***Remarks on Frazer's <u>Golden Bough</u>***
***- Ludwig Wittgenstein***

*I now believe that it would be right to begin my book with remarks about metaphysics as a kind of magic.*

*But in doing this I must not make a case for magic nor may I make fun of it.*

*The depth of magic should be preserved.--*

*Indeed, here the elimination of magic has itself the character of magic. For, back then, when I began talking about the* 'world' *(and not about this tree or table), what else did I want but to keep something higher spellbound in my words?*

*- Wittgenstein (remarks labeled as 'bad' and eventually cut from the text)*

**I**

One must start out with error and convert it into truth.

That is, one must reveal the source of error, otherwise hearing the truth won't do any good. The truth cannot force its way in when something else is occupying its place.

To convince someone of the truth, it is not enough to state it, but rather one must find the *path* from error to truth.

I must plunge into the water of doubt again and again.

Frazer's account of the magical and religious views of mankind is unsatisfactory: it makes these views look like errors.

Was Augustine in error, then when he called upon God on every page of the *Confessions*?

But--one might say--if he was not in error, surely the Buddhist holy man was--or anyone else--whose religion gives expression to completely different views. But *none* of them was in error, except when he set forth a theory.

The very idea of wanting to explain a practice--for example, the killing of the priest-king--seems wrong to me. All that Frazer does is to make them plausible to people who think as he does. It is very remarkable that in the final analysis all these practices are presented as, so to speak, pieces of stupidity.

But it will never be plausible to say that mankind does all that out of sheer stupidity.

When, for example, he explains to us that the king must be killed in his prime, because the savages believe that otherwise his soul would not be kept fresh, all one can say is: where that practice and these views occur together, the practice does not spring from the view, but they are

both just there.

It can indeed happen, and often does today, that a person will give up a practice after he has recognized an error on which it was based. But this happens only when calling someone's attention to his error is enough to turn him from his way of behaving. But this is not the case with the religious practices of a people and *therefore* there is *no* question of an error. [*Ed.: See Sir James George Frazer, The Golden Bough, p. 264 [iii, 422]: "But reflection and enquiry should satisfy us that to our predecessors we are indebted for much of what we thought most our own, and that their errors were not wilful extravagances or the ravings of insanity, but simply hypotheses, justifiable as such at the time when the were propounded, but which a fuller experience has proved to be inadequate. It is only by the successive testing of hypotheses and rejection of the false that truth is at last elicited. After all, what we call truth is only the hypothesis which is found to work best. Therefore in reviewing the opinions and practices of ruder ages and races we shall do well to look with leniency upon their errors as inevitable slips made in the search for truth, and to give them the benefit of that indulgence which we ourselves may one day stand in need of: cum excusatione itaque veteres audiendi sunt".*]

Frazer says that it is very hard to discover the error in magic--and that is why it has lasted so long--because, for example, an incantation that is supposed to bring rain certainly seems efficacious sooner or later. But then it is surely remarkable that people don't realize earlier that sooner or later it's going to rain anyhow. [*Ed.: See Frazer, p. 59 [i, 242]: "A ceremony intended to make the wind blow or the rain fall, or to work the death of an enemy, will always be followed, sooner or later, by the occurrence it is meant to bring to pass, and primitive man may be excused for regarding the occurrence as a direct result of the ceremony, and the best possible proof of its efficacy."*]

I believe that the attempt to explain is already therefore wrong, because one must only correctly piece together what one *knows*, without adding anything, and the satisfaction being sought through the explanation follows of itself.

And the explanation isn't what satisfies us here at all. When Frazer begins by telling us the story of the King of the Wood of Nemi, he does this in a tone which shows that he feels, and wants us to feel, that something strange and dreadful is happening. But the question "why does this happen?" is properly answered by saying: Because it is dreadful. That is, precisely that which makes this incident strike us as dreadful, magnificent, horrible, tragic, etc., as anything but trivial and insignificant, is also *that* which has called this incident to life.

Here one can only *describe* and say: this is what human life is like.

Compared with the impression which the thing described makes on us, the explanation is too uncertain.

Every explanation is after all an hypothesis.

