumner & Keller 979)

§248.\* **Types of Fetishes.** (Sumner & Keller 988)

In particular do those animals become fetishes which “bury” the dead by eating them; it is characteristic of the fetish-animal that **its flesh is tabooed as food** (S&K 990).

In West Africa the crocodile, snake, leopard, fish, shark, and a species of iguana are fetish-animals, as also are the anthropoid **apes and some monkeys**—the latter **because of their likeness to men** and not because they prey upon human bodies (S&K 991).

In many ways the savages **envied** the animals; they did not feel **superior** to them

and **were often named after** their favorite beasts.

88:1.5 When animals became fetishes, there ensued the **taboos on eating the flesh of the fetish animal.**

**Apes and monkeys, because of resemblance to man,** early became fetish animals;

“Living sacred objects in the Solomon Islands are chiefly sharks, alligators, snakes, bonitos, and frigate-birds...” (S&K 991).

In New Guinea, pigs are killed slowly for the mango-tree, so that its spirit can enjoy the sacrifice the more; pigs are sacred to that tree (S&K 990).

XXIX: FETISHISM: TOTEMISM (Sumner & Keller 1017)

§256.\* **The Animal-Fetish.** (Sumner & Keller 1026)

Among the Greeks of Homer’s time there was evidently a taboo on the milk of cows ... (S&K IV 508).

Cases of Hindu reverence for the cow might cover much space: “the water it ejects ought to be preserved as the best of all holy waters—a sin-destroying liquid which sanctifies everything it touches, while nothing purifies like cow-dung” (S&K IV 508).

XXVIII: FETISHISM (Sumner & Keller 979)

§248.\* **Types of Fetishes.** (Sumner & Keller 988)

The serpent figures in the Bible and among the Phoenicians as the agency of temptation and is raised, in effigy, to cure disease (S&K 993).

The snake as an evil daimon, as tempter, and as a creature associated with wisdom has been clearly depicted in the Old Testament (S&K IV 456).

later, snakes, birds,

and swine were also similarly regarded.

At one time the cow was a fetish, the milk being taboo

while the excreta were highly esteemed.

The serpent was revered in Palestine, especially by the Phoenicians,

who, along with the Jews, considered it to be the mouthpiece of evil spirits.



Superstitions regarding snakes still exist. “Near Leeds they say that when a snake crosses the path rain is near; and in West Sussex to kill the first snake you see in the year gives you power over your enemies for a twelvemonth, or its skin hung up in the house brings good luck to the tenant....” [Etc.] (S&K IV 456)

Like the American Indians, the **Arabs** have their snake-dance (S&K IV 456).

The snake is regarded as a fetish in **India**, where the annual loss of life and property due to unmolested cobras and other species is very great (S&K 993).

The prominent rôle played by the rattle-snake in the **Moki** Indians’ life is well-known through popular descriptions of the **Snake Dance** (S&K 993).

XXIX: FETISHISM: TOTEMISM (Sumner & Keller 1017)

§255.\* **The Lucky and Unlucky.** (Sumner & Keller 1023)

“Every [Toda] clan has **certain days of the week** on which people are restricted from following many of their ordinary occupations, although they are not the occasions of any special ceremonies” (S&K IV 495).

**Friday is widely regarded as an unlucky day**, especially Friday the thirteenth (S&K IV 496).

Statistics show much avoidance of Friday, especially Friday the thirteenth, which is a conjuncture of an evil day and an **unlucky number** as viewed by Christian tradition (S&K 1023)

Even many moderns believe in the charm powers of reptiles.

From **Arabia**

on through **India**

to the **snake dance** of the **Moqui** tribe of red men the serpent has been revered.

88:1.6 **Certain days of the week** were fetishes.

For ages **Friday has been regarded as an unlucky day**

and the number thirteen as an **evil numeral**.

There are certain “round numbers,” such as **three and seven**, that seem to have impressed themselves upon our cultural forebears; but they are not of universal acceptance (S&K 1024).

We are told, in fact, that “the favorite number among the aboriginal races is undoubtedly **four**, especially in the pueblos where heliolatry is the fundamental basis of religion, as in Mexico and Peru...” (S&K 1024).

“ ... The devotee of the Cult of the Quarters is unable to think or speak without habitual reference to the **cardinal points** ...” (S&K 1024).

In the East African Protectorate it is held to be **unlucky to count cattle** or any other living creatures, while it is particularly unlucky to count girls (S&K IV 493).

[**And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people** (2 Sam. 24:10).]

XXVIII: FETISHISM (Sumner & Keller 979)

§253.\* **The Image.** (Sumner & Keller 1011)

A phase of religion of which some authors make much is the worship of the sex-organs, which is largely a cult of images—the so-called phallic cult. It is entirely probable that its importance has been exaggerated.... In general it is quite wrong to think of the savage as always preoccupied with **sex**;

**The lucky numbers three and seven came from later revelations;**

**four** was the lucky number of primitive man

and was derived from the early recognition of

the **four points of the compass.**

It was held **unlucky to count cattle** or other possessions;

the ancients always opposed the taking of a census, **“numbering the people.”**

88:1.7 Primitive man did not make an undue fetish out of **sex**; the reproductive function received only a limited amount of attention.

it was much more a matter of course with him than it is with us; systematic **obscenity** belongs rather to developing civilization (S&K 1014-15).

XXXII: SIN, EXORCISM, COERCION  
(Sumner & Keller 1133)

§276.\* **Exorcism.** (Sumner & Keller 1144)

In one sense, the **saliva** is **fetishistic**, just as the rest of the *exuviæ* are; and its use is in so far magical, for magic is carried out through the agency of fetishes (S&K 1150).

To spit on a person is to **drive off evil spirits** from him (S&K 1150).

The Masai attached much importance to the act of spitting. **To spit at a person** is, with them, a **great compliment**. “The earlier travellers in Masailand were astonished, when making friendship with old Masai chiefs and head-men, to be constantly spat at...” (S&K 1150).

XXVIII: FETISHISM (Sumner & Keller 979)

§249.\* **Exuvial Fetishes.** (Sumner & Keller 994)

In considering the location of the soul it has been found that that essence may reside during life in some special **part or organ of the body**. It may persist, further, in any fragment, after its removal or after death (S&K 994).

Such *exuvia*, or “strippings,” are outlying, dispensable, or discarded portions of the body such as skin, **hair**, blood, or excreta (S&K 994).

