



This is a graded discussion: 100 points possible

due Apr 19



## Week 5 Discussion: Magic and Divination

105 105

[Arion Melidonis](#)

Select a specific example of magic or divination. You may select an example from your own culture or any other culture (feel free to select a superstition that you practice if you don't mind talking about it). What makes this practice magical or divine and how does it function within the cultural group? What type of magic or divination best describes this practice? Does the magic or divination work and in what ways? What is the relationship of this practice to the wider religious or scientific beliefs in the culture?

Complete your initial post by Wednesday at 11:59 pm. Respond to at least two other posts by Sunday at 11:59 pm. When completing this assignment be sure to apply the course theories and perspectives. When you respond to another student, don't just tell us that you like their post or not, utilize the course theories to analyze their posts.

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[Emelyn Ortiz](#)

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/10507>

Wednesday

The topic I will be talking about in regards to this discussion is on a Medium which is identified to be part of the divination. I recently lost an uncle to stomach cancer and I found it so curious and interesting on how mediums tend to connect with the afterworld specifically with a person they're getting a strong connection with. John Edwards and Long Island Medium both connected with someone from the afterworld and it's interesting how they can manage to get information from the family's background. For example, John Edwards got a picture of the American flag due to the woman's brother passing away in the occurrence of 9/11. For Long Island Medium, she stated if the family kept some sunglasses the husband/father would wear and by the look in their faces they were shocked. I personally would like to come across a medium to see if it's believable and just to see it with my own eyes. The divines of medium function with the cultural group from their knowledge to simply get information from their patients to give them the best course of action to the individual (like telling them what they are sensing). The divination definitely works for succeeding in being highly accurate although a medium might spit out words and be wrong their matches are intended to always be right. A medium's job isn't to connect with the dead but to simply give a good meaning to their patients. This practice is tended to be a supernatural to me due to how it connects with spirits.

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[Adriana Gil](#)

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/4063>

Yesterday

Hello Emelyn,

First of all, sorry for your loss. Not something easy to deal with. Just like you I chose to speak of divination. I also lost a family member 6 years ago. But I had some one tell me once what my brother apparently was saying at that time and I was happy to hear that but it also was freaky because I never told this person I was feeling guilty of his death. I do't know how to take this information, wether is my mind playing games on me, or simply heard want I need or desired just like Emily Durkheim thought.

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Wednesday

I am going to do my discussion post on triskaidekaphobia, or otherwise known as the fear of the number thirteen. This is a superstition I have heard of all my life, and is not something that I technically practice, but when it is Friday the 13th and I am having an unusually bad day, it seems that blaming it on the superstition makes it somewhat justifiable. What makes this superstition magical is that if someone is having a particularly bad day on the 13th, or if something bad were to happen on a 13th floor of a building, it would be blamed on the belief that bad luck is associated with the number. Because of this, within our society or culture, some people do not do or lose business on the 13th, and in almost all buildings there is not a 13th floor. Durkheim says that magic is driven by individual desires, which means if someone wanted to avoid the 13th, they might practice in rituals such as praying before leaving the house, or avoiding other superstitious unlucky things like ladders or black cats.

While many of us think the number thirteen is a silly superstition, many people, take it very seriously. Drawing back to the Last Supper, as there were thirteen people at the table with Jesus, and the 13th person, Judas, betrayed him. Another example of this superstition relating to other beliefs in our culture and society is Apollo 13. It was launched on the 11th of April, and then suffered an oxygen tank explosion on the 13th. There are also other mythological stories involved with the number, as well as social media pushing the idea of bad luck relating to it, such as the movie Friday the 13th.

In another way that the fear in the number can be magical is that if one truly believes that the day or just the number in general will bring them bad luck, it can lead to bad things happening to them. Just as the man who died three days after the death bone was pointed at him, a person who believes in the unlucky number thirteen, can bring bad things upon themselves, believing it's the superstition, leading to other issues in the person's life.

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[Sven Young](#)



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Wednesday

I did not necessarily think of my pre at bat ritual as magic. I just knew that it was something I needed for myself to be comfortable in the box. My dad played ball for a while and said that it was a major key to hitting. It was a series of moves that'll lock you in and get everything into position. What makes the ritual magic is the fact that it changes who you are. Before the ritual you're a person and after you feel like an animal. It changes your mindset and brings you to a place that you need to be. I believe that the pre at bat rituals do help because I once tried to hit without doing it and I felt completely out of wack. I felt like everything was going 1000 mph and I couldn't slow anything down. After doing my ritual mid at bat, I finally felt fine again. It's not just hitters that have these rituals, it's every athlete before they perform. Some are even entertaining.

