

in kinetic sculpture and other forms of art that incorporated mechanized movement.

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(R.M.)

Animism

Animism is the belief in innumerable spiritual beings concerned with human affairs and capable of helping or harming men's interests. Animistic beliefs were first competently surveyed by Sir Edward Burnett Tylor in a work, *Primitive Culture* (1871), to which is owed the continued currency of the term. While none of the "great" religions of the world is animistic (though they may contain some animistic elements), most of the "little" religions, those of the tribal (or "primitive") peoples, are. For this reason an ethnographic understanding of animism, based on field studies of the tribal peoples, is no less important than a theoretical one, concerned with the nature or origin of religion.

IMPORTANCE IN THE STUDY OF MAN AND RELIGION

The term animism denotes not a single creed or doctrine but a view of the world consistent with a certain range of religious beliefs and practices, many of which may survive in more complex and hierarchical religions. Modern scholarship's concern with animism is coeval with the problem of rational or scientific understanding of religion itself. After the age of exploration, Europe's best information on the newly discovered peoples of the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Oceania often came from Christian missionaries. While generally unsympathetic to what was regarded as "primitive superstition," some missionaries in the 19th century developed a scholarly interest in beliefs that seemed to represent an early type of religious creed, inferior but ancestral to their own. It is this interest that was crystallized by Tylor in *Primitive Culture*, the greater part of which is given over to the description of exotic religious behaviour. To the intellectuals of that time, profoundly affected by Darwin's new biology, animism seemed a key to the primitive mind—man's intellect at the earliest knowable stage of cultural evolution. Present-day thinkers consider this view to be rooted in a profoundly mistaken premise. All contemporary cultures and religions are regarded as comparable in the sense of reflecting a fully evolved human intelligence capable of learning the arts of the most advanced society. The religious ideas of the "stone-age" hunters interviewed in this century have been far from simple.

Since the "great" religions of the world have all evolved in historic times, it may be assumed that animistic emphases dominated the globe in the prehistoric era. In societies lacking any doctrinal establishment, a closed system of beliefs was less likely to flourish than an open one. There is, however, no ground for supposing that polytheistic and monotheistic ideas were excluded. But what is plain today—that no historically given creed has an inevitable appeal to the educated mind—had scarcely gained a place in scholarly argument 100 years ago.

THEORETICAL ISSUES

Tylor's theory of animism. For Tylor the concept of animism was an answer to the question, "What is the

most rudimentary form of religion which may yet bear that name?" He had learned to doubt scattered reports of peoples "so low in culture as to have no religious conceptions whatever"—he thought religion was present in all cultures, properly observed, and might turn out to be present everywhere. Far from supposing religion of some kind to be a cornerstone of all culture, however, he entertained the idea of a pre-religious stage in the evolution of cultures and believed that a tribe in that stage might be found. To proceed in a systematic study of the problem, he required a "minimum definition of religion" and found it in "the Belief in Spiritual Beings." If it could be shown that no people was devoid of such minimal belief, then it would be known that all of mankind already had passed the threshold into "the religious state of culture."

But, if animism was ushered in as a "minimum definition," it became the springboard for a broad survey. Although anthropology in Tylor's day was mainly an "armchair" science, through wide and critical reading he had developed a good sense for what was credible in the ethnographic sources of his day. He assembled an array of cases and arranged them in series from what seemed to him the simplest or earliest to the most complex or recent. In this way he taught that religion had evolved from a "doctrine of souls" arising from spontaneous reflection upon death, dreams, and apparitions to a wider "doctrine of spirits," which eventually expanded to embrace powerful demons and gods. A fundamental premise was "that the idea of souls, demons, deities, and any other classes of spiritual beings, are conceptions of similar nature throughout, the conceptions of souls being the original ones of the series." Tylor asserted that men everywhere would be impressed by the vividness of dream images and would reason that dreams of dead kin or of distant friends were proof of the existence of souls. The simple belief in these spiritual beings independent of natural bodies would, he thought, expand to include more elaborate religious doctrines, accompanied by rites designed to influence powerful spirits and so control important natural events.

While Tylor offered no special theory for this expansion and so avoided most of the traps of early social evolutionism, he taught that cultures moved, though not along any single path, from simpler to more complex forms. The direction of movement was shown by the survival of animism in muted but recognizable forms (including most "superstitions" and many expressions such as "a spirit of disobedience" or common words like "genius") in the advanced civilization of his own day. This "development theory" he championed against the so-called degradation theory, which held that the religion of remote peoples could only have spread to them from centres of high culture, such as early Egypt, becoming "degraded" in the process of transfer. Tylor showed that animistic beliefs exhibit great variety and often are uniquely suited to the cultures and natural settings in which they are found.

