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The Hume/Tylor Genealogy and Andrew Lang

Of Miracles and Marvels, Animism, and Materialism

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Abstract. – This article focuses on the influence of David Hume's writings and particular the Natural History of Religion on Edward B. Tylor's "Primitive Culture" highlighting the Hume/Tylor genealogy in the foundation of the discipline. It further argues that Tylor developed his argument through three interrelated meanings of the word animism (primitive animism, animism as religion, and animism as ontology/philosophy). Andrew Lang launched his critique against Tylor's first and third meanings of the term "animism" and in the process revealed the influence of David Hume on Tylor. Lang also raised certain phenomenological issues that are relevant today for the problem of religious experience in the field. *[religion, theism, polytheism, animism, spiritual dualism]*

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At the end of the 19th century, Andrew Lang launched a critique of the new discipline of anthropology by mainly attacking some of Edward Burnett Tylor's suppositions. As part of this critique Lang also launched an attack on David Hume's famous essay "Of Miracles" (1748)[1] as well as on his main claim in the "Natural History of Religion" (1995 [1757] – NHR) that theism emerged out of polytheism. Lang's critique shows us the importance of Hume's work on Tylor and the early development of anthropology. In this article I will explore the Hume/Tylor genealogy in relation to Lang's critique by first providing an exposition of Hume's "Natural History of Religion" (1995) followed by his argument in "Of Miracles" (1748). Then I will discuss what I see as Tylor's three interrelated meanings of the word animism, and particularly the last through which he forged the materialist meta-frame of the discipline. Finally, I will explore Lang's critique of the Hume/Tylor genealogy as well as raise some ethical concerns over the rational-materialist approach in anthropology to numinous experiences in the research field.

David Hume's Understanding of Early Polytheism or What Tylor Would Later Call "Animism"

David Hume's "Natural History of Religion" which was first published in 1757 opens with his characteristic "two-pronged fork." He states that with regards to religion "there are two questions in particular which challenge our attention, to wit, that concerning its foundation in reason, and that concerning its origin in human nature" (1995: 1). The first and more important question provides an an-

1 The essay appeared originally 1748 in his work "Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding. An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding." New Edition 1777: "Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects"; Section X.; 110–132. (Third edition revised and with notes by P. H. Nidditch). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975. See Hume 1985.

swer that proves nature "bespeaks of an intelligent author" which after serious reflection cannot be doubted with regards to "the principles of genuine Theism and Religion" (1995: 1). The "Natural History of Religion" states its concern with the second of the questions (the second prong) which Hume says is more problematic and as we shall see can be read as reflecting a mitigated skeptical mirror on the first prong. The NHR does not present itself as providing a critique against the argument from design. This Hume carried out in the "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion" (2007a – DNR) which he started writing in 1750, before the "Natural History of Religion," but was published posthumously in 1779. However, some of the arguments in the DNR underlie the conjectural history of the NHR.[2]

In the NHR, Hume utilizes four terms, polytheism, idolatry, demonic theism, and theism. Polytheism for him combined both the belief in spirits or what Tylor would later call "animism," as well as the belief in multiple spiritual gods. He seems to use idolatry for belief and practices corresponding to the Judeo/Christian meaning of the term and for what Tylor would call "fetishism," the connection of a spiritual being with a physical object. Demonic theism is superstitious theism rooted in polytheism and unable to shake of its superstitious irrationalism. Hence and although both Judaism and Islam developed strict prohibitions against the making of images for this reason, these two great theistic religions (as well as Catholicism) were still steeped in superstitious practices and, therefore, examples of demonic theism. Hume's basic argument in the NHR is that theism emerged and developed out of polytheism which is "the primitive religion of unstructured mankind" (1995: 6) and that much of theism was still imbued with its superstition.