But an hypothetical explanation will be of little help to someone, say, who is upset because of love.--It will not calm him.

The crowd of thoughts which cannot come out, because they all want to rush forward and thus get stuck in the exit.

If a narrator places the priest-king of Nemi and "the majesty of death" side by side, he realizes that they are the same.
The life of the priest-king shows what is meant by that phrase.

Someone who is affected by the majesty of death can give expression to this through such a life.--This, of course, is also no explanation, but merely substitutes one symbol for another. Or: one ceremony for another.

No *opinion* serves as the foundation for a religious symbol.
And only an opinion can involve an error.

One would like to say: This and that incident have taken place; laugh, if you can.

The religious actions, or the religious life, of the priest-king are no different in kind from any genuinely religious action of today, for example, a confession of sins. This, too, admits of being '*explained*' and not explained.

Burning in effigy. Kissing the picture of one's beloved. That is *obviously not* based on the belief that it will have some specific effect on the object which the picture represents. It aims at satisfaction and achieves it. Or rather: it *aims* at nothing at all; we just behave this way and then we feel satisfied.

One could also kiss the name of one's beloved, and here it would be clear that the name was being used as a substitutes.

The same savage, who stabs the picture of his enemy apparently in order to kill him, really builds his hut out of wood and carves his arrow skillfully and not in effigy.

The idea that one can summon an inanimate object to oneself as one can summon a person. Here the principle is that of personification.

And magic is always based on the idea of symbolism and language.

The representation of a wish is, *eo ipso*, the representation of its realization.

But magic brings a wish to representation; it expresses a wish.

Baptism as washing.--An error arises only when magic is interpreted scientifically.

If the adoption of a child proceeds in such a way that the mother draws it from under her clothes, it is surely insane to believe that an *error* is present and that she believes she has given birth to the child. [*Ed.: See Frazer, p. 15 [i, 74]: "...in Bulgaria and among the Bosnian Turks... a woman will take a boy whom she intends to adopt and push or pull him through her clothes; ever afterwards he is regarded as her very son, and inherits the whole property of his adoptive parents."*]

Operations which depend on a false, overly simple idea of things and processes are to be distinguished from magical operations. For example, if one says that the illness is moving from one part of the body to another, or takes precautions to divert the illness as if it were a liquid or a condition of warmth. One is then creating a false picture for oneself, which, in this case, means a groundless one.

What a narrow spiritual life on Frazer's part! As a result: how impossible it was for him to conceive of a life different from that of the England of his time!

Frazer cannot imagine a priest who is not basically a present-day English person with the same stupidity and dullness.

Why shouldn't it be possible for a person to regard his name as sacred? It is certainly, on the one hand, the most important instrument which is given to him, and, on the other, like a piece of jewelry hung around his neck at birth.

One sees how misleading Frazer's explanations are--I believe--by noting that one could very easily invent primitive practices oneself, and it would be pure luck if they were not actually found somewhere. That is, the principle according to which these practices are arranged is a much more general one than in Frazer's explanation and it is present in our own minds, so that we ourselves could think up all the possibilities.--We can easily imagine, for example, that the king of a tribe is kept hidden from everyone, but also that every man in the tribe must see him. Certainly, then, the latter will not be left to happen in some more or less chance manner, but he will be *shown* to the people. Perhaps no one will be allowed to touch him, but perhaps everyone *must* touch him. Recall that after Schubert's death his brother cut some of Schubert's scores into small pieces and gave such pieces, consisting of a few bars, to his favorite pupils. This act, as a sign of piety, is *just as* understandable to us as the different one of keeping the scores untouched, accessible to no one. And if schubert's brother had burned the scores, that too would be understandable as a sign of piety.

The ceremonial (hot or cold) as opposed to the haphazard (lukewarm) characterizes piety.

Indeed, if Frazer's explanations did not in the final analysis appeal to a tendency in ourselves, they would not really be explanations.

