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[note 2] Here was magic; here was the supernatural ... persons who are certain that they have adopted a thoroughgoing

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materialistic naturalism. Sometimes ancient mythology is not vanquished: it merely ...

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VEDIC MYTHOLOGY presents the earliest stage in the evolution of beliefs which constitute the source of religious concepts of the majority of Indian people. Documented with Sanskrit and General Index, this work constitutes a valuable contribution in the field of Vedic Mythology.

The Hindu Samskaras give expression to

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aspirations and ideals of the Hindus. They aim at securing the welfare of the performer and developing his personality. They go back to a hoary antiquity. The Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Grhyasutras, the Dharmasutras, the Smrtis and other treatises describe the rites, ceremonies and customs here and there but they do not present them in their historical evolution. The present work is a systematic study of all the Samskaras enjoined to be performed at the various epochs in the life of an individual from conception to crematorium. The author has cited parallels in other religions to show

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that they are universal and have a recognised place in ancient cultures and are still represented within the limits of modern religion. He has also shown that the sacramental beliefs and practices, far from being an irrational priestcraft, are consistent and logical and have practical utility and intention. This work discusses the source, meaning, number, purpose and the constituents of Samskaras grouped under five heads: prenatal, natal, educational, nuptial and funeral. Besides being a landmark in Hindu culture, it presents patterns of life based on high ethical, spiritual and

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humanistic values.

For countless generations families have lived in isolated communities in the Godavari Delta of coastal Andhra Pradesh, learning and reciting their legacy of Vedas, performing daily offerings and occasional sacrifices. They are the virtually unrecognized survivors of a 3,700-year-old heritage, the last in India who perform the ancient animal and soma sacrifices according to Vedic tradition. In *Vedic Voices*, David M. Knipe offers for the first time, an opportunity for them to speak about their lives, ancestral lineages,

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personal choices as pandits, wives, children, and ways of coping with an avalanche of changes in modern India. He presents a study of four generations of ten families, from those born at the outset of the twentieth century down to their great-grandsons who are just beginning, at the age of seven, the task of memorizing their Veda, the Taittiriya Samhita, a feat that will require eight to twelve years of daily recitations. After successful examinations these young men will reside with the Veda family girls they married as children years before, take their places in the oral transmission of a three-



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thousand-year Vedic heritage, teach the Taittiriya collection of texts to their own sons, and undertake with their wives the major and minor sacrifices performed by their ancestors for some three millennia. Coastal Andhra, famed for bountiful rice and coconut plantations, has received scant attention from historians of religion and anthropologists despite a wealth of cultural traditions. Vedic Voices describes in captivating prose the geography, cultural history, pilgrimage traditions, and celebrated persons of the region. Here unfolds a remarkable story of Vedic pandits

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and their wives, one scarcely known in India and not at all to the outside world.

The authors of the Devi-Bhagavata Puranendeavored to demonstrate the superiority of the Devi over competing masculine deities, and to articulate in new ways the manifold nature of the Goddess. Brown's book sets out to examine how the Puranpursues these ends. The Devi-Bhagavata employs many ancient myths and motifs from older masculine theologies, incorporating them into a thoroughly "feminized" theological framework. The text also seeks to

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supplant older "masculine" canonical authorities. Part I of Brown's study explores these strategies by focusing on the Puran's self-conscious endeavor to supersede the famous VaisBhagavata Puran. The Devi-Bhagavata also re-envisions older mythological traditions about the Goddess, especially those in the first great Sanskritic glorification of the Goddess, the Devi-Mahatmya. Brown shows in Part II how this re-envisioning process transforms the Devi from a primarily martial and erotic goddess into the World-Mother of infinite compassion. Part III examines the Devi Gita,

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the philosophical climax of the Puran modeled upon the Bhagavad Gita. The Devi Gita, while affirming that ultimate reality is the divine Mother, avows that her highest form as consciousness encompasses all gender, thereby suggesting the final triumph of the Goddess. It is not simply that She is superior to the male gods, but rather that She transcends Her own sexuality without denying it.

"Encyclopedia of World Religions" explores the major religions of the world, emphasizing the living faiths and their background. Each illustrated volume provides access to the

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theological concepts, personalities, historical events, institutions, and movements that helped shape the history of each religion and the way it is practiced.

The question of the original home of the Aryans and their migrations to India is only part of the problem of their “elusiveness.” Their subsequent assimilation and nativization in India also contributed to this elusive quality. This socio-cultural process can be traced through a study of their gods, rituals, and philosophy. Thus changes in the nature and function of R̥gvedic

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gods; the appearance of upstart gods in the late Ṛgvedic period; the elaboration of the soma ritual with elaborate supplementary rituals; the introduction of the new ritual of Agnicayana; the rise of the eschatology of “punarjanma” (rebirth) and “saṁsāra” (eternal return) based on “karma”; and the ideal of “mukti”, or liberation from life, in place of the former ideal of a life of “śaradaḥ śatam” (a hundred autumns) are symptoms of, as well as a witness to, the transformation of the original identity of the Aryans as revealed in the Family Books of the Ṛgveda. This cultural transformation is no less

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significant than the “Yakṣa praṣṇa” (knotty question) of their original home and their “indubitable” archaeological traces. The book addresses itself to both these questions, and, for that purpose, takes another look at some of the archaeological material and Aryan life and thought as reflected in Vedic literature.

Presents the Hindu religious tradition's major events, individuals, texts, sects, and concepts in the context of its historical development through various periods.

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At the hand of the hero Karna this book offers a model for 'heroic religion', having to a large extent shaped not only the Indic epics, but also cognate Indo-European epics, such as Homer's Iliad.

This is the first work to trace the origins of religion to the "Agricultural Revolution." It does so by identifying the enigmatic psychoactive drugs employed by the Indo-European religion. Through the ancient Vedic literature, the archaeological record, and



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through chemistry, this work identifies the ingredients and the method of preparation employed to produce the Soma of the Rig-Veda, Haoma, and the Kykeon. A contribution to both the history of science and the history of religion, Soma shows that the dawn of civilization was the product of the cultivation of cereals which enabled early man to exchange a nomadic life of hunting and gathering for a sedentary one, giving rise to settlements that would eventually become city-states and nations. The work reveals that this civilizing revolution was not only the origins of science, but also the origins of

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religion. The author presents literary evidence from the Vedas, Brahmanas, and Vedic ritual texts to identify the source of the ritual sacrament called Soma (or Madhu, "Mead"), and he describes the chemical processes that rendered it non-toxic. In addition, he shows that the ancient literature of the Greeks and the chemistry indicate a similar method was employed to produce the hallucinogenic kykeon of the Greek Eleusinian Mysteries, the center of Greek civilization. The work also explores the ethnographic relationship between the Indo-European priesthood (that included the

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priests of ancient Greece) and the Indo-Aryan priesthood, a branch of the Indo-Europeans that included the Soma-drinking Vedic priests of India. The identification of Soma is a solution to one of the greatest mysteries in the history of religion. The chemistry is consistent with the chemistry of the Greek kykeon, another important and unsolved question in the history of religion, which like Soma, has appeared to many as unsolvable. Finally, through the Greek and Roman classics the work demonstrates the relationship between the Indo-Aryans and Indo-Europeans as well as the similarities of

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traditions among the priesthoods extending throughout the great civilizations of the ancient world. The book also contains scientific evidence for the production of the 'Philosopher's Stone' briefly addressed in Shelley's earlier book, Science, Alchemy and the Great Plague of London.

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