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QUERIES AS TO DR. TYLOR'S VIEWS ON ANIMISM.¹

"ANIMISM" is the term, specially used by Dr. Tylor, for what is otherwise called Spiritism or Spiritualism—the general doctrine, namely, of Spiritual Beings; and, to use his own words,² Dr. Tylor's "Theory of Animism divides into two great dogmas, forming part of one consistent doctrine: first, concerning souls of individual creatures, capable of continued existence after the death or destruction of the body; second, concerning other spirits upward to the rank of powerful deities." Similarly may Mr. Herbert Spencer's Ghost-theory be defined. But, though as fully and cordially as anyone here present, I acknowledge my obligations to Dr. Tylor, and especially to Mr. Herbert Spencer, I venture to think—and trust that you will agree with me in thinking—that the time has now come for a more searching criticism of the Ghost-theory which these writers hold in common. I propose, however, to confine myself here to the form it assumes in Dr. Tylor's Theory of Animism. And without further preface, I shall state my first Query.

¹ This Paper is here printed as read at the meeting of the Folk-lore Society on the 15th June 1892, save that the first Query, which related more particularly to Mr. Spencer's views, is omitted, and certain of the other Queries are stated somewhat differently.

² *Prim. Cult.*, i, pp. 384-5.

I.—My first Query is: Does not the theory of Animism—so far as it is an attempt to account for the conception of Nature as animated—inconsistently ignore an admittedly primitive conception of Nature which, if consistently recognised, would make the theory unnecessary; and is not the consequent subsumption of Fetishism under Animism a self-contradictory confusing of two essentially different conceptions?

Both Mr. Spencer and Dr. Tylor admit, though in different ways, that the notion of the animation of nature by "souls" was not the primordial conception of Nature. According to Mr. Spencer, the earliest conception of Nature was one in which there was the most definite discrimination between "animate" and "inanimate", living and dead. This theory I may elsewhere have occasion to discuss, and here I shall only remark that it appears to be founded on the singular fallacy of confusing the very abstract notions of "animate" and "inanimate" with the very concrete notions of harmful and harmless. Dr. Tylor, however, declares that, "for his part he fails to see anything to object to in the ordinary notion that savages do directly personify the Sun, or the Sky, the Wind, or the Rivers, treating them as great beings acting by will, and able to do good or harm."¹ But if there was, as Dr. Tylor elsewhere more briefly puts it, "a primordial personification of inanimate objects and powers",² it is difficult to see the logical necessity for the elaboration of a theory of "souls" wherewith to animate things which are already *ex hypothesi* animated by "personification". Here Mr. Spencer is incomparably more logical. For, as he affirms that all animals, "from cirrhipeds and seaflies", have, and that man also had primordially, the marvellous capacity of perfectly discriminating between "animate" and "inanimate", and as he yet admits that, as a matter of fact, men do not now so discriminate, he is obliged to invent his theory of "ghosts", in order to attempt, at least, to account for the later non-discrimina-

¹ *Mind*, vol. ii, 1877, p. 155.

² *Prim. Cult.*, i, 285.

tion in which men fall so woefully short of the perfect discrimination attributed to other animals. Dr. Tylor, however, does not merely elaborate a theory of "souls" for the sake of such an "animation" of Nature as, in opposition to Mr. Spencer, he has already postulated; but, still more illogically, if possible, he brings his primordial personifications under that general Theory of Animism which is but a secondary result of the elaboration of a theory of "souls". Dr. Tylor professes himself a believer in Fetishism precisely as it was defined by Comte, namely, as "characterised by the free and direct exercise of our primitive tendency to conceive all external bodies soever, natural and artificial, as animated by life essentially analogous to our own, with mere differences of intensity".¹ But though the Fetishist theory of Comte, with which Dr. Tylor thus expressly agrees, is in the most definite opposition to his own theory of Animism, defined as "the doctrine of Spirits in general", Dr. Tylor thinks that it will, to use his own words, "add to the clearness of our conceptions", if we define Fetishism as a "subordinate department of the doctrine of spirits";² and so give the name of Animism to two conceptions of Nature, which are not only essentially different in their characteristics, but which, according to Dr. Tylor's own contention, have two different origins—the origin of the one being a primitive tendency, "quite independent of the Ghost-theory", and the origin of the other being entirely derived from the Ghost-theory.³ And supported as I am both by Mr. Spencer⁴ and by Professor

¹ *Philosophie Positive*, tom. v, p. 30.