In the NHR Hume poses a rhetorical question: is it possible to conceive that humans entertained an idea of theism in earlier times and then fell into error (1995: 3)? To support his argument, Hume looks to contemporary indigenous peoples for evidence for earlier "barbarous" and "savage" periods of human society. He answers that contemporary "barbarous nations" and "savage tribes" are all "idolaters" and, therefore, it is plausible to assume that the origins of religion was rooted in similar beliefs. He even entertains the possibility that some peoples do not have religious beliefs at all (1995: 2). Hume was challenging a religious degenerationist view that argued that humans had an original belief in God, which degenerated into polytheism and idol worship (Bennett 1996: 22).

For Hume, theism does not spring from universal human instinct or "primary impressions of nature such as love, affection between the sexes, and love of progeny' (1995: 2). Instead the religious experience arose out of accidental secondary psychological principles, such as fear and hope, in a world where hunger can strike at any moment, crops can fail, and natural devastations, disease as well as war can extinguish life (1995: 7). The savage and barbarian were concerned with the workings of causes of natural events that effected their lives and livelihood, and their religious sentiment was directed at trying to get them through the seasons. This inherent psychology of the species gave humanity a distorted vision of cause and effect in nature. It imputed conscious forces to the causes behind seemingly anomalous events that disrupted the common natural process in the environment. Hume writes "while the passions are kept in perpetual alarm by the anxious expectations of the events, the imagination is equally employed in forming ideas of those powers, on which we have so entire dependence" (1995: 9). Every grove or field was thus assumed to be inhabited by a spirit or genius or imputed with invisible powers, which protected it. Every part of nature became anthropomorphically deified and these beings had to be placated. What Hume calls "prodigies" or anomalies of the common place were far more important than speculation about the origin of the universe and gradually people started to connect invisible powers with visible objects, and various allegories with the physical and the moral were developed in relation to these deities. This subsequently lead to the creation of gods that reflected social institutions such as the cruel god of war, the elegant god of poetry, and so on (1995: 18). The early deities were not conceived of as being vastly superior beings to humans but intelligent voluntary agents only superior in power and wisdom and any hero or benefactor could have been made into one (1995: 19). Further, polytheists according to Hume could recognize their own gods in that of others as well as accept the gods of others, although Hume also considered that polytheism did not develop an advance to a theologically-based moral system that was connected to the gods (1995: 29).

Hume does not think that at the dawn of humanity "man" contemplated the origin of the universe as he believes that the "savage had no reason to ask such philosophical questions" (1995: 11;

2 In the DNR Hume utilizes four characters, three of whom (Philo, Cleanthes, and Demea) are engaged in a philosophical debate about religion. It is usually assumed that Philo, who provides a barrage of mitigated skeptical arguments against the argument of design as well as other philosophical claims for God, is Hume's mouthpiece in the dialogue, although this understanding has also been questioned.

2007a: 32). Instead the "savage" as well as the "barbarian" was and is submerged in nature and an animal's anatomical design and its seemingly fitting relationship to its environment was a normal experience for early mankind (1995: 23). Hume seems to be suggesting that a certain empirical distance is needed from nature for a rational philosophical appreciation to emerge about the origins of the world which would inevitably lead to the idea of one designer of Nature and thus to an idea of God.

The Emergence of Theism out of Polytheism, Demonic Theism, and Superstition

Hume was not writing ethnography in Tylor's sense (see below) but forging a rational critique of the divine validity of theism in much of what would have been considered natural religion. The word superstition is a key word in all his writings of religion and in his essay "Of Superstition and Enthusiasm" he calls superstition one "species of false religion," the other being enthusiasm (1996: 38). If natural religion originated in the psychology of fear, it developed on the basis of superstitious belief (1996: 39). In Hume's works the term superstition refers to common or shared belief adhered to out of habit, rooted in pious bigotry, and accepted uncritically from the authoritative statements of others who might even have a personal cause to make them. Superstition gives institutional religious authority manipulative access over people's psychological weaknesses, fears, and keeps people in manacles of ignorance. For Hume it was the foundation of institutional religion and priestly authority (1996: 40; see also 2007a: 100 f.). By contrast, enthusiasm (originally from the Greek meaning "the god within"; Mavrodes 1989) was the practice of people who although are pious to the faith, free themselves from ecclesiastical religion approaching the divinity directly without a human mediator. In believing that direct communication had been achieved with the deity, "the fanatic madman delivers himself over, blindly, and without reserve, to the supposed illapses of the spirit, and to inspiration from above" which "leads to "raptures, transports, and surprising flights of fancy" (1996: 40). Although Hume saw enthusiasm as being a liberating experience from superstitious priestly authority, people who were enthused were reduced to the level of beastly irrationalism (1996: 39). Enthusiasm could not have anything to do with divinity and the antidote to the two species of false religion was philosophy and liberation through rational discourse that would lead to a more enlightened religious path.