In retrospect, Tylor seems more balanced in his judgments than later writers who constructed the problem of "minimal religion" in a narrower frame. Tylor's greatest limitation was self-imposed, since he narrowed his attention to what may be called the cognitive aspects of animism, leaving aside "the religion of vision and passion." Tylor took animism in its simplest manifestation to be a "crude childlike natural philosophy" that led men to a "doctrine of universal vitality" whereby "sun and stars, trees and rivers, winds and clouds, become personal animate creatures." But his cognitive emphasis led him to understate the urgent practicality of the believer's concern with the supernatural. Tylor's men are "armchair primitives" (the creatures of "armchair anthropologists"), not real men caught in the toils of discord, disease, and fear of perdition.

Counter theories: totemism and magic. Tylor thought the idea of the human soul must have been the elementary religious idea and the model for all other supernatural beings. Later scholars, responding to evidence of simpler beliefs that yet entailed a properly religious awe toward the sacred, began to debate the probability of a

Definition and limits of the term animism

The dominance of human supernatural spiritual powers

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"pre-animistic stage" of theological evolution. Corresponding to this turn in religious studies was a shift in anthropology toward a concern with "primitive thought" and, in particular, the explanation of religion as intellectual error. Émile Durkheim, a French sociologist, in his *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1915), held that religion originated in totemism, conceiving that identification with a totem animal could result from an irrational projection of men's expectations of security in the bosom of society. He thought such collective projections were more solidly based in the human condition than the "hallucinations" (dreams) that Tylor had supposed must lead to the ideas of soul and supernatural being. Durkheim has been criticized for not seeing totemism as only one animistic cult among many, with special implications as an organizational schema but not "elementary."

English and German theorists conceived the invention of religion in more pragmatic terms: attempting to extend his control of nature beyond the limits his crude science imposed, man had invented supernatural power—magic. The most prolific scholar of this persuasion was Sir James G. Frazer, who argued in his massive work *The Golden Bough* (1890–1915) that "the magic art" had arisen as a pseudo-science, probably had achieved universality before the emergence of religion, and was more firmly rooted than religion in men's beliefs. He thought intelligent men had become disillusioned with earthly magicians and had invented infallible ones—gods. Frazer's work ranged over classical mythology and savage custom without distinction. Finding parallel traditions everywhere, he compiled a massive testament to the psychic unity of mankind. The myriad structures of both magic and religion that he surveyed all could be reduced to transparent intellectual error. The apparent mystery of religion was virtually explained away, for, if magic had become man-centred religion and religion god-centred magic, there was little to choose between them.

Since Frazer accepted the common notion that the sign of religion is man's humility before the gods and held that magic put man in the ascendancy, it followed that wherever the supernatural beings could be tricked, bribed, or otherwise mastered the system of beliefs was magical. This obscured Tylor's clear "minimum definition of religion" and threw an odd light on what he had called "lower animism," the belief in spirits that men with ritual knowledge can master. Any self-confident ritual act—for example, the Eskimo hunter's ritual control of game spirits or the shaman's cure of a grave affliction—had become magical and so transparently egoistic. The result for an ensuing generation of anthropologists was loss of focus upon the religions encountered in the field. Tylor had found animistic beliefs generally devoid of ethical content even when centred in men's urgent needs. Frazer, interjecting the image of the primitive magician with illusions of unlimited power, made it difficult to grant animistic religion even Tylor's minimum of dignity.

Frazer had identified Melanesia as an area in which, by his terms, magic dominated over religion. An admirer, Bronisław Malinowski, was able to accomplish a thorough ethnographic study of the Trobriand Islanders in Melanesia during World War I, and it was Malinowski who dominated European ideas about the intimate life of "primitive man" in the following decades. Viewing his islanders within the frame of ideas Frazer had provided, Malinowski pictured them as secular in outlook. In numerous works on the Trobriand Islanders, published through the 1920s and 1930s, there was to be scarcely a mention of religion as such. The belief in spirits appeared only as mythical background to magical practices connected with gardening and seafaring and with a ceremonial cycle in which the competition for prestige was dominant. The effect was to reduce religion to its pragmatic and social aspects, thus de-emphasizing the very peculiarities of human belief and experience that first attracted men such as Tylor to the study of "primitives."