The savage was natural minded, not **obscene** or prurient.

88:1.8 **Saliva** was a potent **fetish**;

**devils could be driven out** by spitting on a person.

For an elder or superior **to spit on one** was the **highest compliment**.

**Parts of the human body** were looked upon as potential fetishes,

particularly the **hair** and nails.

A chief in Togoland had a fetish-nail on his little finger: "This nail was the object of painful attention and must not be broken off, because if it were, according to the popular belief, a misfortune would occur to the owner..." (S&K 995).

As the treatment of the skull is typical, further illustration is limited to the skull-fetish... Here again, of course, we encounter the topic of head-hunting (S&K 999).

"In the little toy . . . which is suspended before the [American Indian] child's face, is carefully and superstitiously preserved the umbilicus, which is always secured at the time of its birth, and, being rolled into a little wad the size of a pea, and dried, it is inclosed in the center of this little bag and placed before the child's face, as its protector and its security for 'good luck' and 'long life'" (S&K 995).

In Uganda the naval-cord of a prince is dried, set with pearls, and hung up on a post. A man is set to guard it (S&K 995).

No sooner is a child born in Central Australia than it becomes the object of magic arts: the navel-string is dried, swathed in fur, and tied round the child's neck. "The necklace not only facilitates growth, keeps it quiet and contented, but it also has the admirable faculty of deadening to the child the noise made by the camp dogs" (S&K IV 459).

The long-growing fingernails of the chiefs were highly prized,

and the trimmings thereof were a powerful fetish.

Belief in skull fetishes accounts for much of later-day head-hunting.

The umbilical cord was a highly prized fetish; even today it is so regarded in Africa.

Mankind's first toy was a preserved umbilical cord.

Set with pearls, as was often done,

it was man's first necklace.

XXIX: FETISHISM: TOTEMISM  
(Sumner & Keller 1017)

§257.\* **The Man-Fetish.** (Sumner & Keller 1036)

In the New Hebrides **deformed children** are well cared for; while in Samoa **hunchbacks** and the scrofulous are regarded as favorites of the spirits, generally, be it noted, becoming priests when grown up (S&K 1036).

The very term "**lunatic**" indicates that the person in question is "**moon-struck**," and under external and supernatural influence (S&K 1039).

Mental peculiarities are an even greater distinction than physical; they are found on both sides of the normal, the extremes being **insanity and genius**. That these extremes are wont to meet is a proverbial saying, and the evidence from primitive life does not disprove it; it is not always so easy to determine whether the shaman, for instance, is unsettled in mind or is simply sly and shrewd above his fellows (S&K 1039).

Topinard goes into some detail concerning the cult-functions of two microcephalous **idiots** in Mexico. Burckhardt gives several cases of honor accorded to idiots (S&K 1040).

[See 90:1.2.]

88:1.9 **Hunchbacked and crippled children** were regarded as fetishes;

**lunatics** were believed to be **moon-struck**.

Primitive man could not distinguish between **genius and insanity**;

**idiots** were either beaten to death or revered as fetish personalities.

Hysteria increasingly confirmed the popular belief in witchcraft; epileptics often were priests and medicine men.

§258.\* **Ecstasy and Inspiration.** (Sumner & Keller 1041)

Inebriation, as will be seen later on, forms a good example of possession; in the Congo region drunkenness “was not condemned in either men or women, but was looked upon with good-natured amusement.

When a man went ‘on the drink,’ he pinned a leaf in his hair to show he was drinking, then if he abused anyone no notice was taken of it; and if he entered into a contract which he afterwards considered was to his disadvantage he need not ratify it, because he had a leaf in his hair—a sign of his fuddled condition” (S&K 1042).

§254.\* **The Extraordinary.** (Sumner & Keller 1017)

Yet it is not at all uncommon in ethnography to encounter cases where plants and intoxicating drinks made from them are thought to be possessed of a spirit.... In East Africa, herbs which are thought to effect miraculous cures and many native poisons are fetishes ... (S&K IV 491).

§259. “**The Great Man**” and “**The People.**” (Sumner & Keller 1047)

[contd] The genius is the “inspired” man, the “wizard”; great men of all ages, of the later as well as the earlier, have been regarded as something more than human (S&K 1047).

[Thus men who are skilled in the arts are spoken of in the Bible as those that are “wise-hearted,” in whom “I have put wisdom” (S&K 1045).]

Drunkenness was looked upon as a form of spirit possession;

when a savage went on a spree, he put a leaf in his hair for the purpose of disavowing responsibility for his acts.

Poisons and intoxicants became fetishes; they were deemed to be possessed.

88:1.10 Many people looked upon geniuses as fetish personalities

possessed by a wise spirit.

And these talented humans soon learned to resort to fraud and trickery for the advancement of their selfish interests.

Always has the race known that “to err is human”; if, now, the head of the religious system is **infallible**, he is no mere man; he was not infallible just preceding his investiture with the fetish-character. It is possession by the spirit that makes the fetish-man **more than human** and lends him that which just before he did not have (S&K 1049).

[See S&K 1049-51.]

A fetish man was thought to be **more than human**; he was divine, even **infallible**.

Thus did chiefs, kings, priests, prophets, and church rulers eventually wield great power and exercise unbounded authority.

## 2. EVOLUTION OF THE FETISH

XXVIII: FETISHISM (Sumner & Keller 979)

§249.\* **The Exuvial Fetish.** (Sumner & Keller 994)

88:2.1 It was a supposed preference of ghosts to indwell some object which had belonged to them when alive in the flesh. This belief explains the efficacy of many modern

Perhaps the most readily recognized of exuvial fetishes is the **relic**. This is some part of the body, often a bone, and is plainly of idolistic origin; and if it is thought to have exhibited virtue and proved its power, it attains to unquestioned sanctity (S&K 998).

**relics.**

In the Solomon Islands the **bones of persons of distinction** are gathered and kept—those of the chief in a coffin of shark-shape, in the taboo- [taboo-] house; here is “the devil of the natives, to whom they offer the first fruits of the season” (S&K 999).

The ancients always revered the **bones of their leaders,**

A famous **saint** whose relics are highly revered in this country, and more especially in Canada, is Ste. Anne. Her first shrine on this continent ... has been visited by thousands of people and many miraculous cures have been ascribed to the relics (S&K IV 464).

