

ФІЛОСОФІЯ ТА ПОЛІТОЛОГІЯ В КОНТЕКСТІ СУЧАСНОЇ КУЛЬТУРИ

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ФІЛОСОФСЬКІ НАУКИ

Володимир Володимирович СКРЕБЕЦЬ

Студент відділення «Релігієзнавство»
філософського факультету,
Київський національний університет
імені Тараса Шевченка,
вул. Володимирська, 60, Київ, 01601, Україна
E-mail: vvelikij791@gmail.com,

Volodymyr SKREBETS

Student at the department of Religious Studies,
department of Philosophy,
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv,
60 Volodymyrska Str., Kyiv, Ukraine,
01601, Ukraine
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-8857-706X>

Ірина Валентинівна ШАВРІНА

Кандидат філософських наук, доцент, доцент
кафедри релігієзнавства філософського
факультету,
Київський національний університет
імені Тараса Шевченка,
вул. Володимирська, 60, Київ, 01601, Україна
E-mail: Shavrina_irina@ukr.net,

Iryna SHAVRINA

PhD of Philosophical Sciences, Associate Professor,
Associate Professor of department of Philosophy,
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv,
60 Volodymyrska Str., Kyiv,
01601, Ukraine,
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8533-6256>

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FEATURES AND MAIN TYPOLOGIES OF THE ORIGINAL RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND CULTS

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Abstract

The article focuses on the research in the field of religious studies and the history of religion, specifically, the original religious cults and beliefs. The original beliefs are the basis of any modern religion. It is important to understand the history of formation of the ideas from the original communities' times to the first states and up to current times. They allow us to better understand the religious beliefs and practices of our ancestors, as well as to find out how they influenced the formation of culture and society. Important aspects of the original religious beliefs, such as animism, totemism, fetishism, magic, and shamanism, which caused the formation of complex religious systems, are analyzed in the article. The original sources of well-known anthropologists, historians of religion of the 19th-21st centuries, which were not translated into Ukrainian, were analyzed, translated and introduced into scientific circulation. In the modern world, studying the original religious beliefs is important not only from a scientific point of view, but also from cultural and ethical points of view, as it allows to enhance our understanding and respect for the diversity of religions and cultures. The original religious beliefs have many unique features that distinguish them from more developed religious traditions. The original beliefs went beyond pure metaphysical explanations and included a variety of social and ethical aspects that were important for the formation of cultures and communities. Religious practices such as totemism and taboos played an important role in the lives of original communities and are key components of their religious traditions. In addition, original religious beliefs reflect many of the complex relationships between humans and nature, as well as our feelings and thoughts about life and death. These concepts reflect complex beliefs and practices that arose within original people groups and became key components of their religious traditions.

Keywords: *original religions, religious cult, animism, totemism, fetishism, magic.*

**ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ТА ОСНОВНІ ТИПОЛОГІЇ ПЕРВІСНИХ РЕЛІГІЙНИХ
ВІРУВАНЬ ТА КУЛЬТІВ**

Анотація

Стаття присвячується дослідженням в галузі релігієзнавства і стосується вивчення історії релігії, а саме первісних релігійних культів та вірувань. Первісні вірування є основою будь-якої релігії світу, важливо розуміти історію формування уявлень від первісних обичин до перших держав і нашого часу. Вони дозволяють краще осягнути релігійні переконання та практики наших предків, а також з'ясувати, як вони вплинули на формування культури та суспільства. Первісні релігійні вірування

мають складну структуру та можуть включати різноманітні ритуали, обряди та символіку. Проаналізовано важливі аспекти первісних релігійних вірувань, такі як анімізм, тотемізм, фетишизм, магія, шаманізм, які зумовили формування складних релігійних систем. У сучасному світі дослідження первісних релігійних вірувань важливі не тільки з наукової, а й з культурологічної та етичної точок зору, оскільки вони дозволяють поглибити наше розуміння та повагу до різноманітності релігій та культур.

Ключові слова: первісні релігії, релігійний культ, анімізм, тотемізм, фетишизм, магія.

Formulation of the problem.

The concept of “original religious beliefs” is rather ambiguous. In scientific sources, they are referred to in a number of ways: original, primitive, early-stage, archaic, natural, pagan, and animistic. The terminological originality is a result of an insufficiently developed scientific classification of religious beliefs and cults.