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[Julian Gonzalez](#)



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Wednesday

Mediums and psychics are good examples of divination in which people could see into the future or past. The act of divination is stereotyped to be practiced by Romanian Gypsies or anyone who identifies as a Gypsy. Some religions believe that having the ability to see the past or future is the work of the Devil and is considered blasphemy against God and his will. One of the first people I have heard of being psychic was Sylvia Browne who would

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 [Danbne Daniel](https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/5996)



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Yesterday

Hi Julian,

I believe in psychics too. I've never heard of Sylvia Browne before I really enjoyed the insight of her video. I definitely think it gives us faith and good purpose too.

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 [Nicholas Medina](https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/13251)



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Wednesday

As a Roman Catholic, I grew up with a strong spiritual presence in my parish. Some called it active spiritual warfare. I've witnessed exorcisms from time to time and therefore it is the exorcism that i would like to reference as my act of magic or divination. The exorcisms that I witnessed happened typically during spiritual retreats and during high concentrations of prayer and worship. During these times, the presence of the holy spirit is at its peak and it is at these times that it is said that demons act out in defiance and mockery of the presence of the holy spirit. Spiritual ministers who are leading prayer and worship then come together and surround the particular individual showing signs of possession. The individual is typically taken to another room and prayed upon. The exorcism then begins and depending on the severity of the presence of the demon, this can last minutes to hours. If personally have caught glimpses of the experience but I will never forget the sounds I heard fro. Those prayed upon. They were monstrous. I consider these events to be divination because they only occurred under the presence of this ministers most blessed and anointed to perform such level of prayer.

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Wednesday

I would have to say I practice magic on a daily basis. In order for me to want to start a good day, I start my day with the sign of cross, or just like the instructor guidance mentioned, before getting on the highway. It's my way of feeling safe, or, simply just start off my day the way it should, so I can prevent anything bad from happening.

I would say this practice does work for me, but then again it could be the faith and how we go about our day that helps make a difference. The relationship of this practice help me be closer to my culture and helps me maintain the relationship with my culture.

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Andres Medrano



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Wednesday

I would like to talk about the Ouija board as an example of divination. Personally, I have never practiced nor am I considering in participating in this form of divination. Heck, I did not even bother watching the movie "Ouija" that came out recently. As a Catholic and believer of the spirit world, it is not the best idea for me to go out and get involved in this. The Ouija board is divine because it is used in order to contact spirits in the supernatural world. The board itself is set up so that it displays letters A-Z, numbers 0-9, and the phrases "yes", "no" and "good bye". The way it works is that the users of the board call out to the spirits, asking whichever question they would like to be answered. As stated best in the online article "How Safe is a Ouija Board?", "In order to get the spirit to contact you through the planchette (heart-shaped wooden piece with little wheels), you basically have to give up your will, and work as a medium -- it's the only way for them to work through you." (1) Therefore, theoretically speaking, the spirit is causing you to move the planchette by way of possession. People use Ouija boards simply because they want to communicate with the spiritual world. It could be that they want to speak with a passed loved one or just get answers about their future. This practice would best be described as a deliberate inspirational form of divination through the use of a medium. The practice involves having direct contact with a supernatural being by freeing one's mind (altered state of consciousness) in order to be possessed and used as a medium. Although there has been reports of really strange and creepy experiences for some, there has also been experiences in which nothing happens. I would say that there is no solid evidence to say that this practice works. However, I would not mess with it and would advise you not to do so either, at least if you are not familiar with the process. The practice of the Ouija board is criticized by Christianity to be the act of the devil and warns others not to engage in the act. In the scientific community, through research and experiments, scientists have found an explanation for the movement of the planchette. They found that the movement is driven by the "ideomotor phenomenon" which states that a subject makes motions unconsciously. When a user of the board was blindfolded, he/she did not spell coherent messages. (2) Despite this finding, the Ouija board continues to be considered as a dangerous form of divination and is warned upon. If you have had an experience with the Ouija board or know someone that has, feel free to share.