§247. **The Fetish.** (Sumner & Keller 981)

Many of the “symbols” of a more advanced stage are but survivals, somewhat adapted and **rationalized**, of **primitive fetishism**. Consider the **pilgrimages to the graves of eminent and revered men**, even in modern times (S&K 988).

§251.\* **Hearth- and Altar-Fetishes.** (Sumner & Keller 1004)

The kotla is the **hearth**-place and **sacred spot** of the Bechuanas as the hearth was to the Romans; “no one may enter the kotla with his shoes on” (S&K 1005).

Thus the fetish-quality of the **shrine**, as well as of other sacred structures and places, is derived ultimately from idolistic beliefs (S&K 1008).

and the skeletal remains of **saints** and heroes are still regarded with superstitious awe by many.

Even today, **pilgrimages are made to the tombs of great men.**

88:2.2 Belief in relics is an outgrowth of the ancient fetish cult. The relics of modern religions represent an attempt to **rationalize the fetish of the savage** and thus elevate it to a place of dignity and respectability in the modern religious systems. It is heathenish to believe in fetishes and magic but supposedly all right to accept relics and miracles.

88:2.3 The **hearth**—fireplace—became more or less of a fetish, a **sacred spot.**

The **shrines** and **temples** were at first fetish places because the dead were buried there.



Fawcett thinks that if more evidence were needed to support the Spencerian theory “that the **temple** originated out of a sheltering structure for the dead ..., it would be found in the Saora country” (S&K 1007).

Presumably the [Israelite] tabernacle was originally a **fetish-hut** of the dead.

The ark was a receptacle for fetishes; the tablets of the **law** were placed in it (S&K IV 468).

§253.\* **The Image.** (Sumner & Keller 1011)

At the time when the oldest of the pentateuchal narratives were written, the Canaanites and the great mass of the Hebrews certainly treated the *masseba* [*i.e.*, a **stone pillar**] as a sort of idol or embodiment of the divine presence.

[And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee (Gen. 28:22).]

“Moreover Jacob’s pillar is more than a mere landmark, for it is anointed, just as idols were in antiquity, and the pillar itself, not the spot on which it stood, is called ‘the house of God,’ as if the deity were conceived actually to  **dwell in the stone**, or manifest himself therein to his worshippers” (S&K IV 476).

The **fetish hut** of the Hebrews

was elevated by Moses to that place where it harbored a superfetish,

the then existent concept of the **law** of God.

But the Israelites never gave up the peculiar Canaanite belief in the **stone altar**:

“And this stone which I have set up as a pillar shall be God’s house.”

They truly believed that the spirit of their God **dwelt in such stone altars**, which were in reality fetishes.

Images carved in a rude likeness of a man are common in Melanesia.... “ ... But these had no sacred character, further than that they were memorials of deceased great men, whose ghosts visiting their accustomed abodes would be pleased at marks of memory and affection, and irritated by disrespect” (S&K IV 470).

The very making of an image seems to exercise a compulsion upon the spirit in question to occupy or possess it... There must often take place, however, a ceremony of invitation or induction before the image can be anything more than a material thing (S&K 1011).

“Candles are set in a row in front, then, when all is ready, the [Palaung] monks come from the monastery and the chief monk blesses the image [of the Buddha], which is thenceforth considered sacred...” (S&K IV 471).

[See 66:7.8.]

[Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: (Exod. 20:4)]

88:2.4 The earliest images were made to preserve the appearance and memory of the illustrious dead; they were really monuments.

Idols were a refinement of fetishism.

The primitives believed that a ceremony of consecration caused the spirit to enter the image;

likewise, when certain objects were blessed, they became charms.

88:2.5 Moses, in the addition of the second commandment to the ancient Dalamatian moral code, made an effort to control fetish worship among the Hebrews. He carefully directed that they should make no sort of image that might become consecrated as a fetish. He made it plain,

“You shall not make a graven image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or on the earth beneath, or in the waters of the earth.”

While this commandment did much to retard art among the Jews, it did lessen fetish worship.<sup>1</sup>

§251.\* **Hearth- and Altar-Fetishes.** (Sumner & Keller 1004)

[?]

[contd from 88:2.3] Not only was it the Ark of the Covenant but also a **war-altar** and a **religious shrine** (S&K IV 468).

§252.\* **The “Word.”** (Sumner & Keller 1008)

There is magic in **words**, written or spoken, for fetishes are not limited to material things (S&K IV 469).

“**Doctrines** are the **most frightful tyrants** to which men ever are subject,

because doctrines get inside a man’s own reason and **betray him against himself**. Civilized men have done their fiercest fighting for doctrines (S&K 1009).

But Moses was too wise to attempt suddenly to displace the olden fetishes, and he therefore consented to the putting of certain relics alongside the law

in the combined **war altar** and **religious shrine** which was the ark.

88:2.6 **Words** eventually became fetishes,

more especially those which were regarded as God’s words; in this way the sacred books of many religions have become fetishistic prisons incarcerating the spiritual imagination of man.

Moses’ very effort against fetishes became a supreme fetish; his commandment was later used to stultify art and to retard the enjoyment and adoration of the beautiful.

88:2.7 In olden times the fetish word of authority was a fear-inspiring

*doctrine*, the **most terrible of all tyrants** which enslave men.

A doctrinal fetish will lead mortal man to **betray himself**

into the clutches of bigotry, fanaticism, superstition, intolerance, and the most atrocious of barbarous cruelties.

If the reader objects that the reverence paid to the sayings of extraordinary men

seems like fetishism only in case we make a sort of metaphorical extension of the term, and that such reverence simply reveals a “fetish-making tendency,” we are not disposed to take serious issue with him (S&K 1009).

There is an assumption, says Maine, that “sacred or inspired literature being once believed to exist, all knowledge is contained in it. The Hindu way of putting it was, and is, not simply that the Scripture is true, but that everything which is true is contained in the Scripture” (S&K 1010).

Throwing the Bible open at random with the idea of chancing upon a verse which would lend supernatural counsel at a crisis of life or fortune

is an exhibition of fetishism quite comparable to any out of primitive life;

Modern respect for wisdom and truth

is but the recent escape from the fetish-making tendency

up to the higher levels of thinking and reasoning.

Concerning the accumulated fetish writings which various religionists hold as *sacred books*,

it is not only believed that what is in the book is true, but also that every truth is contained in the book.