The original religious beliefs and cults are the foundation of any modern religion. The study of the original religious beliefs and their typology helps in understanding the development of religious ideas and practices since ancient times and their influence on the formation of cultural, social, and political systems. The study of the original religious beliefs facilitates the understanding of the religious traditions of modern peoples, which have their roots in these beliefs. Studying historical forms of religious worship contributes to the understanding of how religious practices and rites influenced the culture and life of people in the past, changed over time, as well as how influenced the formation of modern society. It also contributes to the formation of an unbiased, open-minded view on important aspects of the original religious beliefs that caused the formation of complex religious systems.

Analysis of research and publications.

Modern religious studies’ analysis of the original beliefs is based on serious scientific studies of the beliefs of the peoples of the world, represented by the works of E.Tylor, J.Frazer, L.Morgan, B.Malinowski, L.Sternberg, I.Ohienko, O.Potebnja, R.Otto, etc. The theoretical base of this research is comprised of publications focused on the history of religion, as well as original works by well-known anthropologists and religious historians of the 19th-21st centuries, scarcely available to the Ukrainian researches.

The purpose of the article is to analyze the views of well-known and respectable scholars and researchers, who focused on a modern view on the origin, evolution and interrelationship of the original religious beliefs and cults in their works.

Presenting main material.

The original, or primitive, religions is a name given to religious beliefs and practices of those traditional, often isolated, pre-literate cultures that did not develop cities and technologically complex forms of society. The term “primitive religions”, widely used as a synonym to “original religions”, is misleading, suggesting that the religions of these peoples are somehow less complex than the religions of “developed” societies. It is important to note that the term does not have any negative connotation and does not imply any under-development or incompleteness of a religious system. As noted by the British anthropologist E.Evans-Pritchard, the term “primitive religions” should not be taken as an indication that these religions are less developed or simplistic compared to monotheistic religions. The original, or primitive, religions are just other forms of belief and religious practice that have their own value and meaning [Evans-Pritchard 1965: 4-5].

The original religions also include religions of archaic cultures: the Paleolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic cultures. The available evidence for prehistoric religions is so limited that it makes any reconstruction highly speculative. However, scholars such as M.Eliade emphasized the importance of modern fieldwork to restore a sense of the religious life of early humankind.

The concept of the original religions is one of the key concepts in the study of the religious life of humankind. The original religions are religious systems that developed in different cultures that existed before the emergence of monotheistic

religions.

According to the definition given by ethnographer E. Tylor, primitive religions are religions of the lower classes of society that arise on the basis of beliefs and practices passed down from generation to generation [Tylor 1871: 423-424].

The English anthropologist J. Frazer describes the original religions as a set of ways that allow people to maintain interaction with the spiritual world. He claims that the original, primitive, religions are based on a belief that the spiritual world has an influence on the physical world and can influence human will [Frazer 2013: 3].

The U.S. anthropologist C. Geertz states that the original religions also have an important social function, which consists in ensuring social stability and maintaining moral values in a society [Geertz 1973: 90].

Since the 17th century, Western scholars have researched the issue of the beginnings of human culture, using empirical data collected on religious beliefs and practices among non-European cultures of the New World, Africa, Australia, the South Pacific, etc. Thus, religion became one of the fields of study that shaped modern ideas regarding the origin of human consciousness and various institutions. Religion, both as a human experience and as an expression of this experience, is seen as a primitive model of human consciousness, which is most vividly manifested in the original, or primitive, cultures.

One of the main aspects of the original religions is the cult of ancestors, which is based on a belief that souls of deceased relatives remain on the earth and can influence the lives of the living. This cult played an important role in the formation of traditions and heritage that was passed down from generation to generation.

The original religions have a great similarity in a belief that souls of deceased ancestors are influential in the spiritual life of a society and can help to ensure its well-being [McCarter 2017: 15]. An important aspect of the original religions is their perception of nature and the cosmos. Many original religions see nature and the cosmos as sacred and connected to spiritual powers. For example, in the traditional religion of the Australian aborigines, the universe is

spiritual and holy, and all things and beings are connected with each other and with the world of spirits [Geertz 1973: 228-229].

The theories of the nature of the original religions have been moving between two poles: intellectual and rational; and psychological and irrational. E. Tylor based his interpretation of an original, primitive religion on the idea that primitive people make a false logical conclusion, i.e. an intellectual error. He thought that they were confusing a subjective and objective reality in their belief that the vitality (soul) present in living beings was separate and capable of independent existence in its own mode. He assumed that dreams could have been the basis for this error. E. Tylor's definition of the original religion as animism, the belief in spiritual beings, expresses his interpretation that the basis of the original religion is the belief that separated vitalities form a superhuman area of reality, which is as real as the physical world of rocks, trees, and plants [Tylor 1871].