² *Prim. Cult.*, ii, 132.

³ "It will probably add to the clearness of our conception of the state of mind which thus sees in all nature the action of animated life, and the presence of innumerable spiritual beings, if we give it the name of *Animism* instead of *Fetishism*." (*Mind*, 1877, ii, p. 488.) Compare *Prim. Cult.*, i, pp. 431 and 145, 260, etc., and ii, pp. 132, etc.

⁴ *Mind*, ii, 1877, pp. 418-19, 428-29.

Max Müller¹ in my criticism of Dr. Tylor's self-contradictions, I may, perhaps, venture to put the above question in such bolder terms as these: Is not the theory of Animism, notwithstanding its sanction by the *Encyclopædia Britannica*,² one of the most illogical and self-contradictory, and hence the most inimical to clear ideas, that has ever been introduced into, and had a vogue in science?

II.—My second Query is: May not a far more verifiable and consistent account be given both of the character and of the origin of primordial conceptions of Nature than that which is offered by Dr. Tylor in his theory of Animism?

I have just pointed out the self-contradiction in Dr. Tylor's admission of a primordial personification of the inanimate objects and powers of Nature, while he at the same time sets forth a theory of the animation of Nature by the association of "souls" with all its objects; and the self-contradiction also in Dr. Tylor's subsumption of Fetishism under Animism, thus "reducing it to a mere secondary development of the doctrine of spirits", while he at the same time expressly accepts the opposed definition of Fetishism by Comte. And I have now to show that, even disregarding these self-contradictions, Dr. Tylor's definition of the primordial conception of Nature as a

¹ "Animism . . . has proved so misleading a name that hardly any scholar now likes to employ it. . . . In itself it might not be objectionable, but unfortunately it has been used for a totally different phase of religious thought, namely, for the recognition of an active, living, or even personal element in trees, rivers, mountains, and other parts of Nature. . . . Nay, Fetishism has been identified with Animism, and defined as the capability of the soul to take possession of anything whatever." (*Natural Religion*, p. 158.) But already, in 1873, nearly twenty years ago, I had entered my protest against this disastrously confusing term in *The New Philosophy of History*, p. 11, n. 2.

² See Dr. Tylor's article on *Animism*, and the general acceptance of the theory throughout the work. But the *Encyclopædia Britannica* is, in very numerous articles, a record rather of what was believed, than of what is believed, or is on the way towards being believed.

personification of its objects and powers gives a very questionable account of the probable character and origin of the primitive consciousness of Things. That there ultimately arises a personification of the objects and powers of Nature may be admitted, and I shall presently have occasion to suggest what the origins probably were of the personifying process. But I submit that if, with due scepticism as to the reports of missionaries and travellers, saturated with Christian notions of "dead" matter and immaterial "spirits", we endeavour rather to gain a realising knowledge of primitive conceptions from a comparative study of the different departments of Folklore, scientifically classified with this end in view, we shall conclude that the primitive, and still universally prevalent, conception of Nature is one in which all objects—whether what we would call "animate" or "inanimate"—are conceived, so far as they are noticed at all, as themselves *Powers*, harmful or beneficial. And not to Folklorists only, but to Psychologists, I would appeal as to whether such a consciousness of Things is not a necessary condition of the existence of all creatures; and as to whether such a consciousness of Things as practically discriminates only between what may eat, and what may be eaten, implies, any such irrelevant and unnecessary discrimination between "animate" and "inanimate" as is insisted on by Mr. Spencer? We have here, however, to deal with Dr. Tylor. And, again, I would appeal to Psychologists as to whether, in the conception of the objects of Nature as themselves *Powers*, harmful or beneficial—understanding by the objects of Nature, of course, those only which specially influence the creatures' existence, no notice being taken of the rest—whether in such a conception there is any sort of "personification"? Does a horse, for instance, either personify, or associate with an indwelling demon, a heap of stones by the roadside before he shies at it? And why, therefore, imagine that a negro must either personify an odd-looking pebble,

or associate a demon with it, before it strikes his fancy as possessed of powers that may bring him luck? No words, however, so far as I am aware, as yet exist that can be desirably used to express the general concrete conception of objects as themselves Powers. Fetishism and Fetishist will, no doubt, at once occur to you. But the associations connected with the origin of these terms in the Portuguese *feticho*, and which still cling to it inseparably, make it impossible, or, at least, highly undesirable, to use these terms to connote so general a conception of *innate* powers in things as must, I think, be recognised. For the needed term should include in its connotation not only such manifestations of this conception as had been observed by Habakkuk when he wrote—"He sacrificeth to his net and burneth incense unto his drag, *because by these his portion is fat and his meat plenteous*"¹—but such a verse of the hymn of the Peleiades, Priestesses of Dodona, as