If one of these sacred books happens to speak of the earth as being flat, then, for long generations, otherwise sane men and women will refuse to accept positive evidence that the planet is round.<sup>2</sup>

88:2.8 The practice of opening one of these sacred books to let the eye chance upon a passage, the following of which may determine important life decisions or projects,

is nothing more nor less than arrant fetishism.

taking oath upon the book by kissing it or otherwise is, as an example of fetishism, quite the counterpart of swearing upon the relics of a martyr or upon a piece of the “True Cross” (S&K 1010).

Speaking of the rigid dogmatism formerly based upon literal readings from Jewish and Christian scripture, White writes: “The most careful inductions from ascertained facts were regarded as wretchedly fallible when compared with any view of nature whatever given or even hinted at in any poem, chronicle, code, apologue, myth, legend, allegory, letter, or discourse of any sort which had happened to be preserved in the literature which had come to be held as sacred” (S&K 1010).

To take an oath on a “holy book” or to swear by some object of supreme veneration is a form of refined fetishism.

88:2.9 But it does represent real evolutionary progress to advance from the fetish fear of a savage chief’s fingernail trimmings to the adoration of

a superb collection of letters, laws, legends, allegories, myths, poems, and chronicles

which, after all, reflect the winnowed moral wisdom of many centuries, at least up to the time and event of their being assembled as a “sacred book.”

88:2.10 To become fetishes, words had to be considered inspired, and the invocation of supposed divinely inspired writings led directly to the establishment of the *authority* of the church, while the evolution of civil forms led to the fruition of the *authority* of the state.

### 3. TOTEMISM

88:3.1 Fetishism ran through all the primitive cults from the earliest belief in sacred stones, through idolatry, cannibalism, and nature worship, to totemism.

§260.\* **Totemism: Religious Aspects.**  
(Sumner & Keller 1052)

It may be said preliminarily that [totemism] includes features belonging to animism, reincarnation, ancestor-worship, the familiar spirit, fetishism, the taboo, and magic.... Further, totemism reveals, along with pronounced religious aspects, also a social bearing which cannot well be considered otherwise than in conjunction with the religious (S&K 1052).

Australians and Indians have in common the taboo on eating or killing the totem-animal; and both display a consideration and reverence for it which go so far in the case of the Indian that he elaborately excuses himself on occasions when he must kill it. The idea in this appears to be that if the totem-animal is not irritated or alienated by rude treatment there will be plenty of game. Concern for the food-supply is never very far off from the savage mind (S&K 1054).

§261.\* **Totemism (Social Aspect, and Theories about Totemism)** (Sumner & Keller IV 544)

[T]he totem is not only the symbol of this mysterious force [*i.e. mana*]; it is the symbol of the social group as well. “ ... So, if it is at once the symbol of the god and of the society,

88:3.2 Totemism is a combination of social and religious observances.

Originally it was thought that respect for the totem animal of supposed biologic origin insured the food supply.

Totems were at one and the same time symbols of the group and their god.

is that not because the god and the society are only one? . . . The god of the clan, the totemic principle, can therefore be nothing else than the clan itself, personified and represented to the imagination under the visible form of the animal or vegetable which serves as the totem” (S&K IV 556).

§260.\* **Totemism: Religious Aspects.** (Sumner & Keller 1052)

Many young Indians acquire a patron animal-spirit, sometimes called a “manitou,” as a result of a revelation accorded them while under the trance-inducing discipline of initiation; then the patron thus acquired by an ancestor, especially if the latter was also a hero, descends to become the tutelary spirit of a kin-group. Thus the American totem is typically the familiar or guardian spirit as derived by the individual out of personal experience (S&K 1053-54).

“[The totem] is its flag; it is the sign by which each clan distinguishes itself from the others, the visible mark of its personality, a mark borne by everything which is a part of the clan under any title whatsoever, men, beasts, or things ...” (S&K IV 556).

§249.\* **The Exuvial Fetish.** (Sumner & Keller 994)

[[contd from 88:1.2] Later on, however, fetishes were manufactured. Frequently they were little pouches containing objects with reputedly magic properties (Browne 36).]

Such a god was the clan personified.

Totemism was one phase of the attempted socialization of otherwise personal religion.

The totem eventually evolved into the flag,

or national symbol, of the various modern peoples.

88:3.3 A fetish bag, a medicine bag, was a pouch containing a reputable assortment of ghost-impregnated articles,

“When the medicine-bag is carried on a war party it is never allowed to touch the ground...” (S&K 997).

and the medicine man of old never allowed his bag, the symbol of his power, to touch the ground.

Civilized peoples in the twentieth century see to it that their flags, emblems of national consciousness, likewise never touch the ground.

[Neither the king’s characteristic paraphernalia] nor the insignia of supreme ecclesiastical office are merely symbols, certainly not if they have, in the course of transmission across the generations, been handled by a long line of “God’s anointed” (S&K 997).

88:3.4 The insignia of priestly and kingly office were eventually regarded as fetishes,

and the fetish of the state supreme has passed through many stages of development, from clans to tribes, from suzerainty to sovereignty, from totems to flags.

§259. “The Great Man” and “The People.”  
(Sumner & Keller 1047)

Whenever the doctrine has prevailed that “the king can do no wrong”—and it prevails in the face of the *errare est humanum*—the king is a fetish-man, has “divine right” and all the other fetish-perquisites (S&K 1049).

Fetish kings have ruled by “divine right,”

and many other forms of government have obtained.

In later times the fetish-quality has passed, with the extension of democracy,

Men have also made a fetish of democracy,

the exaltation and adoration of the common man’s ideas when collectively called

to “The People.” *Vox populi vox dei.*

“public opinion.”



The idea seems to be that individually the opinions of common men are foolish, or negligible, or even contemptible;

but that when they get together to vote or otherwise to express themselves as a whole, they become inspired for the occasion and are infallible (S&K 1051).

One man's opinion, when taken by itself, is not regarded as worth much,

but when many men are collectively functioning as a democracy, this same mediocre judgment is held to be the arbiter of justice and the standard of righteousness.

#### 4. MAGIC

88:4.1 Civilized man attacks the problems of a real environment through his science; savage man attempted to solve the real problems of an illusory ghost environment by magic. Magic was the technique of manipulating the conjectured spirit environment whose machinations endlessly explained the inexplicable;

XXXVII: MAGIC (Sumner & Keller 1291)

§299. **Methods of Magic.** (Sumner & Keller 1291)

The methods and processes of magic represent, in the main, an effort to coerce spirits to accomplish things desired, through the agency of other spirits and in particular by means of fetishes (S&K 1291).