There are dangers connected with eating and drinking, not only for savages, but also for us; nothing is more natural than the desire to protect oneself from these; and now we could devise such preventative measures ourselves.--But according to what principle are we to invent

them? Obviously, according to the one by which all dangers are reduced to the form of a few very simple ones which are immediately evident to man. Hence the same principle according to which uneducated people among us say that the illness is moving from the head into the chest, etc., etc. Personification will, of course, play a large role in these simple pictures, for, as everyone knows, men (hence spirits) can become dangerous to mankind.

It goes without saying that a man's shadow, which looks like him, or his mirror-image, the rain, thunderstorms, the phases of the moon, the changing of the seasons, the way in which animals are similar to and different from one another and in relations to man, the phenomena of death, birth, and sexual life, in short, everything we observe around us year in and year out, interconnected in so many different ways, will play a part in his thinking (his philosophy) and in his practices, or is precisely what we really know and find interesting.

How could fire or the similarity of fire to the sun have failed to make an impression on the awakening mind of man? But perhaps not "because he can't explain it" (the foolish superstition of our time)--for will an explanation make it less impressive?--

The magic in *Alice in Wonderland*: of drying out by reading the driest thing there is.

With the magical healing of an illness, one directs the illness to leave the patient.

After the description of any such magical treatment, one always wants to say: If the illness doesn't understand *that*, I don't know *how* one should tell it to leave.

Nothing is so difficult as doing justice to the facts.

I don't mean that just *fire* must make an impression on everyone. Fire no more than any other phenomenon, and one thing will impress this person and another that. For no phenomenon is in itself particularly mysterious, but any of them can become so to us, and the characteristic feature of the awakening mind of man is precisely the fact that a phenomenon comes to have meaning for him. One could almost say that man is a ceremonial animal. That is, no doubt, partly wrong and partly nonsensical, but there is also something right about it.

That is, one could begin a book on anthropology by saying: When one examines the life and behavior of mankind throughout the world, one sees that, except for what might be called animal activities, such as ingestion, etc., etc., etc., men also perform actions which bear a characteristic peculiar to themselves, and these could be called ritualistic actions.

But then it is nonsense for one to go on to say that the characteristic feature of *these* actions is the fact that they arise from faulty views about the physics of things. (Frazer does this when he says that magic is essentially false physics or, as the case may be, false medicine, technology, etc.)

Rather, the characteristic feature of ritualistic action is not at all a view, an opinion, whether true or false, although an opinion--a belief--can itself be ritualistic or part of a rite.

If one holds it as self-evident that people delight in their imagination, one should bear in mind that this imagination is not like a painted portrait or plastic model, but a complicated pattern made up of heterogeneous elements: words and pictures. One will then no longer place operating with written and phonetic symbols in opposition to operating with 'mental images' of events.

We must plow through the whole of language.

Frazer: "...That these observances are dictated by fear of the ghost of the slain seems certain..." But why then does Frazer use the word 'ghost'? He thus understands this superstition very well, since he explains it to us with a superstitious word he is familiar with. Or rather, this might have enabled him to see that there is also something in us which speaks in favor of those savages' behavior.--If I, a person who does not believe that there are human-superhuman beings somewhere which one can call gods--if I say: "I fear the wrath of the gods," that shows that I can mean something by this, or can give expression to a feeling which is not necessarily connected with that belief.

Frazer would be capable of believing that a savage dies because of an error. In books used in primary schools it is said that Attila had undertaken his great military campaigns because he believed that the possessed the sword of the god of thunder.

Frazer is much more savage than most of his savages, for they are not as far removed from the understanding of a spiritual matter as a twentieth-century Englishman. *His* explanations of primitive practices are much cruder than the meaning of these practices themselves.

The historical explanation, the explanation as an hypothesis of development, is only *one* way of assembling the data--of their synopsis. It is just as possible to see the data in their relation to one another and to embrace them in a general picture without putting it in the form of an hypothesis about temporal development.

Identifying one's own gods with the gods of other peoples. One convinces oneself that the names have the same meaning.

"And so the chorus points to a secret law" one feels like saying to Frazer's collection of facts. I *can* represent this law, this idea, by means of an evolutionary hypothesis, or also, analogously to the schema of a plant, by means of the schema of a religious ceremony, but also by means of the arrangement of its factual content alone, in a '*perspicuous*' representation.