Sources:

1) Wigington, Patti. "How Safe Is a Ouija Board?" *ThoughtCo*. About, Inc, 18 Sept. 2016. Web. 20 Apr. 2017.

2) Romano, Aja. "How Ouija Boards Work. (Hint: It's Not Ghosts.)" *Vox*. Vox, 29 Oct. 2016. Web. 20 Apr. 2017.

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Andres Medrano



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Wednesday

### Animism

About three years ago I did some ethnographic work for my cultural anthropology class offered by Melidonis. I wrote a paper about the practice of animism; as a result, animistic beliefs are familiar to me. The animism religion sees a spirit/spiritual force behind every event, it is also thought that objects of the physical world carry some spiritual significance. The animistic worldview contains both the observed or physical world and the unseen or spirit world. Animists take part in a breathing ritual which they call "Journey" where they spend their time trying to connect to "Spirit" (their God), ancestors, or family that has passed. People view themselves as constantly struggling against spirits, other humans, and supernatural forces. "Spirit" usually gives them visions and guidance on what to do during these circumstances. Here we see how divination is a fundamental practice of the animistic culture. They seek Spirit to obtain information about the unknown and future. The goal is to attain power to control the forces around them. Animism follows the first rule of magic in which all things are associated; furthermore, animistic beliefs show that all things are interconnected. Spirits can take the form of animals or plants. Shamans in a trance believe they can travel to distant places and bring harm to an enemy. They also believe they can travel to the spirit world, find information, or retrieve lost souls. Animism takes a holistic view of life. The obsession with invoking good luck and avoiding bad luck involves every aspect of life, from what they eat, to where they place furniture. By these examples we can observe from an anthropological perspective that animists also practice superstition. In a world full of spirits and spells, life is rarely secure. Many see the world as a hostile and dangerous place filled with spirits and forces. This way of thinking supports Durkheim's theory that people use magic and divination to alleviate moments of high anxiety and to find a meaning to the supernatural.

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As a Catholic, I was told not to believe in magic or divination, but be aware of its existence. But I choose to write about the video, "In 15 years this has never happen" about the Long Island Medium. I think it is an inspirational method and yes it does involve the state of consciousness of the person(s). I lost a family member almost 6 years ago and was emotionally wacked. It all started with a dream that until this point I do not know how to interpret or believe it was not just an illusion. But a couple a months ago, someone that I am not too close to, and didn't know what had happen to my brother said something to me that left me wondering. But one thing for sure is that maybe I am hearing what I want to hear. I feel somewhat guilty my brother is no longer with us here in this world. One day speaking to this person about my daughter and I said, "her attitude reminds me so much of my brother." Right away she said, "please don't freak on me, but he says to let it go is not your fault and he is watching over her." So, watching this video has moved every emotion inside of me and can relate to how this family was probably feeling at the time the Medium was speaking of everything she said, he said.

As we know that our state of consciousness can play trick on us, but how can these people know some personal or intimate situations of our lives. If we want to believe that this person is really hearing the spirit of our loved ones, then we believe every word they tell us. So, then Emile Durkheim is right when he said everything evolves around our necessities and desires. I know that my religion doesn't agree with this type of experiences one has occasionally and surely doesn't see nothing scientifically in them. Specially now days that many of us post in social media all our feelings or life stories. In my behalf, I do know that I have never posted anything about feeling so guilty that some can out of the blue just come and tell me what my brother wants me to do.

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Yesterday

Our book talks about inspirational divination as being a form in which an individual has direct contact with a supernatural being. An example I'd like to discuss is the divination given to Noah before the flood, that is describe in the Holy Bible.

"And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth."(Genesis 6:13)

God spoke unto Noah, warning him that a flood was to come through prophecy and divination. Noah received information of the future, through a spiritual experience with God. Our class book categorizes this as Prophecy which is deliberate and inspirational. The book also says that Prophecy is, "fortuitous in that the prophet receives information through a vision unexpectedly, without any necessary overt action on the part of the individual." Although Noah may have received the message unexpectedly, but he individual actions did have a part in God's selection. In Genesis 6:8, "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD." It was through God's grace that Noah was saved in the time of the flood, because he found grace in the eyes of God.

Now fortuitous is said to be something happening by chance rather than design. But the Bible says, "And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die."(Genesis 6:17) The Prophecy was not fortuitous, but a design from God.