§304. **Sway of Magic.** (Sumner & Keller 1316)

[contd] The object of magic is stated by one writer to be twofold:

to secure insight;

it was the art of obtaining voluntary spirit co-operation

and of coercing involuntary spirit aid through the use of fetishes or other and more powerful spirits.

88:4.2 The object of magic, sorcery, and necromancy was twofold:

88:4.3 1. To secure insight into the future.

to exert effect on environment.

It might be noted at once that these are the objects of science also; men's aims must needs be the same, however diverse the means employed for their attainment (S&K 1316).

Much enlightenment ... can be gained by noting how, entirely automatically, the race has stumbled upon a working hypothesis, has carried it to the facts of life, has corrected it gradually and painfully (by experience, not by meditation),

and has finally emerged with highly effective sciences which provide both insight and also power over environment—the original objects at which magic aimed (S&K 1317).

§307. Correction into Science. (Sumner & Keller 1329)

By constant further correction he backed, as it were, into all he knows; and he is doing it still. All that men have learned has been won, so to speak, backwards.

It began in error; then error was corrected a bit at a time, for in the place of the old mistake there was generally put a new error which was only a little better.

It is only since modern science came into general authority that the race has been able to face forwards and to undertake free and original investigation into truth (S&K 1333).

88:4.4 2. Favorably to influence environment.

88:4.5 The objects of science are identical with those of magic.

Mankind is progressing from magic to science,

not by meditation and reason, but rather through long experience, gradually and painfully.

Man is gradually backing into the truth,

beginning in error, progressing in error,

and finally attaining the threshold of truth.

It is not always realized that primitive man had to experiment or perish, even though the danger of experimentation was always great; indeed it is even yet not frequently at the risk of his life that man discovers the laws of nature (S&K 1333).

It was “superstition” that made the sciences possible (S&K 1332).

It was the conviction that lay in what we now call superstition that put the emotional motive behind these studies, labors and renunciations. Without the fear and the hope, but especially without the fear, the activity would not have been there; for it is emotion that is dynamic (S&K 1332).

[Superstition] had in it, right or wrong, the dynamic power, capable of inspiring mankind to effort and to action, which has brought us where we now are (S&K 1332).

§305.\* Applications of Magic. (Sumner & Keller 1319)

As has been shown in another connection, “primitive man is unable to conceive the idea of natural death—every death is attributed to sorcery or to some malicious act” (S&K 1319-20).

Only with the arrival of the scientific method has he faced forward.

But primitive man had to experiment or perish.

88:4.6 The fascination of early superstition was the mother of the later scientific curiosity.

There was progressive dynamic emotion—fear plus curiosity—in these primitive superstitions;

there was progressive driving power in the olden magic.

These superstitions represented the emergence of the human desire to know and to control planetary environment.

88:4.7 Magic gained such a strong hold upon the savage because

he could not grasp the concept of natural death.

[See 86:3.3.]

“Belief in witchcraft is the cause of more African deaths than anything else. It has killed and still kills more men and women than the slave trade...” As it is, however, ten or more die for one death, “and thus, over immense tracts of country, the death rate exceeds the birth rate.” [Etc.] (S&K 1320-21)

Indian villages were bombarded and destroyed in the effort to compel the natives to abandon the punishment of victims accused of witchcraft; “but the chief stumbling block has been the surprising admission of guilt which nearly all the accused Indians make when charged with charming away life, and this, too, in the face of the death penalty. Such is their credulity that when accused they believe they must be guilty” (S&K 1321).

§304. Sway of Magic. (Sumner & Keller 1316)

The belief in magic is wholly natural to the savage; given his premises, it is also rational and logical.

Says a writer on New Guinea: “While I have spoken of this native belief as belief in ‘magic,’ we must remember that it is really not magic from the native point of view. From his point of view it is just as natural for a person to be killed by treating his hair after it has been cut off, as it is to kill him by giving him a grain or two of strychnine” (S&K 1318).

The later idea of original sin helped much to weaken the grip of magic on the race in that it accounted for natural death.

It was at one time not at all uncommon for ten innocent persons to be put to death because of supposed responsibility for one natural death.

This is one reason why ancient peoples did not increase faster, and it is still true of some African tribes.

The accused individual usually confessed guilt, even when facing death.

88:4.8 Magic is natural to a savage.

He believes that an enemy can actually be killed by practicing sorcery on his shingled hair

[In cases of death by natural causes the evil spirit has fixed the time beforehand for the victim to meet the accident, for instance, to be **bitten by a snake** (S&K 1385).]

**§306. Effectiveness of Magic.** (Sumner & Keller 1326)

“... **So** strong is the superstition regarding these things that a man who is cursed never dreams of attempting to overcome the disaster foretold him, he simply goes home and dies,

and it is in this way that this particular superstition, and others like it live” (S&K 1327).

If the performance does not come off, there is always an excuse which is **plausible** enough to a believer.

**The cure for magic is more magic** (S&K 1327).

**§300.\* Exuvial Magic.** (Sumner & Keller 1292)

[See 88:1.8, above. Compare S&K 1292-95 and S&K IV 696-704.]

or fingernail trimmings.

The fatality of **snake bites** was attributed to the magic of the sorcerer.

The difficulty in combating magic arises from the fact that fear can kill.

Primitive peoples **so** feared magic that it did actually kill,

and such results were sufficient to substantiate this erroneous belief.

In case of failure there was always some **plausible** explanation;

**the cure for defective magic was more magic.**

## 5. MAGICAL CHARMS

88:5.1 Since anything connected with the body could become a fetish, the earliest magic had to do with hair and nails.

Secrecy attendant upon body elimination grew up out of fear that

“ ... It is believed [by Australian aborigines] that if **enemies get possession of anything** that has belonged to a person, they can by its means make him ill;

hence every uncleanness belonging to adults and half-grown children is **buried** at a distance from their dwellings...” (S&K 1295).

If [certain Africans] spit, they **cover** it with earth (S&K 1295).

Such objects, including not alone physical fragments such as hair but also **remnants of food, clothing**, property, and likewise the name—things assimilated to personality—are part of their owner in the sense of containing some fraction of his soul. With such samples of a person, it is thought, much damage can be done, for by the induction of spiritual influence into them, supernatural power may be exerted over the whole of which they are or have been parts (S&K 1293).