Γᾶ καρποὺς ἀνέλει, διό κλήζετε μητέρα Γαίαν!²

("Earth bringeth forth fruits, therefore call Earth Mother"), and also such a sublime invocation as that of Prometheus:

"O divine Ether, and swift-winged Breezes,
Fountains of Rivers, and Sea-waves'
Laughter innumerable, All-mother Earth,
All-seeing circle of the Sun, on you I call!"³

Hence, as terms connoting this general concrete conception of Things as themselves Powers, however low the expression of it, or however high, I would propose the terms *Zoönism* and *Zoönist*, derived from the Greek *Zōon*, an animal. For what is distinctive of our conception of

¹ *Hab.* i, 16.

² Pausanias, x, xii, 10.

³ Thus I have *literally* translated the famous lines of Æschylus (*Prometh. Vinc.*, 82-91). But Christian notions so overpower the perceptions even of such a scholar as Dean Plumptre, that he actually translates "Ὁ Δῖος αἰθέρ—"O divine firmament *of God*," thus wholly destroying the meaning of the passage as an appeal from the Younger Anthropomorphic to the Elder Elemental Gods.

an animal is that it has *innate* powers—powers due to its very existence, and not to something else which has taken possession of it, and acts through it, but is not properly the animal itself. In a less accurate way, one may define the Zoönist conception of Nature as a conception of all Things as living; but more accurately, as I have said, it is a conception of all Things as themselves Powers, and in which no definite discrimination is made between dead and living matter, save as possessed of *different* powers.

III.—My third Query is: Is there any adequate evidence, or, indeed, any evidence at all, of the elaborate inductions attributed by Dr. Tylor, as by Mr. Spencer, to Savages, in the working-out of the theory of Animism, their so-called "Savage Philosophy"; and does not the theory of such inductions involve patent self-contradictions?

According to Mr. Spencer, the Ghost-theory was the identical result, all over the world, of the meditations of Savage Philosophers on the phenomena of shadows, reflections, echoes, dreams, fainting, apoplexy, catalepsy, epilepsy, somnambulism, insanity, and death. Dr. Tylor is of the same opinion, with only certain differences in his list of the facts from reflection on which Mr. Spencer and he believe the Ghost-theory to have arisen. And some here present may remember the rather heated controversy between these two authors of the Ghost-theory in the pages of *Mind* in 1877, with reference particularly to the priority of their respective lists of the phenomena which they believed had painfully exercised the minds of their "Savage Philosophers".¹ Now what I venture altogether to question is this notion of Savage Philosophers among all races painfully reflecting on the problems of existence; and not—like so many of us, Civilised Philosophers—dashing to conclusions, but slowly working up to them through reflection on a dozen different classes of facts; nor, like Civilised Philosophers, coming all to different, but all to identical conclusions. And I question this more particularly on these

¹ Pp. 424-29.

grounds: First, however necessary may, as I have already pointed out, be, for Mr. Spencer, the elaboration of a Ghost-theory in order to account, if possible, for a conception of the animation of Nature, which he admits to be actual, but denies to be primordial, there is, as I have also already pointed out, no such necessity for Dr. Tylor's theory of Animism. But setting this aside, I must remark, secondly, that, as we have absolutely no evidence whatever of a spontaneous origin of Civilisation among Savages, so we have absolutely no evidence whatever of the spontaneous origin of such a reasoned inductive and deductive Philosophy among Savages, as is attributed to them by Dr. Tylor, as also by Mr. Spencer. Thirdly, the undeveloped mental capacities of Savages, which have been by no one more clearly demonstrated than by Mr. Spencer—the utter absence, or extreme defect, among them of capacities of surprise and curiosity, of abstraction, and of deliberate and coherent thought—make impossible the elaboration of such a complex and consistent theory as is attributed to them by Dr. Tylor's theory of Animism, as also, in contradiction of his own principles,¹ by Mr. Spencer himself in his Ghost-theory. Fourthly, while there would be at least