God told Noah he was to 'destroy all flesh' because the earth was violent and God was to save the life of Noah. Hebrews 11:7 says "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

Noah had inspiration divination when he had a spiritual experience by having direct contact with the supernatural, that being the Almighty God. This story is just one of the many stories in the Bible gives us examples of divination, telling us what is going to happen in the future, and also telling his people how to prepare for the future. In Noah's case, divination worked because he was able to preserve his life. By knowing God's word, the Christian religion believes to have divination, knowing what is to come in the future.

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Yesterday

Hello Evelyn

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I have selected asking God

practice magical is the fact that you feel God will protect you and it functions within a culture as a blessing and being protected by God. I think magic best describes but in a form of faith under the religion and culture. I believe that it works but in a way where it makes the person feel protected. It gives someone a sense of security that nothing bad will happen. The relationship of this practice is linked to the Hispanic culture and the catholic religion. In this culture and religion you are brought up with this practice and it is also especially used by the elderly when they want to blessed heir children and grandchildren from anything bad. People even ask priest for their blessing so they can be protected.

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 [Catherine Suarez](https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/12721)

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Yesterday

Hi Evelyn, I do believe that the sign of the cross across our face is a superstition linked to religion. I always tell my kids to do the sign of the cross across their face every time we go on the freeway. They always ask me why and my answer is just what you said. Its a sign of protection. Its like the Trobriand Islanders who practice magic when open-sea fishing because open-sea fishing is dangerous.

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 [Darwin Perez](https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/4334)

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/4334>

Yesterday

Hey Everyone,

For my example of magic or divination I would like to talk about spiritual mediums and more specific spirit channeling. These individuals fall in the category of divination and by definition they are individuals who mediate communication between the dead and the living. The practice of mediumship is quiet popular among different cultures and it has been around for centuries.

The curiosity and anxiety of humans to understand death has created a big demand for answers to alleviate this anxiety and to give some sense to why the death of a beloved one has occurred. To supply this demand for answers mediumship was created and it has risen over the past years. It may not necessarily mean that these individuals actually communicate with spirits, maybe they do or maybe they dont but as Geertz theorize this believe of being able to communicate with the dead helps these individuals to alleviate their anxiety of understanding things out of their control. By getting a sense of at peace and a better understating of the why certain things happen, the people who believe will continue to go mediums to calm their anxiety.

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 [Catherine Suarez](https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/12721)

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Yesterday

An example of magic that I practice when I'm pregnant is that I wear a red bracelet. Some people say that it keeps the evil from you. I've heard many versions of what the red bracelet does for pregnant women. I honestly started wearing one because of a dream I had which an old man dressed in white with white long hair gave me a red bracelet and told me to put it on. I knew about the red bracelet before my dream but did not really believed in it. After my dream I bought one the next day and never took it off until I had my daughter. I think people use the red bracelet for pregnant woman because even though pregnancy is a beautiful thing, it is also dangerous. Your body goes through so many changes in order to create life. The red bracelet is a kind of magic to protect women. Like the Trobriand Islanders only used magic in open-sea fishing because open-sea fishing is dangerous and they used magic to assure safety and success. This works because like stated in the reading " the human mind frequently sees coincidence as evidence of causation." Maybe a

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[Darlene Daniel](https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/5996)

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Yesterday

Hi Catherine,

Wow, I love the red bracelet magic. I've heard of the red bracelet giving a person protection my mom always wears one for protection. It's interesting that it made it's way into your dreams giving you a sign.

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Yesterday

My example of divination in my culture is the tarot cards. This practices telling the future through tarot cards they are used to tell a person's future by laying out the cards and the other person chooses them to determine their future. I think it functions within a culture because a lot of people believe in it to be true and it gives them a sense of hope for their future. I would say this is contagious magic because it can be based off a premise of things that were once in contact to maintain a connection. How this would work is asking questions while doing the tarot cards to help predict the future. I believe it works I've had the tarot cards done many times and I was told things that happened to me and that were going to happen that worked out for me. The practice of the tarot card goes hand and hand with candles and spells to help make the future come true.