All the scraps from Papuan **meals** are burned or buried, “as they could be used in sorcery, to which all disease and calamity is ascribed” (S&K IV 697).

It is **fear** of the magic that can be worked by the use of exuviae, for instance saliva, which has made a good part of men’s manners,

as well as their so-called **hygienic** and sanitary practice (S&K 1293).

an **enemy might get possession of something** derived from the body and employ it in detrimental magic;

all excreta of the body were therefore carefully **buried**.

Public spitting was refrained from because of the fear that saliva would be used in deleterious magic;

spittle was always **covered**.

Even **food remnants, clothing**, and ornaments could become instruments of magic.

The savage never left any remnants of his **meal** on the table.

And all this was done through **fear** that one’s enemies might use these things in magical rites,

not from any appreciation of the **hygienic** value of such practices.

88:5.2 Magical charms were concocted from a great variety of things:

Perhaps the most potent West African charm, stowed in the tusk of a young elephant, comprises **hair** from the head of a white man, a bit of **human flesh**, also said to be that of a white man, some large snake-teeth, the point of a **leopard's claw**, a fragment of the **tooth of a crocodile**, a few **seeds of the plant** from which **poison** for arrows is made, all mixed in a kind of paste. To this is added a little gunpowder and a few drops of **snake-poison** (S&K IV 699).

Bones form another instrument of magic common in Central Australia. "All diseases are supposed to be caused by the **bones of the dead** blackfellow being pointed at the sick person..." (S&K IV 696).

[If a sorcerer can get hold of a man's exuvia he has a grip upon the spirit of the man himself. **Even dust from his footprint can be used** (S&K 994).]

For **love-charms**, in Germany of earlier days, magicians used sundry words, signs, wax images, nail-parings, a piece of the person's clothing or something else that had been in contact with him, which latter were buried under the threshold (S&K IV 703).

In East Prussia, "if anyone wants to be truly loved by any else, he must give him secretly three drops of his **blood** in some food and drink" (S&K IV 703).

Harlots and others of that ilk made use of sexual **secretions**, after-births, milk, perspiration, urine, spittle, hair, navel-strings, and the brains of tadpoles or burbots (S&K IV 703).

**human flesh, tiger claws, crocodile teeth, poison plant seeds, snake venom, and human hair.**

The **bones of the dead** were very magical.

**Even the dust from footprints could be used** in magic.

The ancients were great believers in **love charms**.

**Blood**

and other forms of bodily **secretions** were able to insure the magic influence of love.

§302.\* **Imitative Magic.** (Sumner & Keller 1306)

*Effigy.* A special type of imitative magic consists in making an **image** or other representation and treating it in a special manner, in the belief that the person or thing for whom it stands will be affected accordingly (S&K IV 721).

The Zulu, buying cattle, **chews a bit of wood to soften the hard heart of the seller** (S&K 1310).

§301.\* **Other Instrumentalities.** (Sumner & Keller 1296)

The Singhalese make medicine for some ills from the **milk of a pure black cow**, which animal, like the **black cat** so much in evidence here as elsewhere, is a fetish (S&K 1298).

The simplest instrument which is perhaps most commonly associated with magic is the **staff or wand** (S&K 1299).

The wand is peculiar to no time or place: a Homeric god or magician wielded one; so does the African sorcerer; and, **along with the drum**, it distinguishes the medicine-man in Indian picture-writing (S&K 1299-1300).

Besides the wand and the drum, the magician may use a variety of implements, like the **bells**, or the **knot**, most of which have, aside from magic, a fetishistic quality (S&K 1300).

**Ancient objects** are likely to be regarded as fetishes and to be available for magic (S&K 1301).

88:5.3 **Images** were supposed to be effective in magic.

**Effigies** were made, and when treated ill or well, the same effects were believed to rest upon the real person.

When making purchases, superstitious persons would **chew a bit of hard wood in order to soften the heart of the seller.**

88:5.4 The **milk of a black cow** was highly magical; so also were **black cats.**

The **staff or wand** was magical,

**along with drums,**

**bells, and knots.**

All **ancient objects** were magical charms.



Another set of instrumentalities of magic, to the savage mind, are the inexplicable products and processes of **civilization**.

**Writing**, for example, is to one unacquainted with it pure magic; and the written or **printed** signs that convey meaning without a voice have powerful "medicine" in them....

The Hovas of Madagascar believe that paper, written upon, has **evil** powers, but that such magical instruments may also ward off ills (S&K 1302).

XXIII: ANIMISM (Sumner & Keller 791)

§212.\* **The Name.** (Sumner & Keller 810)

No one's **name, least of all a god's**, might be taken "in vain," that is, lightly ... (S&K 810).

Savage men conceived of all names as **entities** connected intimately with personality (S&K 811).

The name was of great interest and significance in North America. Names could be **loaned, pawned**, or even given or thrown away outright (S&K IV 321).

Furthermore, among the Kwakiutl, if a man's credit is poor, he may pawn his name for a year, during which time he may not use it. He has to pay about twenty-five per cent for a three months' loan to **redeem** his name (S&K IV 322).

The practices of a new or higher **civilization** were looked upon with disfavor because of their supposedly **evil** magical nature.

**Writing, printing**, and pictures were long so regarded.

88:5.5 Primitive man believed that **names** must be treated with respect, **especially names of the gods**.

The name was regarded as an **entity**, an influence distinct from the physical personality;

it was esteemed equally with the soul and the shadow.

Names were **pawned for loans**;

a man could not use his name until it had been **redeemed** by payment of the loan.

Nowadays one signs his name to a note.

The name plays an important part in magic (S&K 810).

An individual's name soon became important in magic.

Hence a savage would have two names, a real one which was never used and another for common appellation; or he would change his name several times during life for reasons presently to appear (S&K 810).

The savage had two names;

[In Babylonia and Assyria, one's name] belonged to an individual as a part of his equipment and in many cases was regarded as too sacred to be used on all occasions,

the important one was regarded as too sacred to use on ordinary occasions,

so that in addition to his real name an individual generally had some less solemn sobriquet by which he was known ... (S&K IV 325).

hence the second or everyday name—a nickname.

“You can implore a native [in Papua] to tell you his name, and even offer him coin to pay him for that information, but it has no effect. He will tell you some name, if you press him hard enough, but it won't be his, as you will discover if you try to find him again” (S&K 811).

He never told his real name to strangers.