The opposite interpretation of the original religion is based on an experimental and psychological approach to the data. In the study "The Melanesians", R. Codrington described the meaning of mana as a supernatural power or influence felt by Melanesians [Codrington 1891]. This laid ground for other scholars to explain the origin and interpretation of the original religion as based on the experience of primitive peoples and on natural forces. Variants of this theory can be seen in the works of L. Lévy-Bruhl [Lévy-Bruhl 1932], who distinguished a logical and pre-logical mentality in the analysis of the type of thinking that occurs through this way of experience, and in the works of R. Otto, who described the specific religious meaning of this way of human consciousness [Otto 1926].

The history of the origin of primitive religious beliefs is very complex and diversified. The emergence of primitive religions is related to many factors such as social, cultural, natural, and historical conditions.

One of the main theories regarding the origin of primitive religions is a theory of animism. According to this theory, primitive people believed that all things and beings had a spiritual essence. This theory was introduced

by the British anthropologist E. Tylor in the 19th century. He believed that animism was the first belief of humankind and that it was animism that became the basis for further development of religious ideologies. In the book “Primitive Culture”, he argued that animism is a universal natural religious belief of primitive peoples, and its fundamental meaning is that a belief in the spirits of things and powers is the basis of religion, science, and philosophy at the early stage of humankind development [Tylor 1871: 375].

Another theory that explains the origin of primitive religions is the theory of totemism. According to this theory, primitive people believed in their kinship with animals and plants and paid them respect and reverence. Thus, the practice of totemism emerged, which implied worshipping symbols that represented kinship with specific species of animals or plants. Totemism is one of the most popular theories explaining the origin of primitive religion. The English anthropologist J. Frazer is one of the leading representatives of this theory [Frazer 1999].

Other scholars have also studied totemism as an important component of primitive religion. For example, the U.S. anthropologist M. Spiro, who studied totemism among the Indians of North America, wrote that totemistic beliefs were connected to the perception of a world in which everything is intertwined. He argued that totemistic beliefs are based on the idea of a relationship between humans, animals, and plants. For primitive people, the world was not divided into separate parts, but was integral, having everything interconnected [Spiro 1993: 27].

Another theory that explains the origin of primitive religions is the theory of natural religious instinct. According to this theory, primitive people felt a need to believe in something more than just the material world because they felt a great need to explain various phenomena around them. It suggests that primitive people believed in the existence of forces beyond their understanding and control. The theory of natural religious instinct focuses on the idea that religiosity is built into human nature. The U.S. philosopher William James formulated this theory in his book

“The Varieties of Religious Experience”. He believed that a feeling of the need for religion is an integral part of human nature, and this need is a consequence of an instinct inherent in every person [William 2009].

Primitive religious beliefs have several main features that determine their uniqueness and specificity, distinguishing them from more developed religious traditions.

The first feature of the original religious beliefs is a close connection with nature. Primitive humans felt that nature had its own forces and wills, and that they could interact with these forces. They respected nature and found ways to use its resources, but at the same time, they were aware of its unpredictability and dangers. For this reason, they looked for ways to come to terms with nature and draw its blessing to their deeds. On this basis, one of the main features of primitive religious beliefs arose: namely, a belief in supernatural forces and death. In the book “The Myths That Live”, J. Šiman states that a belief in supernatural forces is the basis of primitive religious systems. Šiman argues that primitive people believed that the world around them was full of forces and energies that they could not see or feel directly, but that influenced their lives and destinies. These beliefs are rooted in a desire to control and understand nature, as well as in a need for protection from danger [Šimán 1998].

Cult rites and rituals are the second feature of primitive religious beliefs [Šimán 1998]. Rituals varied from shared meals to dances and songs and served as a means of communicating with the spirit world. In his work “The Sacred and The Profane”, M. Eliade states that rituals have a meaning that exceeds their simple symbolism or pragmatic functions. He argues that rituals reflect social problems and beliefs, and serve as a means of integrating the internal social structure [Eliade 1997].

The third feature is a belief in spirits. These spirits could be blessed, and their influence on the formation of cultures and social structures could be blessed as well. The ethnologist and anthropologist C. Geertz argues that primitive religions reflect social processes and the deepest values and beliefs within which people exist. Believing in spirits provided primitive people

with a way of understanding and controlling the world.

Although primitive religious beliefs have their own characteristics and diversity, they have common features that unite them as a unique form of religion [Geertz 1973].