The concept of perspicuous representation is of fundamental importance for us. It denotes the form of our representation, the way we see things. (A kind of 'World-view' as it is apparently typical of our time. Spengler')

The perspicuous representation brings about the understanding which consists precisely in the fact that we "see the connections". Hence the importance of finding *connecting links*.

But an hypothetical connecting link should in this case do nothing but direct the attention to the similarity, the relatedness, of the *facts*. As one might illustrate an internal relation of a circle to an ellipse by gradually converting an ellipse into a circle; *but not in order to assert that a certain ellipse actually, historically, had originated from a circle* (evolutionary hypothesis), but only in order to sharpen our eye for a formal conclusion.

But I can also see the evolutionary hypothesis as nothing more, as the clothing of a formal connection.

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I should like to say: nothing shows our kinship to those savages better than the fact that Frazer has on hand a word as familiar to himself and to us as 'ghost' or 'shade' in order to describe the views of these people.

(That is certainly something different than were he to describe, for example, the savages as imagining that their heads will fall off when they have killed an enemy. Here *our description* would contain nothing superstitious or magical in itself.)

Indeed, this peculiarity relates not only to the expressions 'ghost' and 'shade', and much too little is made of the fact that we count the words 'soul' and 'spirit' as part of our educated vocabulary. Compared with this, the fact that we do not believe that our soul eats and drinks is a trifling matter.

An entire mythology is stored within our language.

To drive out or slay death; but on the other hand it is represented as a skeleton, as itself dead in a certain sense. "As dead as death." "Nothing is as dead as death; nothing is as beautiful as beauty itself." The picture in terms of which one conceives of reality here is such that beauty, death, etc. are the pure (concentrated) substances, while they are present in a beautiful object as an admixture.--And do I not recognize here my own observations about 'object' and 'complex'?

In the ancient rites we have the use of an extremely developed gesture-language.

And when I read Frazer, I continually would like to say: We still have all these processes, these changes of meaning, before us in our verbal language. When what hides in the last sheaf of corn is called 'Corn-wolf', but also this sheaf itself as well as the man who binds it, we recognize herein a familiar linguistic occurrence. [*Ed.: See Frazer, p. 449 [vii, 273]: "In various parts of Mecklenburg, where the belief in the Corn-wolf is particularly prevalent, every one fears to cut the last corn, because they say that the Wolf is sitting in it;... the last bunch of standing corn is itself commonly called the Wolf, and the man who reaps it...is himself called Wolf..."*]

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I could imagine that I had had the choice of picking a creature of the earth as the dwelling place for my soul, and that my spirit had chosen this unattractive creature as its

residence and vantage point. Perhaps because the anomaly of a beautiful residence would be repugnant to it. One's spirit would certainly have to be very sure of itself to do this.

One could say "every view has its charm", but that would be false. The correct thing to say is that every view is significant for the one who sees it as significant (but that does not mean, sees it other than it is). Indeed, in this sense, every view is equally significant.

It is indeed important that I must also make my own the contempt that anyone may have for me, as an essential and significant part of the world as seen by me.

If a man were given the choice to be born in one tree of a forest, there would be some who would seek out the most beautiful or the highest tree, some who would choose the smallest, and some who would choose an average or below average tree, and I certainly do not mean out of philistinism, but rather for exactly the same reason, or kind of reason, that the other had chosen the highest. That the feeling which we have for our lives is comparable to that of such a being who could choose for himself his viewpoint in the world underlies, I believe, the myth--or the belief--that we had chosen our bodies before birth.

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I believe that the characteristic feature of primitive man is that he does not act from *opinions* (contrary to Frazer).