Hume's entire polemic in his writings against religion was to expose what he called in the NHR, as well as in the DNR (O'Connor 2001: 204) "demonic theism" (Falkenstein 2003: 2 f.). His conjecture of how demonic theism emerged out of polytheistic superstition comes very close to some present-day understanding of how biblical monotheism might have emerged within a polytheistic world through henotheism (although he does not use this word). He argues that it is possible for a certain idolatrous nation that still believes in a few gods to choose one god and exalt it over the rest, and make it their particular patron deity (1995: 23). His worshipers will then try to appease him with exaggerated flattery similar to the way they flatter their sovereign. The flattery develops in proportion to their fears as they heap titles on him to try to outdo their adversaries' gods (Hume 1995: 24). Once the god is singularized, humans begin to praise him until they see him as the only one god, the maker of the universe, the most powerful (omnipotent), the all-knowing (omniscience), and so forth. He then becomes the god of no limits and these praises develop until they arrive at infinity itself, beyond which there is no further progress (1995: 23).

Hume then made a most challenging statement that reflected his critique of the argument of design in the DNR. He writes "while they confine themselves to the notion of a perfect being, the creator of the world, they coincide by chance, with the principles of reason and true philosophy; though they are guided by that notion not by reason, of which they are of a general measure incapable, but by the adulation and fears of the most vulgar superstition" (1995: 24). Here the two prongs of Hume's fork comes to mirror each other and it is very tempting for the reader to make the association that the principles on which the arguments for God and particularly the argument from design are based on is just another superstition rooted in the demonic side of natural theism (Wheatley 1986).[3]

3 This is precisely Philo's argumentation in the DNR. The arguments that Philo levels against Cleanthes' mechanical argument for a designer are first intended to show how anthropomorphic (demonic) it is and how it reduces God to nothing more than a superior human and thus is a form of idolatry. He makes the point that it is easy to contest such an argument with similar types of arguments that can argue for multiple designers, botched worlds, and even to consider the world as analogous to a regenerating living being (Hume 2007a: section 5–7). He also points out that it is only natural for humans to conceive of God in anthropomorphic terms as it would be for a world of spiders to view the world as having been spun by a giant spider (2007a: 56). Hume does believe though that the laws of nature reveal a designer and he does make Philo restore a more naturalistic version of the design argument in the last section of the DNR, but due to human limitation hu-

Of Miracles and Prodigies

The second important work we have to consider is Hume's "Section X" of the "Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding" (2007b), titled "Of Miracles" (1985) which he referred to in a letter to his cousin as the "noble parts" of the book and, like all "noble parts," it was a complicated piece that he could not "castrate" from the body of the text even if its public exposure meant offending the religious establishment (Buckle 2001: 224). This text may have deposited its direct influence on Tylor's own methodological problem of valid ethnographic testimony since one of its multiple concerns was with valid reportage of past events (Armstrong 1995). Hume's concern with testimonies was based on an underlying question of what to do with a historical testimony of a group of people who, for example, attest to a man being crucified by the Romans and further attest to him rising from the dead after three days. The first is highly probable that it occurred if it meets certain criteria which he expounds, but the second testimony is far more problematic.