In his work “Magic, Science and Religion”, one of the leading anthropologists and religious studies scholars B. Malinowski notes that primitive people believed that spirits, influencing natural phenomena and people’s lives, inhabit the world around them. These spirits can be blessed or ominous and believing in them helped primitive people to explain events in their lives and to find protection against dangers [Malinowski 1948].

Another attribute of primitive religious beliefs is a belief in collective belonging and cooperation. Primitive people lived in communities, and it was important for them to preserve and strengthen their society. E. Evans-Pritchard notes that primitive religious practices and beliefs helped to strengthen social bonds and create interactions between people. In his opinion, religious beliefs and rituals had a certain social function that helped to ensure harmony and balance in the inner life of the community [Evans-Pritchard 1953].

One of the components of the primitive community was a taboo, i.e. a system of prohibitions established within the framework of religious traditions and cultures. Taboos can relate to various aspects of life, including food, sexuality, and behavior. According to anthropologist M. Douglas, taboos become a part of religious traditions because they are a way to ensure social stability and avoid violating the sanctity of certain objects or actions [McCormack, Douglas 1967: 34].

In the original religious traditions, taboo and totemism were closely interconnected. According to anthropologist D. Lopez-Gomez, a totem becomes not only a ban on consumption, but also a symbol of a ban on killing, destruction, and other actions that can harm the totem animal [López-Gómez 1988: 53].

Animism can be seen as a form of pantheism or a belief that everything living and inanimate is a part of the divine essence. Animism can also be seen as a form of anthropomorphism or

attributing human qualities to inanimate objects.

The primitive peoples of the world have their own concepts of animism. Many primitive cultures see nature as a world in which every object is an entity capable of perceiving and responding to the environment [Ingold 2000].

One of the manifestations of animism is a belief in the sanctity of various natural objects. For example, Japanese Shinto beliefs are based on the idea that nature and humans are inextricably linked, and each natural object has its own spirit that must be honored and respected. As Professor M. Yanagisawa writes, “for Shintoists, each horizontal, vertical, and diagonal section of a mountain has its own name and its own spirit” [Yanagisawa 2005: 33].

One of the theories that explains animism is the hybrid thinking theory proposed by the French anthropologist and philosopher P. Descola. This theory states that people in primitive cultures perceive the world much more broadly than simply as a set of objects that can be subject to scientific analysis [Descola 1989].

According to this theory, primitive people viewed the world as a set of animate and inanimate objects that had souls and an ability to interact with each other. People of that time perceived nature as a single system in which each object had its own role and meaning.

One of the arguments that support the hybrid thinking theory is that there was a practice of honoring ancestors and gods in primitive cultures. This shows that people of that time believed in the spiritual world and felt a certain dependence on it. Honoring nature and spiritual beings was for them a way to ensure their well-being and protection from negative forces. In a child’s worldview, the real world is intertwined with the imaginary world, and different objects and beings can have different degrees of vitality and consciousness. This may explain why we often observe animistic ideas in primitive cultures, with individuals not having scientific and comprehension tools to understand the world and thus relying on their intuitive feelings and emotions.

Another animism theory we can see among some researchers is that animistic ideas arose as an attempt to explain various natural phenomena

associated with plant and animal life. According to this theory, primitive people began to notice certain patterns in nature, such as changes in weather and seasons, and animal behavior, and tried to explain those with the help of animistic ideas. It helped them to understand and control the nature around them.

Animistic beliefs are not just mystical experiences, but rather have a certain function in the primitive worldview system. This indicates that animistic ideas were a necessary element of primitive cultures and had practical meaning. To support this theory, we can use an example from the book "The Forest People" by anthropologist C. Turnbull, where the author writes that the idea of animism can arise as an attempt to explain what, in our rational worldview, we consider dead, and in animistic worldview, alive [Turnbull 1961]. This once again confirms the idea that animism consists in perceiving the whole world as living and equal.

According to the research of anthropologist C. Levi-Strauss, totemism is one of the most widespread religious and cultural organization forms among "wild" peoples. He also notes that a totem can be associated with a certain territory in which a group lives [Lévi-Strauss 1963].

E. Durkheim described totemism as a religious system aimed at maintaining collective consciousness and identity. Durkheim argued that totemism was especially important for primitive peoples that had poorly developed individuality and a sense of self [Durkheim 2001].

However, there are opinions that totemism is not always related to religion. Totemism is often associated with a practice of dances by groups of people performing movements imitating behavior of their totem. In anthropology, totemism is often viewed as one of the first forms of the religious and social bodies of humankind. Totemism can influence society formation by providing spirit of a community and creating bonds between people; it can help create a common identity among a group of people and contribute to the formation of a collective consciousness.