I read, among many similar examples, of a Rain-King in Africa to whom the people pray for rain *when the rainy period comes*. But surely that means that they do not really believe that he can make it rain, otherwise they would do it in the dry periods of the year in which the land is "a parched and arid desert". For if one assumes that the people formerly instituted this office of Rain-King out of stupidity, it is nevertheless certainly clear that they had previously experienced that the rains begin in March, and then they would have had the Rain-King function for the other part of the year. Or again: toward morning, when the sun is about to rise, rites of daybreak are celebrated by the people, but not during the night, when they simply burn lamps. [*Ed.: See ibid., p. 107 [ii, 2]: "...The Kings of the Rain, Mata Kodou, who are credited with the power of giving rain at the proper time, that is, the rainy season. Before the rains begin to fall at the end of March the country is a parched and arid desert; and the cattle, which form the people's chief wealth, perish for lack of grass. So, when the end of March draws on, each householder betakes himself to the King of the Rain and offers him a cow that he may make the blessed waters of heaven to drip on the brown and withered pastures."*]

[When I am furious about something, I sometimes beat the ground or a tree with my walking stick. But I certainly do not believe that the ground is to blame or that my beating can help anything. "I am venting my anger". And all rites are of this kind. Such actions may be called Instinct-actions.--And an historical explanation, say, that I or my ancestors previously believed that beating the ground does help is shadow-boxing, for it is a superfluous assumption that explains *nothing*. The similarity of the action to an act of punishment is important, but nothing

more than this similarity can be asserted.

Once such a phenomenon is brought into connection with an instinct which I myself possess, this is precisely the explanation wished for; that is, the explanation which resolves this particular difficulty. And a further investigation about the history of my instinct moves on another track.

It was not a trivial reason, for really there can have been no *reason*, that prompted certain races of mankind to venerate the oak tree, but only the fact that they and the oak were united in a community of life, and thus that they arose together not by choice, but rather like the flea and the dog. (If fleas developed a rite, it would be based on the dog.)

One could say that it was not their union (the oak and man) that has given rise to these rites, but in a certain sense their separation. For the awakening of the intellect occurs with a separation from the original *soil*, the original basis of life. (The origin of choice.)

(The form of the awakening spirit is veneration.)]

**II**

[p. 168 (*"At a certain stage of early society the king or priest is often thought to be endowed with supernatural power or to be an incarnation of a deity, and consistently with this belief the course of nature is supposed to be more or less under his control..."*) It is, of course, not so that the people believe that the ruler has these powers, and the ruler knows very well that he doesn't have them, or can only fail to know it if he is an imbecile or a fool. But the notion of his power is, of course, adapted in such a way that it can harmonize with experience--the people's as well as his own. That some hypocrisy thereby plays a role is true only insofar as it generally lies close at hand with most things people do.

p. 169 (*"In ancient times, he was obliged to sit on the throne for some hours every morning, with the imperial crown on his head, but to sit altogether like a statue, without stirring either hands or feet, head or eyes, nor indeed any part of his body, because, by this means, it was thought that he could preserve peace and tranquility in his empire..."*) When a man laughs too much in our company (or at least in mine), I half-involuntarily compress my lips, as if I believed I could thereby keep his closed.

p. 170 (*"The power of giving or withholding rain is ascribed to him, and he is the lord of the winds..."*) The nonsense here is that Frazer represents these people as if they had a completely false (even insane) idea of the course of nature, whereas they only possess a peculiar interpretation of the phenomena. That is, if they were to write it down, their knowledge of nature would not differ *fundamentally* from ours. Only their *magic* is different.

p. 171 (*"A king of this sort lives hedged in by a ceremonious etiquette, a network of*

*prohibitions and observances, of which the intention is not to contribute to his dignity, much less to his comfort, but to restrain him from conduct which, by disturbing the harmony of nature, might involve himself, his people, and the universe in one common catastrophe. Far from adding to his comfort, these observances, by trammelling his every act, annihilate his freedom and often render the very life, which it is their object to preserve, a burden and sorrow to him."*) "...a network of prohibitions and observances, of which the intention is not to contribute to his dignity..." That is true and false. Certainly not the dignity of protection of the person, but perhaps--so to speak--the natural sanctity of the divinity in him.]

As simple as it sounds: the distinction between magic and science can be expressed by saying that in science there is progress, but in magic there isn't. Magic has no tendency within itself to develop.

[p. 179 (*"The Malays conceive the human soul as a little man... who corresponds... to the man in whose body he resides..."*) How much more truth there is in this view, which ascribes the same multiplicity to the soul as to the body, than in a modern watered-down theory.