ANIMISTIC PHENOMENA IN THEIR SOCIAL CONTEXTS

While it is futile to seek cases of animism in "pure," "minimal," or "elementary" form, some social contexts

are undeniably simpler than others, and it may be tempting to suppose that the religions found in those contexts would follow suit. On that principle, however, nomads such as the Australian Aborigines might be supposed (as they were supposed by Durkheim) to enjoy an uncomplicated religious life, but this is emphatically not the case. What complicates Australian religions is an elaborate ceremonialism not usually found in nomadic societies. Ceremonialism generally can be treated as an emphasis in the area of expressive behaviour, usually consistent with the animistic world view and unlikely to displace it. While it is an emphasis most common among agriculturists, its presence among nomads is by no means confined to Australia. Though there is no reason to suppose that ceremony is of any more recent origin than any other way of expressing man's relation to the spirit world, animistic religions (religious systems in which animism plays an essential role) can be sorted into those with and those without a ceremonial emphasis, and, in this formal sense, the latter are the simpler. The salient characteristic of all animistic religions is their particularism, a quality opposite to the universalism of the "great religions," which conceive man as subject to global powers and personal destiny.

Particularism is evident in the number and variety of spirits recognized and in the peculiar scope attributed to each. The pre-Christian Lapps of Scandinavia have sometimes been called fetishists because they propitiated nature spirits as well as personally named gods and demons. The nature spirits were generally benevolent and always localized. They could be addressed in particular objects, such as stones or posts, which men would set up in likely places. The few personally venerated spirits (gods) were identified with thunder, sun, moon, hunting, childbirth, and the winds. Evil spirits might be incarnate in animal or monstrous forms and could cause disease or other misfortune. In Minnesota–Ontario the Ojibwa world was animated by a great number of eternal spirits (manitous), all of about equal rank, represented in trees, food plants, birds, animals, celestial bodies, winds, and wonders of every description. Besides these esteemed spirits were other categories, which were dreaded: ghosts, monsters, and the windigo (a crazed man-eating ogre), who brought madness (a cannibalistic psychosis). The list of creatures, places, attributes, and events that could be treated as totems in Australia would be quite similar. The Buryat of Lake Baikal in Siberia, living on the fringes of empire (Mongolian and Chinese), developed an elaborate social order and viewed the spirit world as the twin of their own, organized in the same way into noble, commoner, and slave ranks. At death a man passed over to the other world, assuming his proper rank and acquiring fresh power over men, which he might exercise well or ill in accordance with his character in life. Evil men, as it were, became devils and great men gods.

In particularistic religions there is a range of spirits, from sojourning ghosts and mortal witches to perennial beings, whose natures and dispositions to man are attributed by categories (e.g., mermaids and leprechauns are both usually pictured as irresponsible), but in action individual spirits are independent of one another. If some spirits may be called gods, they do not constitute a ruling pantheon, for men do not conceive that any supernaturals enjoy comprehensive control of events. In animism, spirits represent particularistic powers and must be handled accordingly. Typically, men's primary emphasis is on avoidance of trouble, and this is the meaning of the many taboos and propitiatory observances, of an almost mechanical nature, that abound in some societies. When trouble is at last encountered, the responsible witch, demon, or disgruntled spirit must be identified, and this is the task of the diviner. The cure may rely upon ritual cleansing, propitiation, or even the overpowering of the malevolent force through supernatural counteragency—the specialty of the shaman. Judging that an animal will not mind being killed if it is not offended ritually, Eskimos take various precautions before, during, and after the hunt. The rationale lies in the belief that animal spirits exist independent of bodies and are

Ceremonialism and particularism

The primary emphasis: avoidance of trouble

reborn: an offended animal will later lead his companions away so that the hunter may starve. If, in spite of their precautions, men are left without game, a shaman may be called to discover the transgression that has offended an animal spirit—or perhaps he may find that he must do battle with a malevolent being controlled by a rival shaman willing the community harm.

Ceremonialism, when its emphasis is upon feasting, exchange, and display, may be secular in its emphasis, as is the case in much of Melanesia and New Guinea; or if religious, it may be associated with totemic or ancestral cults, as in Australia or Africa, the expressive emphasis of which is on social ties rather than on the quality of relations between men and the supernaturals. Finally, ceremony may be used directly to dramatize the role of the spirits in men's lives, as it is by the Pueblo peoples of Arizona–New Mexico. At their height, the Pueblo ceremonial cycles were as rich as any in the world. Supernaturals were elaborately impersonated by the dancers, and the human condition was portrayed as one of dependency. But, for all this, particularism was not greatly compromised. The supernaturals were many and were represented in a realistic manner emphasizing their differences from ordinary men. The style was that of mummery and conjuring, consciously put on by grown-ups as a sort of morality play. There was no sense of incongruity in the fact that neighbouring pueblos cultivated other sets of spirits. In some pueblos, separate clan societies had complete charge of the ceremonial calendar and formally controlled communication with the supernatural, even to selecting the member who might be curer in case of an illness. But such a step toward ecclesiasticism in a very small community could not greatly affect its animistic premises, and witchcraft prevailed without the blessing of the ceremonial societies.