¹ Thus, for instance, Mr. Spencer truly says, *Principles of Sociology*, i: "Conditioned as he is, the savage lacks abstract ideas" (p. 74). "An invisible, intangible entity . . . is a high abstraction unthinkable by Primitive Man, and inexpressible by his vocabulary" (p. 133). "'Plants are green', or 'Animals grow', are propositions never definitely formed in his consciousness, because he has no idea of a plant or animal apart from kind" (p. 83). "In proportion as the mental energies go out in restless perception they cannot go out in deliberate thought" (p. 77). "Absence of the idea of natural causation implies absence of rational surprise" (p. 85). "When the Abipones are unable to comprehend anything at first sight, they soon grow weary of examining it, and cry, 'What is it after all?'" (p. 53). And after citing a number of similar facts, Mr. Spencer truly says: "The general fact thus exemplified is one quite at variance with current ideas respecting the thoughts of Primitive Man. He is commonly pictured as theorizing about surrounding appearances; whereas, in fact, the need for explanations of them does not occur to him" (p. 87).

a certain congruity in a theory of the origin of immaterial souls, from observations and meditations on "shadows, reflections, dreams," etc.,¹ there is certainly a most significant incongruity in a theory of the origin of souls conceived, as Dr. Tylor rightly affirms them to be by Savages, as "substantial material beings", from such intangibilities as "shadows, reflections, dreams", etc.² And fifthly, the identity, not merely of the general, but of the special conclusions assumed to have been spontaneously arrived at by these Savage Philosophers of every race and clime postulates such an identity in the characteristics of races as is contradicted by all our later ethnological knowledge.

IV.—My fourth Query is: Is not the use of such terms as "soul", "ghost", "spirit", which ordinarily, with us, connote immateriality and (after death) disconnection from the body, in the highest degree misleading when applied to primitive conceptions; and are not these, therefore, terms which should be as much as possible abandoned in scientific discussions of these conceptions?

This Query is founded on the following considerations: First, the greater part of our assumed knowledge hitherto with respect to Savage and Folk Beliefs is derived from the reports of Christian missionaries and travellers who have all had an ingrained belief in an "immaterial soul",

¹ For Dr. Tylor's complete list, as distinguished from Mr. Spencer's, see *Mind*, 1877, ii, 424.

² See for illustrations of the notion of "souls" as "substantial material beings", *Prim. Cult.*, ii, 409, 412. (I might myself add many other illustrations, and among the rest one of a very striking character from Evliya Effendi's *Narrative of Travels*, published by the Oriental Translation Fund; but it may here suffice to refer to Shakespeare's "sheeted dead" who leave the "graves tenantless"—*Hamlet*, Act i, Sc. 1). And Dr. Tylor's conclusion is, that "it appears to have been within the systematic schools of civilised philosophy that the transcendental definitions of the immaterial were obtained by abstraction from the primitive conception of the ethereal-material soul so as to reduce it from a physical to a metaphysical entity" (ii, p. 413). I do not, however, believe that Savages could either form or express the notion either of "ethereal" or "ethereal-material".

and in the absolute difference between what they call "dead" and living matter; in accepting and theorising on these reports, no allowance has been made for the turn given to them by the preconceived notions of these Christian missionaries and travellers; nor any allowance for the unwillingness and inability of savage peoples and uncultured classes to reveal what their notions of things really are, and their persistent effort, indeed, to conceal and mislead when questioned as to these notions.¹ Secondly, the scientific study of Folk-lore, in its comparison of the genuine expressions of Folk-belief in Folk-customs, Folk-sayings, and Folk-poesies shows that the terms which would be usually translated by our words "soul", "ghost", or "spirit" do not mean anything like what these words signify to us. One finds, for instance, that what is really meant by the terms thus translated is not a wandering "spirit", but a restless corpse,² and that Dr. Tylor's definition of the "soul" as "capable of continued existence after the death or destruction of the body", is a Christian Culture-conception, rather than a Pagan Folk-conception; or that what

¹ "The more one knows of the natives", says Bishop Knight Bruce, in his *Journal of the Mashonaland Mission*, 1888-92, "the more one finds how consistently they keep on concealing from strangers what they really think." Similar expressions of opinion might be quoted from Bishop Codrington, and indeed from most of the more recent and more critical travellers and missionaries.