Frazer doesn't notice that we have before us the teaching of Plato and Schopenhauer.

We find every childlike (infantile) theory again in today's philosophy, only not with the winning ways of the childlike.]

p. 614 (*Ed.: Regarding the Fire Festivals of Europe.*) Besides these similarities, what seems to me to be most striking is the dissimilarity of all these rites. It is a multiplicity of faces with common features which continually emerges here and there. And one would like to draw lines connecting these common ingredients. But then one part of our account would still be missing, namely, that which brings this picture into connection with our own feelings and thoughts. This part gives the account its depth.

In all these practices one, of course, sees something that is *similar* to the association of ideas and related to it. One could speak of an association of practices.

p. 618 (*"...As soon as any sparks were emitted by means of the violent friction, they applied a species of agaric which grown on old birch trees, and is very combustible. This fire had the appearance of being immediately derived from heaven, and manifold were the virtues ascribed to it..."*) Nothing accounts for why the fire should be surrounded by such a nimbus. And, how strange, what does it really mean "it had the appearance of being derived from heaven"? from which heaven? No, it is not at all self-evident that fire is looked at in this way--but that's just how it is looked at.

Here the hypothesis seems to give the matter depth for the first time. And one can recall

the explanation of the strange relationship between Siegfried and Brunhilde in the new *Nibelungenlied*. Namely, that Siegfried seems to have already seen Brunhilde before. It is now clear that what gives this practice depth is its *connection* with the burning of a man. (*Ed.: p. 618 "...the person who officiated as master of the feast produced a large cake baked with eggs and scalloped round the edge, called am bonnach beal-tine--i.e., the Beltane cake. It was divided into a number of pieces, and distributed in great form to the company. There was one particular piece which whoever got was called cailleach beal-tine--i.e., the Beltane carline, a term of great reproach. Upon his being known, part of the company laid hold of him and made a show of putting him into the fire... And while the feast was fresh in people's memory, they affected to speak of the cailleach beal-tine as dead."*)

If it were the custom at some festival for the men to ride on one another (as in the game of horse and rider), we would see nothing in this but a form of carrying which reminds us of men riding horseback; but if we knew that among many peoples it had been the custom, say, to employ slaves as riding animals and, so mounted, to celebrate certain festivals, we would now see something deeper and less harmless in the harmless practice of our time. The question is: does the sinister, as we may call it, attach to the practice of the Beltane Fire Festival in itself, as it was carried on one hundred years ago, or is the Festival sinister only if the hypothesis of its origin turns out to be true? I believe it is clearly the inner nature of the modern practice itself which seems sinister to us, and the familiar facts of human sacrifice only indicate the lines along which we should view the practice. When I speak of the inner nature of the practice, I mean all circumstances under which it is carried out and which are not included in a report of such a festival, since they consist not so much in specific actions which characterize the festival as in what one might call the spirit of the festival; such things as would be included in one's description, for example, of the kind of people who take part in it, their behavior at other times, that is, their character; the kind of games which they otherwise play. And one would then see that the sinister quality lies in the character of these people themselves.

p. 619 (*"...they divide the cake into so many portions, as similar as possible to one another in size and shape, as there are persons in the company. They daub one of these portions all over with charcoal, until it be perfectly black. They put all the bits of the cake into a bonnet. Every one, blindfold, draws out a portion. He who holds the bonnet, is entitled to the last bit. Whoever draws the black bit, is the* devoted *person who is to be sacrificed to* Baal*..."*) We see something here that looks like the last vestige of drawing lots. And, through this aspect, it suddenly gains depth. If we were to learn that the cake with the knobs had, in a particular case, originally been baked, say, in honor of a button-maker on his birthday and that this practice had been preserved in the region, this practice would in fact lose all 'depth', unless this depth is embedded in the present form of the practice itself. But in such a case one often says: "this practice is *obviously* ancient". How does one know that? Is it only because one has historical evidence about ancient practices of this kind? Or does it have yet another reason which one arrives at through introspection? But even if both the prehistoric origin of the practice and its derivation from an earlier practice are proven historically, it is nevertheless possible that the practice has *nothing whatever* sinister about it today, that nothing of the prehistoric horror remains attached to it. Perhaps today it is engaged in only by children who