The three terms Hume uses relating to religious experience are "prodigies", "miracles," and prophecies. Prodigies referred to a person or thing believed to have special power. The term "miracle" covered phenomena that included the effects of "prodigies" as well as anomalous events, including prophecy (Hume 2007b: 95; Force 1982: 474). Hume's discussion is an argument against the ontological possibility of miracles and prodigies as well as the validity of testimonies about them.[4]

"Section X" (2007b) has two parts. The first part provides definitions and the purpose of the essay. Section two tests and clarifies his position in relation to miraculous events. Hume opens his essay with Dr. Tillotson's argument against the real presence of the body of Christ (the transubstantiation). Tillotson (who later became the Archbishop of Canterbury and was fond of "Catholic bashing") argued that the evidence for the testimony of the Eucharist is less than the evidence from the believer's senses and, therefore, this claim must be false. Proudly patting himself on his back, Hume then declares "I flatter myself, that I have discovered an argument of the like nature … which, if just will, with the wise and learned, be an everlasting check to all kinds of superstitious delusion" (2007b: 79). He saw his argument as an *a priori* method to use against claims of the miraculous "until the world endures."

For Hume beliefs about the world develop from seeing the regularity of the conjunction of two objects. Although like causes may not necessarily produce like effects people's beliefs are nevertheless still based on past experience that leads to greater certainty with every recurring experience. All reports to an event can either be regarded as a proof or a probability and prior experience guides our judgment (2007b: 80). The evidence for unusual events that challenges commonplace knowledge have to be weighed and we proportion our belief to the stronger evidence. The most usual form of reasoning is based on common testimony and eyewitness reports in which the facts should conform to the testimony given about them (2007b: 80). But testimony can be fallible. We, therefore, rely on the belief that people are commonly inclined to tell the truth and fear shame and ridicule if caught falsifying information. We further utilize certain criteria to aid us in our judgment such as the reliability of the people making the report, whether lying would be advantageous to them, whether sufficient people have witnessed the reported event, whether there are contradictions between reporters as well as the manner they represent their accounts (2007b: 81). All these principles would later influence Tylor's own methods of assessing the reliability of ethnographic reportage, and is still used today in science.

There are testimonies about three categorical types of events that stand at the limit of people's common experience about which reports are questionable. These are marvels, miracles in the general sense, and miracles as signs from a god or a spirit used to validate the truth of a religion such as the miracles of the Biblical religion and Hume is particularly hinting at the resurrection (Maidment 1939: 424).

Marvelous testimonies are accounts about probable events that one has never experienced before. Hume gives the example of the Indian prince who was told that water solidifies under extreme temperature. The disbelieving prince, according to Hume, is reasonable to reject this testimony as the event is beyond his experiences of nature and bears little analogy to anything he has experienced before (2007b: 82). The term "by analogy" is very important as it assumes that even when we meet novel situations we comprehend them by searching for analogous similar situations from our past experiences.

mans can say nothing further about this topic other than recognize that there is a designer through His works in nature and to consider that all limitless properties attributed to Him are praises rather than actual attributes philosophically argued for and well understood (2007a: 78).

4 The essay was not a mere insertion of a polemic but was a critique of religion based on revelation (rather than natural religion) that worked itself out of some of the previous arguments of cause and effect (Buckle 2001: 239). It also forms a companion with the section that follows it where Hume critically argues against arguments for religion based on reason (Buckle 2001: 239).

For the Indian prince, water turning into ice is thus a marvel, but not a miracle. Later in the second part of the text, Hume will give another example of a more challenging marvel. Supposing, he tells us that in the year 1600 the earth was covered by darkness for eight days and we have reports from reasonable people from different parts of the globe testifying to the event and all travelers returning from distant lands bring back similar reports to the event.[5] We should then accept the testimony and "seek out the causes whence it might derive" (2007b: 92).[6] The "eight days of darkness" is an anomaly that passes all the criteria for the probability of a truthful testimony. The event would then warrant a search for an explanation through analogies with all our past experiences that can give us an explanation to its cause and allow us to add to our knowledge the belief that somewhere in the laws of nature there is a possibility that under certain conditions the earth can remain dark for an extended period of time. By contrast he gives a second example of Queen Elizabeth rising from the dead, an event Hume dismisses as impossible and any testimony claiming that it occurred would be false, probably serving someone's personal need (2007b: 93). Hume's subtle distinction means that marvels are at the limit of our rational experience, miracles are well beyond it (Levine 1984: 199).