² Thus, for instance, Mrs. Balfour, in her admirably transcribed and most interesting *Legends of the Lincolnshire Cars* (FOLK-LORE, March, September, and December 1891), entitles one of them "Sam'l's Ghost". Yet she at the same time admits that "ghost" is "not a Lincolnshire word", and tells us that to these peasants dead persons are not "ghosts", but "bogles", which appears to mean "corpses capable of feeling, speaking, appearing to living eyes, and of working good and evil, till corruption has finally completed its work, and the bodies no longer exist" (FOLK-LORE, December 1891, pp. 492-3). Such an adjective as "perverse" is, of course, inadmissible with reference to a lady; but if a man, with similarly full knowledge, had been guilty of such a misleading use of the term "ghost", one might allowably have protested against it as "perverse".

is meant is much more like what a chemist means by an "essential principle", such as of tea, coffee, etc., than what a Christian means by "soul", "ghost", or "spirit";¹ or again, that what is really meant may be but an extraordinarily gifted, rather than supernaturally different, being. It is, indeed, found that the main condition of a genuine understanding of primitive Folk-conceptions is the getting rid altogether—or at least while endeavouring to enter into these conceptions—of the Christian notion of "souls", "ghosts", and "spirits". For conceiving the so-called "Soul" to be still attached to the corpse, and the corpse to be still in a manner living, we shall have no difficulty in understanding the care taken, by the Egyptians particularly, to ensure the preservation of the corpse; nor any difficulty in understanding the deposition with the corpse of the dead man's belongings; but difficulty only in accepting Dr. Tylor's theory of the "ghosts" of the things accompanying the "ghost" of the dead into "Ghostland". And, thirdly, as to the abandonment of these terms in scientific discussions of Folk-conceptions, there would surely be much less chance of misrepresenting them if, when a general term was required for other than ordinary beings, such a term as "Supernals" were used; while we at the same time frankly acknowledged our inability adequately to translate native words for conceptions which we do not share, and freely borrowed these words.²

¹ For instance, the Chaldean *Zi*, ordinarily translated "spirit", was not, says Professor Sayce (*Religion of Ancient Babylonians*, page 327), "a spirit in our sense of the word, nor even in the sense in which the term was used by the Semitic tribes of a later day. The *Zi* was simply that which manifested life." And as to the Egyptian *Ka*, Professor Sayce, in reviewing Miss Edwards's *Pharaohs, Fellahs, and Explorers* (*Acad.*, February 13th, 1892), says: "The *Ka* meant life, though what life was conceived to be she cannot venture to say. I am inclined to identify the Egyptian *Ka* with the Akkadian *Zi*."

² Miss Garnett and I have uniformly followed this rule in our *Greek Folk-songs* and *Women and Folk-lore of Turkey*. Among others, Miss Frere, in her *Old Deccan Days*, has, I think, generally borrowed native appellations instead of attempting almost necessarily mislead-

V.—My fifth Query is: May not origins of the notion of Supernals—or, to use Dr. Tylor's words, of "Spiritual Beings up to the highest Deities"—be suggested far more probably verifiable than the explanation of these origins given in the theory of Animism?

We have thus far considered the theory of Animism as an attempt to account for the conception of Nature as animated. We have now to consider it as an attempt also to account for the conception of "Spirits" associated with Nature. In other words, we have now to consider the theory of Animism as a theory of the origin of the notion of Gods. In the theory so far common to both Mr. Spencer and Dr. Tylor the notion of Gods "up", as Dr. Tylor expressly says, "to the highest", owes its origin, first of all, to the observations and meditations of Savages on such phenomena as shadows, reflexions, dreams, etc. For, as result of these observations and meditations, the notion of "souls", "ghosts", and "spirits" was developed. And from this notion—and, in Mr. Spencer's theory, more especially from *Ancestral* Ghosts—all Gods (and he expressly includes the Semitic Yahveh) have originated. But the starting-point in this theoretical development—namely, observations and meditations of Savages on shadows, etc.—I have, under the Third Query, endeavoured to show to be wholly unverifiable and contradictory even of the facts admitted by Mr. Spencer and Dr. Tylor themselves. Instead, therefore, of starting from unverifiable assumptions as to the observations and meditations of Primitive Savages, I would start from those conceptions of the objects of Nature as themselves Powers, which, as I have endeavoured to show in discussing the Second Query, must be accepted as a necessary postulate. Let us admit, then,

ing translations. But such translations are, unfortunately, still the rule with the majority of European folk-lorists. Geldart, for instance; translates *Drakos* as "Dragon", and *Nereid* as "Fairy". And *Nereids*, *Lamias*, *Stoicheions*, etc., are all turned indiscriminately into *Fées* by French, and into *Elfen* by German folk-lorists.