Totemism can be an important factor in shaping society through its influence on moral and ethical values. E. Evans-Pritchard argues that totemism can play the role of a normative

system within a group of people, regulating their behavior and attitude towards nature [Evans-Pritchard 1953:27].

In addition, totemism can play an important role in the formation of art and culture. Signs and symbols associated with totemic animals and other natural objects can form a basis for the artwork and visual culture of a group of people.

Fetishism is a concept that arises in anthropology and social theory. It describes the phenomenon when a certain object or idea gains a special meaning for people.

A fetish appears for various reasons. Some fetishes may have natural properties that attract people's attention. Others may be related to the history or culture of a particular group of people. A fetish can also arise due to a belief in the magical properties of an object. Fetishism can play an important role in shaping social identity and community. Fetishes can become symbols that unite people into groups and communities, allowing them to feel as a part of something bigger and more important. In addition, fetishes can serve as a means of interaction between people. They can be used as gifts that indicate social status or relationships between people. According to W. Davis, a fetish can be any object to which a special meaning or value is attached [Davis 1984: 5].

Davis also points out that fetishism can be linked to certain social and economic conditions. For example, in colonial contexts, fetishes can be used as a means of protest against colonial authorities and of support for national identity [Davis 1984].

In the modern world, totemism and fetishism can be seen in various areas of life, such as art, fashion, sports, politics, and religion. For example, in the world of fashion, totemistic elements can be found in clothing design, where animal patterns and symbolism are used to create a unique style. Fetishism can be seen in the area of consumer culture. Mobile phones, cars, various gadgets, and other objects can acquire the properties of a fetish, i.e. they become objects of worship and a cult of consumption.

Shamanism is a spiritual system that includes practices related to communicating with the spirit world through a trance condition.

According to anthropologist M. Harner, shamanism is the oldest form of religion known to humankind [Harner 1980: 1].

Shamanism has many different forms and variations in different cultures and peoples. Although shamanism differs across cultures and peoples, a common element is its focus on a spiritual practice and communication with other worlds. Shamanic traditions believe that the spiritual world is not separate from the physical world, but rather they are interconnected and interact with each other. All elements of shamanism (the trance condition, communication with the spiritual world, the use of musical instrument and plants) form its unique and important practice in the world history of religions and cultures.

Another form of primitive religious beliefs is magic. This term describes practices used to alter reality using immeasurable energy or spiritual forces. There are many different approaches to magic, including religious and non-religious practices. However, common to all forms of magic is the belief that people can influence their environment and destiny by using their inner powers.

In order to better understand the nature of magic, we can analyze the works of scholars and practitioners studying the subject. One of such researchers is M. Harner, an anthropologist and a founder of The Foundation for Shamanic Studies. In his book "Shamanic View of the World: The Foundation of Shamanic Studies", he examines the connection between magic and shamanism: "Shamans use magical power to contact the spirit world and gain access to various kinds of knowledge beyond ordinary understanding. It may seem strange or even implausible, but this practice has a thousand-year history in various cultures around the world" [Harner 1980: 6].

B. Malinowski points out that the Melanesian

peoples use magic to ensure the harmony in relations between people and nature. Magic among the Melanesian peoples helps to resolve conflicts and supports harmony between people and nature [Malinowski 2014].

We can say that magic is not only a form of belief, but also an important component of culture and social relations. B. Malinowski demonstrates that magic has both positive and negative effects on people and their relationships, and it can be used both to ensure harmony and to cause harm.

However, B. Malinowski believes that magic cannot be considered as a science, since it is based on beliefs and rituals that cannot be objectively verified [Malinowski 1948: 42]. He emphasizes the importance of understanding different forms of beliefs and rituals for anthropology but rejects the idea that magic can be scientifically based.

Conclusion.

The original, or primitive, religious beliefs have many unique features that distinguish them from more developed religious traditions. The original beliefs went beyond pure metaphysical explanations and included a variety of social and ethical aspects that were important for the formation of cultures and communities. Religious practices such as totemism and taboos played an important role in the lives of original communities, and they are key components of their religious traditions. In addition, the original religious beliefs reflect many of the complex relationships between humans and nature, as well as our feelings and thoughts about life and death. These religious traditions are the source of our cultural heritage, and they can help us to better understand our roots and our shared human experiences. These concepts reflect complex beliefs and practices that arose within primitive people groups and became key components of their religious traditions.

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