When the fullness and versatility of all these religions is considered, without any need to press them into simplified categories or evolutionary stages, it can be seen that openness, not narrowness, of doctrine is a general feature of animism. Wherever it is found, it is a grass-roots religion, not a doctrinaire one imposed from above. Ecclesiasticism may coexist with animism, as in China or Burma, where there are no pre-eminent gods whose universal claims presuppose mastery of the whole supernatural world. But the most likely context of animism is an uncentralized social order in which secular power is not developed and each local settlement is at the focus of its own world.

THE ANIMISTIC WORLD VIEW

Part of the conceptual difficulty experienced both in anthropology and in the history of religions, when animism is to be placed among other systems of belief, springs not from the early association of animism with a speculative theory of religious evolution but directly from the huge variety of animistic cults. As a category, Tylor's concept is more general than either polytheism or monotheism, and its meaning is harder to delimit—the word applies broadly to most of the "little religions" but suggests nothing of their varieties. For this reason, much use is made of subordinate labels, such as shamanism, totemism, or ancestor propitiation. These cults do not, in any case, constitute the whole religion of a people. They are, however, institutions that are not bound to one culture area—an Australian totemic cult does bear a "family resemblance" to an African one, though their differences also are many. Shamanism, with its reliance on ecstasy, is found from Greenland to Mysore, and the propitiation of ancestors is not restricted to Africa and the Far East. It has long been recognized that the frequent recurrence of institutions fitting a certain pattern implies that there is a radically limited number of possible patterns, and, in this case, the premises of animism evidently have imposed the limitation. Animism attributes importance to categories of supernatural being whose individual members are attached to particular places and persons or resident in particular creatures and are autonomous in their dealings. In such a system, each human encounter with the supernatural must work itself out as a distinct epi-

ode. Even where ceremonialism emphasizes an enduring formal relationship to certain supernaturals, men are likely to conceive of alternative powers to which they might seek at need. In a crisis, loyalties may shift: in West Africa, gods have been sold to neighbouring villages, and, in Melanesia, a vision of European trade goods has inspired a series of new millenarian cults. The quality of openness lends itself to change and eclecticism, hardly ever to religious chauvinism.

Animistic creeds have in common an undertaking on the part of men to communicate with supernatural beings, not about metaphysics or the dilemmas of the moral life but about urgent practicalities: about securing food, curing illness, and averting danger. It is characteristic that genuine worship of a supernatural hardly is found. Creator gods often appear in myth but not in cult. In ancestor cults the most recently dead are the most vividly conceived—the original clan ancestor, for all his symbolic importance, is remote both from men and from god-head. If animistic spirits anywhere exercise authority, they do so in a particularistic, even egoistic fashion, sanctioning men for ritual neglect or breaking taboos, not for acts of moral neglect or secular offense. Animistic religions do not readily coalesce with systems of political authority and probably do not favour their development. When it is asked whether the association of animism with smaller and simpler societies proves it the natural (original) religion, the answer can only be that it is not known (and perhaps not knowable) what a prehuman or panhuman religion would be like. The problem is as difficult as reconstructing protohuman speech. If religion is taken as a pattern of serious relations between men and supernaturals, then societies devoid of religion have not been found, and it may perhaps be concluded that religion is usually close to the vital centre of a culture, where the credibility of institutions is determined. The view of all nature as animated by invisible spirits—be it shades, demons, fairies, or fates—with which men could cope in meaningful ways may belong to the past, but philosophies that attribute powers of initiative and responsiveness to nature have not gone out of currency. The lesson of the study of animism is perhaps that religion did not arise, as some of Tylor's successors believed, out of *Urduhmheit* ("primal ignorance") or delusions of magical power but out of men's ironic awareness of a good life that they are unable, by earthly means, to grasp and hold. Animistic beliefs have everywhere engaged men's susceptibility to private vision and enabled them to cope with it at the level of accepted meaning.

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(G.K.P.)

Ankara

Ankara is the capital of the Republic of Turkey and the administrative centre of Ankara *il* (province). The city, at the northern edge of the central Anatolian Plain and about 125 miles (200 kilometres) south of the Black Sea coast, lies close to the confluence of the Hatip, Ince Su, and Çubuk streams. A railroad leads to Istanbul 360

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