that the conception of the objects with which a being is specially concerned is a conception of them as themselves Powers, harmful or beneficial. With many races this conception might remain as concrete as with the lower animals. But with those among whom the specially human faculties of abstraction and language were considerably developed, the conception of Things *as* Powers would be differentiated into Things *and* Powers conceived as separable, just as the chemist's theine or caffeine is conceived. And just as the chemist's "essential principle" is, so the "soul" would be conceived—as we in fact know that it was and is—as a material body itself liable to disintegration. But psychology furnishes another, and perhaps even more powerful condition of the origin of the notion of "Spirits", or of what—because of the immateriality ordinarily connoted by that term—I prefer to call Supernals. I refer to that integrating activity of mind which creates personal shapes corresponding to the impressions made by the aspects of Nature. Take, for instance, the Greek Lamia of the Ocean, 'Η Λάμια τοῦ Πελάγους, or, as she is elsewhere called, "The Mother of the Sea", 'Η Μάνα τῆς Θάλασσης, or the corresponding Gaelic "Sea-Maiden". What have we in this Supernal but a poetic synthesis of the impressions made by the glitteringly beautiful, yet cruel and capricious Sea?—a poetic synthesis which has nothing whatever to do with "ghosts". These creations of folk-fancy are, in fact, in no way essentially different, either in form or character, from the creations of the poet or poet-painter. All are images conveying impressions similar to those which their creator has received from some aspect of Nature. Further, I am quite willing to admit that observations of, and reflections on, the phenomena specially signalled by Mr. Spencer and Dr. Tylor may have had some effect in developing the notion of Supernals. But I submit that such observations and reflections are incomparably more probable among the leisured classes of Higher Races than among Primitive Savages; and further, that it would be in

the highest degree difficult to determine how much such observations and reflections actually contributed to the evolution of the notions in question.

VI.—My sixth Query is: Does not the theory of Animism wholly obscure the more profound "principle underlying" all that immense class of primitive phenomena which may be generally indicated under the name of Magic; and hence, does it not hinder rather than forward what, from the point of view of the Philosophy of History, should be the chief object of Folk-lore Research—the discovery and definition of the primitive conception of Causation?

"The principal key to the understanding of Occult Science", says Dr. Tylor, "is to consider it as based upon the Association of Ideas."¹ It may be readily admitted that the Laws of the Association of Ideas give certain superficial explanations of the erroneous fancies as to causes and effects which are found in the "Occult Sciences", or generally, in Magic. But to treat such superficial explanations as the most profound that can be given is, I submit, only to obscure the necessity for more penetrating research. What is the general conception of Nature which underlies those special notions of causes which we find in the Occult Sciences and the Magical Arts? That is the question to which we must endeavour to discover a verifiable answer. Now, in above urging my Second Query, I have attempted to show that the primordial consciousness of Things among Men, and general consciousness of Things among Animals, down to Mr. Spencer's "cirrhipeds and seaflics", is a consciousness only of those objects with which they are specially concerned, and of *them* simply as Powers, harmful or beneficial. But if the different objects of Nature are thus primordially conceived, how can the primordial general conception of Nature—whenever such conception, or the germ of it, arises—be characterised save as a conception of Mutual

¹ *Prim. Cult.* i, 104; and compare pp. 107, 108, 113 etc.