Any experience of an unusual nature caused him to change his name; sometimes it was in an effort to

Mary Antin cites a similar superstition among the Jews of Russia: “My mother nearly died of cholera once, but she was given a new name, a lucky one, which saved her; and that was when she was a small girl” (S&K IV 325).

cure disease

One Rex Glenwood of Cincinnati rescued a man named Edward Strietback from drowning. The latter was suffused with gratitude for his rescuer and wanted to do what he could for him. Whereupon Glenwood asked that he take his name. The name, it appeared, was hoodooed; but the **bad luck** was attached to the name only and not the individual. So Strietback manfully lived up to his promise, changed his name to Rex Glenwood, and apparently endured several years of hardship and misfortune (S&K IV 325).

“ ... On announcing his desire for a **new name** to the **chief**, and proving that he has the means of paying for it, the [New Hebridean] native goes away by himself for a few weeks ... After his seclusion he is known by his new name, and attends the big religious feast which he himself has provided...” (S&K IV 319).

There are, it is true, occasional cases where the name is lacking; the **Bushman of South Africa** has no name peculiar to himself, and the same is true of the Veddahs (S&K 811).

or to stop **bad luck**.

The savage could get a **new name** by buying it from the tribal **chief**;

men still invest in titles and degrees.

But among the most primitive tribes, such as the **African Bushmen**, individual names do not exist.

## 6. THE PRACTICE OF MAGIC

XXXVII: MAGIC (Sumner & Keller 1291)

§299. **Methods of Magic.** (Sumner & Keller 1291)

[contd from 88:4.1] It is not asserted that all so-called magical operations are coercive nor yet that all are performed by use of fetishes, such as the “medicine,” the wand, or the incantation, but that it is typical of the magician to operate in such manner (S&K 1291).

The connection of magic with coercion is illustrated by the fact that nakedness is often regarded as an essential to the production of magical effects (S&K 1291).

[Compare S&K 1291-92.]

§301.\* **Other Instrumentalities.** (Sumner & Keller 1296)

[contd] Beside the exuviae there is a great variety of objects, substances, mixtures, and preparations used in making magic. Perhaps the best inclusive name for these is the Indian one, “medicine,” which meant to the Indian what he took out of the English or French words, that is, “mystery” (S&K 1296).

One should not “doctor” himself, but should always consult a specialist (S&K IV 705).

88:6.1 Magic was practiced through the use of wands, “medicine” ritual, and incantations,

and it was customary for the practitioner to work unclothed.

Women outnumbered the men among primitive magicians.

In magic, “medicine” means mystery, not treatment.

The savage never doctored himself; he never used medicines except on the advice of the specialists in magic.

Survivals of African beliefs and practices may be found among the negroes of the New World, especially in the activities of the “voodoo doctor” or “conjur’ man” (S&K IV 706).

§303. **Nature of Magic.** (Sumner & Keller 1312)

Lehmann distinguishes between **official** and **private** magic (S&K 1314).

The former is the type which enjoys the sanction of the society—in later development, that of the state; it is for the benefit of the group at large and ... is manipulated by the official representative, **shaman** or **priest**, and is not far from being the group-religion itself (S&K 1314).

The latter is employed by the individual, usually a **witch** or **wizard**, without the sanction of the group, for his own benefit and generally to the injury of others (S&K 1314).

The most familiar instance of **dualism** is the eternal opposition of the White and the Black, the **Good** and the **Evil**, God and Satan; only, on the less sophisticated stage, the moral quality of the spirit invoked as resident in the fetish is not a matter of much attention.

In fact, it is generally supposed that magic deals with the control of evil influences rather than good. There is such a thing as “**white** magic,” but the words “sorcery,” “witchcraft,” “**black** art,” have a suggestion of evil about them (S&K 1314).

And the **voodoo doctors** of the twentieth century are typical of the magicians of old.

88:6.2 There was both a **public** and a **private** phase to magic.

That performed by the medicine man, **shaman**, or **priest** was supposed to be for the good of the whole tribe.

**Witches**, sorcerers, and **wizards** dispensed private magic, personal and selfish magic which was employed as a coercive method of bringing evil on one’s enemies.

The concept of **dual spiritism**, **good** and **bad** spirits,

gave rise to the later beliefs in **white** and **black** magic.

§299. **Methods of Magic.** (Sumner & Keller 1291)

[M]agic is generally conceived to be outside the regular cult,

based upon an old and submerged or foreign religion, and its forms often represent a parody upon those of the regular and accepted faith (S&K 1292).

§301.\* **Other Instrumentalities.** (Sumner & Keller 1296)

Fetishism is not, as we have seen, confined to material objects; the “word” was a fetish, even when it was no more than the name; combinations of words constituted formulas and prayers; and when actions—which may likewise be fetishistic—were added, there appeared a ritual of greater or less complexity, in which, if carried out with exactitude, there was conceived to reside power capable of securing otherwise inexplicable results (S&K 1303).

The connection between incantation and prayer has been developed, with illustrations; it is true enough that prayer, though it is primarily part of the propitiation-ritual, sometimes exercises coercitive power (S&K 1306).

§302.\* **Imitative Magic.** (Sumner & Keller 1306)

It is possible to regard [imitative-magic performances] as acted prayers (S&K 1306).

And as religion evolved, magic was the term applied to spirit operations outside one’s own cult,

and it also referred to older ghost beliefs.

88:6.3 Word combinations, the ritual of chants and incantations, were highly magical.

Some early incantations finally evolved into prayers.

Presently, imitative magic was practiced;

prayers were acted out;

It should be noted in scanning detailed descriptions that the magical dance always presents, in some of its aspects and generally as a whole, the features of a dramatic prayer.

It is with the steady development of the regular cult that "prayer and sacrifice assume the leading place in religious ritual; and magic, which once ranked with them as a legitimate equal, is gradually relegated to the background and sinks to the level of a black art" (S&K 1311-12).

It is not at all fanciful to regard much of what goes under the name of sympathetic magic as simply the sort of prayer which the spirits will be sure to apprehend, appealing as it does to the eye rather than to, or in addition to, the ear. And perhaps gesture, being older, is more holy than speech (S&K 1306).

[contd] Whatever the ritual, its mimetic character is what secures magical results; in it resides a power that is spiritual in nature and compelling in effect (S&K 1307).