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[Samantha Orsco](https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/26798)

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Yesterday

I recently attended a lecture on aura readings, chakra alignment, and reiki healing; this was of course a very interesting and unique lecture. I think this practice is seen as divine because the healer is connected themselves to the divine through energy and they then transfer that energy to the patient. I do think that this practice is really useful and should be seen more as complementary medicine rather than alternative. Everything about reiki healing is very therapeutic and most often it just feels like the best nap ever. I do think Malinowski had a valid point when he said that magic and science should be used together.

Like I stated previously this is most likely able to be categorized as a unique form of divination. I think this magic works for me and many other people but not everyone. You have to be in mental state that is accepting. Energy healing definitely relates to many larger religious groups in our culture today. When an energy healer is working they are pulling energy down from the divine or god in order to heal or help their patients.

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[Janelle Vivero](https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/4618)

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Yesterday

A type of m  
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safer and more connected to God.



I also cross myself every morning when I wake up, at night when I go to bed, and if I have a nightmare or hear a scary noise outside, I also cross myself. Again, I feel safe when I do this. It helps me deal with anxiety and fear that I have when I am frightened. As far as crossing myself when I wake up and before falling asleep, I do it to thank the Lord for another day, and most of all, another grasp of breath. Not many get to wake up or make it through the day, so I feel very blessed that I am allowed to do so.

Lastly, one that has granted me so much and I am so blessed with. Right before job interviews, I get nervous and cross myself. I then let it all rest in Gods hands. I tell myself, if he feels like I deserve it, I will be granted. If not, there is no reason to worry, he has something better in store. To many it might just be luck, people skills, whatever you may call it. For me, it is my faith, my trust in the higher being. Maybe it just gives me confidence and I knock the interview out of the park? Who knows? What I can assure you tho is, that he has blessed me multiple times and I personally feel like crossing myself has helped me every single day of my life.

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Maham Shah

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/16367>

Yesterday

I want to talk about a superstition that many of us have which is Friday the 13th is an unlucky day. This superstition plays a big role in our lives. It functions in our life in a way where people stop functioning during the day and don't do their tasks for the day. People don't travel, go to work, or carry out other daily tasks. " In the U.S., an estimated 17 to 21 million people suffer from a fear of Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, according to a study by the North Carolina Stress Management Center and Phobia Institute." [1]. This superstition does exactly what it is carried out to do, it causes fears in peoples brains and their minds. People are consumed with fear on that day and stop their lives for the day. "There has also been a longstanding myth that if 13 people dine together, one will die within a year." [2]. This is a myth that we previously learned about but people take it very seriously. I know many people of various religions that follow this religion plenty of Christian, Atheist, and Muslims that follow this.

[2]. <http://www.ibtimes.com/friday-13th-history-origins-myths-superstitions-unlucky-day-395108>

[1]. <http://www.ibtimes.com/friday-13th-history-origins-myths-superstitions-unlucky-day-395108>

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Vanessa Williams

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Yesterday

Divination:

I want to talk discuss the YouTube video I watched regarding the Long Island Medium. I think what this woman was doing for this mother & daughter was divine. In this scenario this family needed closure. I feel when a lot of people end up passing and people don't have their closure, them speaking to a medium could provide them with the peace that they need. I'm a strong believer in everything happening for a reason, but sometimes we just need that last conversation or a little reminder of that person being okay, or them knowing the love was mutual. The baby girl in the video just melted my heart. She had very fond memories of her dad, and if I were her mom, I probably would seek a medium to come in and provide that peace for her. I do believe divination works.

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Yince Baines <https://veccd.instructure.com/about/25933>



1:49am

When I was a young boy, we spent our summers with Grandparents on their ranch, during the summer. My Grandfather kept a copy of the Old Farmer's Almanac at the kitchen table. He would refer to it daily. Nothing was done on the Ranch without consulting the Almanac.

When the time came to castrate pigs and steers, the Almanac was consulted. Grandpa explained that the astrological sign must be in the "feet". If that day's sign was in the head or heart the animal would die. When it came to planting, the Almanac was again consulted. The signs needed to indicate it was the proper day to plant, or the crops would wither or die.

I never knew of Grandpa using fertilizer, or spray chemicals to protect against insects, he lived by the Old Farmer's Almanac. It is hard for me to say he was just superstitious. He was uneducated yet the wisest man I have ever met. He attended no church, never seen in prayer, yet when it came to the Old Farmer's Almanac it dictated what task he performed that day, it worked for him.

Reply