Influence? Now I appeal to all students of Folk-lore—or, at least, to all comparative Folk-lorists, that is to say, students who endeavour to get at Folk-conceptions of Nature by a comparison of the expressions of these conceptions in Folk-customs, Folk-sayings, and Folk-poesies—I appeal to such students to say whether there is any possibility of sympathetically understanding the most characteristic facts of Folk-lore save from the point of view of the conception of all things, not only as Powers, harmful or beneficial, but as Powers exerting, or capable of exerting, influences on each other, both for good and evil. It may be true, as Dr. Tylor says, that “it is on an error of the first order that Astrology depends, the error of mistaking ideal analogy for real connection”.¹ But this notwithstanding, I venture to say that the fundamental conception of Astrology was essentially identical with the fundamental conception of the Astronomy founded on the theory of Mutual Gravitation, and developed in the later physical applications of the principle of the Conservation of Energy. No doubt the forms and modes in which Mutual Influence was, in Astrology, supposed to be exerted were fanciful and false. But I submit that, notwithstanding this, the conception itself—at the root as it was, not only of Astrology, but of Divination in all its forms, of belief in the Evil Eye, of the use of Amulets and Charms, and of the practices of Witchcraft and Magic generally—this conception was but a concrete form of the fundamental scientific conception of Reciprocal Action. And, in verification of this, I would refer especially to Sir Alfred Lyall’s illuminating paper on *Witchcraft and non-Christian Religions*.² For he was the first, I believe, clearly to point out—and as result of his Indian studies and observations—that Witchcraft and Religion (as ordinarily defined) are founded on two opposed conceptions of Nature; that the rites of Religion and Witchcraft respectively have two completely different ob-

¹ *Prim. Cult.*, i, 116.

² *Fortnightly Review*, 1873; and *Asiatic Studies*, ch. iv, 1882.

jects in view ; and that, in point of fact, while the object of the Religionist is to obtain by supplication and sacrifice, that of the Magician is to enforce by arts founded on knowledge. But the Magician's belief that he can obtain what he wants by knowledge of the properties of things, or beings, and of the arts by which these properties can be made subservient to his will, is, I submit, essentially identical with the belief of the Savant, and, like his, implies the conception of the action of things on each other, though, no doubt, in forms which to us appear the wildest and most fanciful. And that such was the conception underlying Witchcraft we find verified in the historical fact that Witchcraft and Religion have always been bitterly opposed,¹ just as Science and Religion are now opposed—Religion, at least, defined, as by Dr. Tylor, as "belief in Spiritual Beings".

VII.—My seventh and final Query is : Is not the origin of Religion, as defined by Dr. Tylor, a secondary, rather than a primary phenomenon ; and may not a more verifiable theory of the origin of Religion be suggested than that which is given in the theory of Animism ?

We have found under the Second Query that Dr. Tylor himself recognises a conception of the "animation" of Nature by direct "personification", prior to his affirmed "animation" of it by "souls", "ghosts", or "spirits". I attempted, however, to show under that Query, that direct conception of objects as Powers harmful or beneficial would be a more verifiable way of characterising the primitive consciousness of Nature, than that of affirming a process of personification. Under the immediately foregoing Sixth Query I have pointed out that, if objects are thus primordially conceived as themselves Powers, the primordial general conception of Nature, whenever it arises, will be a

¹ Sir Alfred Lyall takes the following as the significant motto to his chapter on Witchcraft : "Witchcraft is as the sin of Rebellion." Compare the incantation scene in the Greek Romance of *Theagenes and Chariclea* by Heliodorus.

conception of Mutual Influence. And as, under the same Query, we have found that the conception underlying Witchcraft is a conception of Mutual Influence, we must conclude that, of the two opposed conceptions underlying Witchcraft and Religion respectively, it is the fundamental conception of Witchcraft that is primary, and the fundamental conception of Religion, as defined by Dr. Tylor, which is secondary. The same conclusions may be also otherwise reached from the facts and arguments brought forward under the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Queries. But first I must note that Dr. Tylor, in his definition of Religion as "belief in Spiritual Beings", takes no account of the profound distinction shown by Sir Alfred Lyall to exist between Witchcraft and Religion as ordinarily defined.¹ For the Magician may also believe in what Dr. Tylor calls "Spiritual Beings", and what I prefer to call Supernals. But notwithstanding such occasional and partial community of belief, there is still a profound difference between the Religionist and the Magician. For while it is the object of the Magician to force the Supernals, he may believe in, to do his bidding, it is the object of the less audacious Religionist to persuade them by prayer, prostration, and praise to grant him his desires. And if, therefore, Religion is to be defined as by Dr. Tylor, its more complete and accurate definition would be—belief in Spiritual Beings with Observances of Supplication rather than of Command. And now to indicate our other line of argument for the secondary character of the Religious, as compared with the Magical Conception of Nature. Under the Third Query I pointed out that there is absolutely no evidence of such observations and reflections by Savages as those from which Dr. Tylor maintains that the notion of "Souls" was primarily generalised, and the notion of Gods ultimately developed. Under the Fourth Query, I showed that the very terms "soul", "ghost", and "spirit" were in the highest degree misleading when applied to the very