A typical form is the rehearsal of some desirable event, with the idea of making it come off; the "buffalo-dance," wherein the chase and taking of the bison are enacted, with certain Indians made up as the quarry, is perhaps as characteristic an example of this sort of magic as could be found (S&K 1306).

magical dances were nothing but dramatic prayers.

Prayer gradually displaced magic as the associate of sacrifice.

88:6.4 Gesture, being older than speech, was the more holy and magical,

and mimicry was believed to have strong magical power.

The red men often staged a buffalo dance in which one of their number would play the part of a buffalo

and, in being caught, would insure the success of the impending hunt.

In the East Indies the natives of some districts, believing that rice has a soul and **sex-passion**, seek to rouse the latter to get a good harvest (S&K 1310).

The Buryat woman, desiring children, will carry a child's swaddling clothes or a specially made **doll**, and pretend to feed it to her breast (S&K IV 722). [*See also S&K 1311.*]

**§307. Correction into Science.** (1329)

[contd] Out of the magic that **branched off** from the stem of religion sprang an important line of evolutionary development which, passing through pseudo-science, culminates in the sciences of today (S&K 1329).

**Astronomy** and chemistry reach back through **astrology** and alchemy into fetishism and animism (S&K 1330).

The chase after the **philosopher's stone** must have been exciting and engrossing, granted that men were convinced beyond peradventure that there was one and labored under no limitations of scepticism or criticism (S&K 1332).

Would men have studied the **metals** and elements so assiduously and piled up accumulations of observations for science to build upon, if there had been nothing in it beyond the satisfaction of intellectual curiosity? (S&K 1332)

The sex festivities of May Day were simply imitative magic, a suggestive appeal to

the **sex passions** of the plant world.

The **doll** was first employed as a magic talisman by the barren wife.

88:6.5 Magic was the **branch off** the evolutionary religious tree which eventually bore the fruit of a scientific age.

Belief in **astrology** led to the development of **astronomy**;

belief in a **philosopher's stone**

led to the mastery of **metals**,

while belief in magic numbers founded the science of mathematics.



§305.\* **Applications of Magic.** (Sumner & Keller 1319)

The prevalence of belief in magic undoubtedly fathers the conviction that it is the unpredictable whims of the supernatural that determine human destiny, thereby both reducing confidence in labor and economy and furnishing subterfuges to those who shun them (S&K 1324).

Here is exemplified the tendency to call magical, or to ascribe to extra-human power, that which can be attained by sustained and well-directed effort along lines admitted by everyone to be within the scope of powers no more than human (S&K 1324).

There was a popular belief [among the Romans] that grain could be bewitched over from someone else's field to one's own. Once the people lodged such a charge against a freedman.

The latter appeared for trial accompanied by his slaves, carts, and well-kept oxen. "Look upon my magical implements," he said; "there is yet lacking only my unceasing labor, which I cannot show you" (S&K 1324).

There was [in the Middle Ages] a consistent exhibition of the stock attitude of ignorance: the ascription of sorcery. It was not safe to know anything, as many a learned Jew or Arab found out (S&K 1324-25).

88:6.6 But a world so filled with charms did much to destroy all personal ambition and initiative.

The fruits of extra labor or of diligence were looked upon as magical.

If a man had more grain in his field than his neighbor, he might be haled before the chief and charged with enticing this extra grain from the indolent neighbor's field.

Indeed, in the days of barbarism it was dangerous to know very much;

there was always the chance of being executed as a black artist.

§304. **Sway of Magic.** (Sumner & Keller 1316)

As for the belief in witchcraft, “it is latent and may burst forth anew at any moment.... If bad times should come again upon the civilized world, through overpopulation and an unfavorable economic conjuncture, popular education would decline and classes would be more widely separated.

It must then be expected that the old demonism would burst forth again and would reproduce the old phenomena” (S&K 1319).

§305.\* **Applications of Magic.** (Sumner & Keller 1319)

That the race has been long and thoroughly steeped in magic is indicated by the number of terms to be found in modern languages—terms whose origin lies in very real conceptions of enchantment, bewitchment, charming, and other magic conceptions and operations.

Words such as “spell-bound,” recalling magic;

“saturnine,” “mercurial,” “ill-starred,” or “disaster,” recalling astrological beliefs;

“possession” or “inspiration,” recalling fetishism;

88:6.7 Gradually science is removing the gambling element from life.

But if modern methods of education should fail,

there would be an almost immediate reversion to the primitive beliefs in magic.

These superstitions still linger in the minds of many so-called civilized people.

Language contains many fossils which testify that the race has long been steeped in magical superstition,

such words as spellbound,

ill-starred,

possessions, inspiration,

“nightmare,” to “spirit away,” “ingenuity,” “entrancing,” “ecstasy,” “inauspicious,” “abominable,” “thunderstruck,” “astonished,” and a host of other terms that recall animistic and daimonistic doctrines—all are embedded fossils or survivals that witness to preceding stages of evolution ... (S&K 1325).

And if anyone thinks that belief to be defunct in civilized states, he is unacquainted with the mode of thought of the ignorant, as well as with various weaknesses and vagaries of those who ought to know better (S&K 1325-26).

§307. **Correction into Science.** (Sumner & Keller 1329)

The cocoon,

though indispensable in its time, is no longer needed (S&K 1334).

The imagination, availing itself of the poetic and dramatic means of expression, breaks new ground for the intellect, and phantasms hold the field, until concepts are ready (S&K 1334).

spirit away, ingenuity, entrancing, thunderstruck, and astonished.

And intelligent human beings still believe in good luck, the evil eye, and astrology.

88.6.8 Ancient magic was the cocoon of modern science,

indispensable in its time but now no longer useful.

And so the phantasms of ignorant superstition agitated the primitive minds of men until the concepts of science could be born.

Today, Urantia is in the twilight zone of this intellectual evolution. One half the world is grasping eagerly for the light of truth and the facts of scientific discovery, while the other half languishes in the arms of ancient superstition and but thinly disguised magic.

88.6.9 [Presented by a Brilliant Evening Star of Nebadon.]

1. *Contrast:* The Old Testament, despite the fact that the representation of Jahweh by any figure is strictly forbidden, is rich in idolatry—and even though a curse is pronounced on the making of a graven or molten image by the hands of a craftsman (S&K IV 475).
2. *Compare:* Consider the reverence accorded to the opinions of Aristotle: his statements, from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century were not tested by observation even of the most familiar objects; no one noted even the error of assigning eight legs to a fly instead of six (S&K 1008).