compete in baking cakes and decorating them with knobs. Then the depth lies only in thinking about that derivation. But this can still be very uncertain and one would like to say: "Why worry about so uncertain a matter?" (like a backwards-looking Clever Elsie). But it is not that kind of worry.--Above all: where do we get the certainty that such a practice must be ancient (what are our data, what is the verification)? But are we certain then? might we not be mistaken and convicted of our mistake by history? Certainly, but then there still remains something of which we are certain. We would then say: "Good, the origin may be different in this case, but in general it is surely prehistoric." Whatever we regard as *evidence* for this must include the depth of this assumption. And this evidence is again non-hypothetical, psychological. That is, when I say: the depth in this practice lies in its origin *if* it did come about in this way, then the depth lies either in the thought of such an origin, or the depth is itself hypothetical, and one can only say: *If* it happened that way then it was a deep and sinister business. I want to say: The deep, the sinister, do not depend on the history of the practice having been like this, for perhaps it was not like this at all; nor on the fact that it was perhaps or probably like this, but rather on that which gives me ground for assuming this. Indeed, how is it that in general human sacrifice is so deep and sinister? For is it only the suffering of the victim that makes this impression on us? There are illnesses of all kinds which are connected with just as much suffering, *nevertheless* they do not call forth this impression. No, the deep and the sinister do not become apparent merely by our coming to know the history of the external action, rather it is *we* who ascribe them from an inner experience.

The fact that the lots are drawn by the use of a cake is particularly horrible (almost like betrayal with a kiss,) and that it strikes us this way is again of fundamental importance for the investigation of such practices.

When I see such a practice, or hear of it, it is like seeing a man speaking harshly to someone else over a trivial matter, and noticing from his tone of voice and facial expression that this man can on occasion be terrible. The impression that I receive here can be very deep and extraordinarily serious.

The *surroundings* of a way of acting.

In any case, a conviction serves as the basis for the assumptions about the origin of, for example, the Beltane Festival; namely, that such festivals are not made up by one person, so to speak, at random, but rather need an infinitely broader basis if they are to be preserved. If I wanted to make up a festival, it would die out very quickly or be modified in such a manner that it corresponds to a general inclination of the people.

But what prevents us from assuming that the Beltane Festival has always been celebrated in its present (or very recent) form? One would like to say: it's too foolish for it to have been invented in this form. Isn't that like my seeing a ruin and saying: that must have been a house at one time, for nobody would have put up such a heap of hewn and irregular stones? And if I were asked: How do you know that? I could only say: from my experience with people. Indeed, even in places where people actually build ruins, they take the form of collapsed houses.

One might also put it this way: Anyone who wanted to make an impression on us with the story of the Beltane Festival need not advance the hypothesis of its origin in any case, he need only lay before us the material (which leads to this hypothesis) and say nothing further. One might now perhaps like to say: "Of course, because the listener or reader will draw the conclusion himself!" But must he draw this conclusion explicitly? therefore, draw it at all? And what kind of conclusion is it? That this or that is *probable*?! And if he can draw the conclusion himself, how is the conclusion to make an impression on him? Whatever makes an impression on him must surely be something that *he* has not made. Is he impressed for the first time by hearing the hypothesis expressed (whether by himself or someone else), or already by the material that leads to it? But couldn't I just as well ask: If I see someone being killed,--is what makes an impression on my simply what I see, or it it only the hypothesis that here a man is being killed?

But it is not simply the thought of the possible origin of the Beltane Festival that carries with it the impression, but rather what is called the enormous *probability* of this thought. As that which is derived from the material.