¹ Compare Chaps. iv and xviii of *Primitive Culture*.

materially conceived Supernals of Savage and Folk Belief. And under the Fifth Query I indicated what appeared to be a far more probable derivation of the notion of such beings from ordinary psychological processes, if we postulated first of all a direct conception of objects as themselves Powers, harmful or beneficial. Thus we are again, as in our previous argument, brought to the conclusion that the conception of Spiritual Beings with Arbitrary Wills, which is distinctive of Religion (as ordinarily defined), is a later development than that conception of objects as themselves Powers, and hence of all the parts of Nature as bound together by Mutual Influences, which is the distinctive conception of Witchcraft, or, generally, of Magic. And we should now proceed to inquire whether a more verifiable theory of the origin of the conceptions distinctive of Religion may not be suggested, than that maintained in the theory of Animism. But such an inquiry would, in my view of the means of arriving at a verifiable solution, involve consideration of the historical, as distinguished from Dr. Tylor's hypothetical, Origins of Civilisation, and of the results of the Conflict of Higher and Lower Races. And, as Mr. Kipling would say, "that is another story."

Such, then, are the Seven Queries which I would submit to you with respect to Animism. When I read Dr. Tylor's book on its publication twenty-one years ago, it was with an interest which I shall never forget, and which I gratefully record. But no two decades in the history of Science have been more fruitful than those since the publication of *Primitive Culture*. It is these later results of research that have suggested these Queries, and encouraged me to venture on their statement. And this seemed the more necessary, as Dr. Tylor has just published a third, but not a *new* edition of his work—"not having", as he says in his Preface, "found it needful to alter the general argument", but only "to insert further details of evidence, and to correct some few statements," not particularised. His fundamental postulates—the Homogeneity of Human Races, and the Spontaneous and Independent Origins of

Civilisation; his fundamental theory of the Origin of Gods from Ghosts, of Ghosts from Souls, and of Souls from Savage reflections on Shadows, etc.; and his fundamental self-contradiction in both accepting Comte's Fetishism, and treating it as "a subordinate department of the theory of Spirits"—these all, therefore, remain unchanged in Dr. Tylor's theory of Animism. And it is these positions and their implications that I have ventured to query.

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NOTE.—When reading the above Paper, I said that conclusions as to West-European folk-conceptions should be corrected by comparison with conclusions as to East-Asiatic folk-conceptions; and I regretted that I had been unable to attempt such correction through such an authoritative work as Dr. De Groot's *Religious System of China*, which, if then published, was not yet obtainable in London. I have now, however—though not till after correcting the proofs of this Paper—had the advantage of perusing the first volume of that work; and I may here add these general results. First, in corroboration more especially of my Second and Sixth Queries, we find that among the Chinese the objects of Nature, including Mankind, are all conceived as Powers not only occasionally harmful or beneficial, but continually emitting on each other harmful or beneficial influences. Secondly, with reference more especially to my Third, Fourth, and Fifth Queries, we find that the notion of what is most unfortunately translated "Souls" is not at all identical with, or even strictly speaking similar to, the notion commonly associated with that term in English. On the contrary, it seems to be far more similar—to use a comparison I have already used—to the chemist's "essential principle"; it is material, but of the kind of matter called *Yang*, of which the correlate is *Yin*; and it continues after, as before death to be attached to the body, though in an enfeebled condition, which, however, the influences emanating from other portions of *Yang* matter may so revive that there may be a resurrection of the body. And, thirdly, in corroboration of my first and last Queries, though we find among the Chinese a very developed doctrine of so-called "souls", "ghosts", or "spirits", yet these do not give "animation" to matter, as in the theories of Dr. Tylor and Mr. Spencer, but arise from a conception of Nature as already "animated", or rather as, in its own proper and original constitution, consisting of two different kinds of matter, the interaction of which produces a universal life.

J. S. S.-G.