

An Introduction to the Special Issue on the Nature and Evolution of Totemism, Shamanism, Religions, and Spirituality

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Several years ago, one of us (Lee) read about American-Indian totems and their beliefs and has since been fascinated by the American-Indian spirituality. The secret of the totem and totemism has mysteriously remained very interesting and important for over 100 years (e.g., Jones, 2005; Lang, 1905). Totemism and Shamanism were found to be psychologically and spiritually related (e.g., Wundt, 1916). Simply put, totemism is a spiritual or psychological connection of human beings with the natural world, such as animals, plants, or any other objects around human beings. Shamanism is a spiritual belief and a practice of psychological consciousness (see Lee, Beddow, Chan, & Xu, 2015; Winkelman, 2015). As part of spirituality and religions, totemism and Shamanism were seen as important areas by social scientists such as Wundt (1916) and Durkheim (1915/2008). This led us to our interest in the evolution and nature of totemism, Shamanism, religion, and spirituality.

It seems to us that one of the connections between religions and evolution is perhaps totemism. Almost 70 years before Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859/1993), John Long reported that Ojibwa Indians worshipped animals as their ancestors (Long, 1791/1922). Implicitly and evolutionarily, humans and animals are closely related to each other. In the late 19th and early 20th century, after Darwin's landmark book appeared, numerous scientists devoted much time and effort to studying the evolution of totemism and religions (e.g., Freud, 1913/1950; McLennan 1869, 1870). However, little research has been devoted to a systematic investigation on the evolution of human totemism and religions in the past 50 years (see Levi-Strauss, 1962). Evolutionary scientists today tend to focus on modern Western religions with little attention being paid to research on the connection between modern Western religions and totemism as a human universal origin (see Boyer, 2001). Thus, several key issues are of current interest to lay people, psychologists, and other scientists, such as the following questions: How is human ritual practice related to and/or different from chimpanzees and other animals? How are totemism and Shamanism related to Eastern beliefs (e.g., Daoism) and American-Indian spirituality? How do people see their kinship boundary? Where do gods come from? How is religiosity related to mating strategies?

This special issue conceptually and empirically focuses on the psychological evolution and the universality of religion, totemic and shamanic beliefs, and nature. To address those key issues above, we organized these articles on the basis of two primary themes. The first theme addressed evolution and the cultural nature of totemism, Shamanism, and other human spiritual beliefs. The second theme pertained to evolutionary kinship and sociocultural and cognitive investigation of religions and spirituality.

Three articles are organized to address the first theme. Winkelman (2015) reviewed similarities of shamanic ritual with chimpanzee displays involving ritualized bipedal charges, communal vocalizations and drumming, and points to the hominid ritual foundations and community dynamics from which shamanism emerged. Focusing on a cross-cultural study of totemism and Daoism, Lee and colleagues (2015) found that worshipping animals, plants, and other natural phenomena (i.e., totemism) is highly related to Daoism. This has also varied between American and Chinese participants. Evolutionarily, Daoism developed from Shamanism and totemism. Palmer, Begley, and Coe (2015) argued that totemism, as a communication, involves a long-term evolutionary process. That is, clan totemism is distinguished by talk, not belief; totemism is a symbol for a category of codescendants, not a group; traditions can lead to large clans; and totemic clan names identify nonclan members as kin.

There are four articles that address the second theme. First, in three studies, Johnson, Cohen, Neel, Berlin, and Homa (2015) reported on "fuzzy people" and the importance of perceived kinship bonds and essentialist beliefs in the personification of fetuses, the dead, animals, and objects over and above the attribution of mental attributes—a new focus for understanding religious cognition. Second, from a perspective of biological anthropology, Kanazawa (2015) proposed a new concept of *higher-order adaptation* and suggested that religiosity might have evolved as a *tertiary adaptation*, which facilitated the operation of *secondary adaptations* of subjective well-being and meaning in life. In turn, this promoted the execution of numerous *primary adaptations* that were evolutionarily designed to increase the chances of survival and reproductive success. Third, Schmitt and Fuller (2015) studied cross-cultural associations between religiosity and mating strategies by examining empirical links between personal religiosity and permissive sexuality across 10 major regions of the world, and they found that higher personal religiosity was cross-culturally associated with lower sexual permissiveness. These associations were typically stronger among women than men and associated with higher levels of Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. Finally, Gervais and Najle (2015) focused on the cultural, cognitive, and evolutionary origins of religious belief and disbelief. By using

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a sample from the World Values Survey, they found that kin-biased transmission, conformist transmission, and credibility-enhancing displays play a very important role in individuals' beliefs in gods in 53 countries or regions worldwide.

In conclusion, this special issue provides three important perspectives to the scientific study of religion and spirituality. First, it presents an evolutionary and cognitive approach to examining human universal origins of beliefs (e.g., totemism, and kinship boundary) in an interdisciplinary manner. Second, the presented papers argue that totemism and Shamanism, which still widely exist around the world today, can perhaps serve as a bridge between evolutionary science and Western religions. Finally, we conclude that the essential natures of human spirituality and religions are so broad, diverse, and dynamic that human beings cannot function or survive without spirituality or religion.

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