As it has come down to us, the Beltane Festival is indeed a play, and is similar to children playing robbers. But surely not. For although it has been prearranged that the party who rescues the victim wins, nevertheless what takes place still has an addition of temperament which the mere dramatic presentation does not have.--But even if it were merely a question of a wholly cool performance, we would still uneasily ask ourselves: What about this presentation, what is its *meaning*?! And it could then make us uneasy owing to its peculiar meaninglessness, irrespective of any interpretation. (Which shows the kind of basis such uneasiness can have.) Suppose now, for example, that a harmless interpretation were given: They simply cast lots so that they would have the pleasure of threatening someone with being thrown into the fire, which is not pleasant; in this way the Beltane Festival becomes much more like one of those amusements where one of the company has to endure certain forms of cruelty which, such as they are, satisfy a need. By means of such an explanation, the Beltane Festival would indeed lose all of its mysterious character if it did not itself deviate from such ordinary games of robbers, etc. in its action and mood.

Just as the fact that on certain days children burn a straw-man could make us uneasy, even if no explanation for it were given. Strange that they should burn *a man* as part of the festivities! I want to say: the solution is no more disturbing than the riddle.

But why shouldn't it really be only (or certainly in part) the *thought* which gives me the impression? For aren't ideas terrible? Can't I be horrified by the thought that the cake with the knobs has at one time served to select by lot the sacrificial victim? Doesn't the *thought* have something terrible about it?--Yes, but what I see in those stories is nevertheless acquired through the evidence, including such evidence as does not appear to be directly connected with them,--through the thoughts of man and his part, through all the strange things I see, and have seen and heard about, in myself and others.

[p. 640 (*"Various rules were also laid down as to the kind of person who might or should make the need-fire. Sometimes it was said that the two persons who pulled the rope which twirled the roller should always be brothers or at least bear the same baptismal name…"*) One can very well imagine that--and perhaps the reason given might have been that the patron saints would otherwise pull against one another, and that only one could direct the matter. But this too would only be a later extension of instinct.

All these *different* practices show that it is not a question of the derivation of one from the other, but of a common spirit. And one could invent (devise) all these ceremonies oneself. And precisely that spirit from which one invented them would be their common spirit.

p. 641 (*…as soon as the fire on the domestic hearth had been rekindled from the need-fire, a pot full of water was set on it, and the water thus heated was afterwards sprinkled upon the people infected with the plague or upon the cattle that were tainted by the murrain."*) The connection between illness and dirt. "To cleanse of an illness."

It affords a simple, childlike theory of illness, that it is dirt which can be washed off.

Just as there are 'infantile theories of sex', so there are infantile theories in general. But that doesn't mean that everything a child does has arisen *out of* an infantile theory as its basis.

The correct and interesting thing to say is not: this has arisen from that, but: it could have arisen this way.

p. 643 (*"…Dr. Westermarck has argued powerfully in favour of the purificatory theory alone… However, the case is not so clear as to justify us in dismissing the solar theory without discussion…"*) That fire was used for purification is clear. But nothing can be more probable than the fact that later on thinking people brought purification ceremonies into connection with the sun, even where the ceremonies had originally been thought of only as purificatory. When one thought forces itself upon one person (fire-purification) and a different thought upon another (fire-sun), what can be more probable than the fact that both thoughts will force themselves upon a single person. The learned who would always like to have a theory!!

That fire destroys things *completely*, unlike battering, tearing them to pieces, etc., must have attracted the attention of people.

Even if one didn't know that the thoughts purification and sun had been connected, one could assume this to have arisen somewhere.

p. 680 (*"…in New Britain there is a secret society… On his entrance into it every man receives a stone in the shape either of a human being or of an animal, and henceforth his soul is believed to be knit up in a manner with the stone."*) 'Soul-stone.' Here one see how such an

hypothesis works.

p. 681 (*"...it used to be thought that the maleficent powers of witches and wizards resided in their hair, and that nothing could make any impression on the miscreants so long as they kept their hair on. Hence in France it was customary to shave the whole bodies of persons charged with sorcery before handing them over to the torturer."*) That would point to the fact that here truth rather than superstition lies at the basis. (Of course, it is easy to fall into the spirit of contradiction when face to face with the stupid scientist.) But it may very well be the case that the completely shaved body induces us in some sense to lose our self-respect. (Brothers Karamazov.) There is no doubt whatever that a mutilation which makes us appear unworthy or ridiculous in our own eyes can completely deprive us of the will to defend ourselves. How embarrassed we sometimes become--or at least many people (I)--by our physical or aesthetic inferiority.]