Hume defines a miracle as a "violation of the laws of nature" (2007b: 83). Since "firm and unalterable experience has established the laws of nature" the proof for a miracle cannot be derived from the nature of the occurrence. For example, since it is most probable from the laws of nature and human experience based on these laws that "all men must die" then any testimony claiming that "a man has returned from the dead" violates this law and cannot be experienced by anybody and any testimony to its occurrence is false. This leads Hume to his famous maxim that a testimony to a miracle must have it that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact that the testimony is trying to prove (2007b: 83). The falsehood of a statement affirming a miracle that is no more miraculous than the description of the miracle would make the occurrence testified to as falling within the laws of nature and common human experience.

Authors have argued that Hume's *a priori* argument is begging-the-question (Armstrong, Jr. 1992) and even was an "abject failure" in probability reckoning (Earman 2000). Already in 1763, George Campbell noted that Hume "proposes stories like those which tell us that dead men come alive must be false since their falsity must be inferred from the proposition that 'no dead man comes alive' … [which] then allows that no such event ever happened" (quoted in Armstrong 1992: 320). He adds "if we do not begin with the presumption that religious stories about people awaking from the dead are false, we do not have the premise that such an event has never happened" (320). If Hume dismisses these reports because they conflict with the laws of nature then he is begging the question as he has defined a miracle as that which is impossible to occur by its very definition rather than demonstrating it. Hume's metaphysics assumes that miracles are false at the outset.

Hume has a second definition of miracles, which is tucked away in an endnote. In fact, the second definition is the first in its complete form "accurately defined." There he defines a miracle as a transgression of a law of nature by a particular volition of a deity or by the interposition of some invisible agent (2007b: 89, endnote 127). This second definition could have saved him from any accusations of "begging the question." To use the second definition Hume would have had to have developed a different metaphysics. He would have had to argue against the existence of God, and then make the point that since there is no God or spirit beyond the material world that we perceive there can be no miracles (unless we attribute them to some other source), and, therefore, all testimonies to miracles are false. But to argue this way would have meant for Hume to have given up on theism and accept atheistic-materialism or polytheism. Hume, however, never abandoned theism in all of his critiques of religion. Another possibility would have been for Hume to have worked with the second definition and accepted some version of the argument that God does break the laws of nature in order to communicate His presence. This position would have contradicted Hume's own religious philosophical project. As he writes, "though the being to whom the miracle is ascribed be in this case the Almighty (it does not) on that account become a whit more probable; since it is impossible for us to know the attributes or actions of such a being, otherwise than from the experience which we have of his productions, in the usual course of nature" (2007b: 93).

5 Note how similar this is to Tylor's own methodology of selecting and accepting ethnographic reports from distant lands.

6 Although some philosophers contest whether Hume saw this last example as a marvel but as a miracle (Slupik 1995). Antony Flew claimed that Hume gave this as an example of an extreme marvel rather than a miracle (1961: 200). According to my reading, it only makes sense as an example of a marvel rather than a miracle and is contrasted with the second example of Queen Elizabeth's resurrection.

Hume's Cuadruple A Posteriori Reasoning As to Why Miracles Are Impossible and His Case Examples of Miracles

In part two of his essay, Hume provides four reasons as to why miracles are impossible and applies his principles to case examples. Firstly, he tells us that there has never been a miracle that was attested to by enough credible witnesses, with good education and learning, and neither have they occurred in situations that assure us that fraudulent activity can be ruled out with certainty (2007b: 84). Secondly, human beings by nature are credulous and take pleasure in tales of the marvelous and accept claims, which all evidence rules out and this already lessens the validity of the testimony as well as the probability that a miracle had taken place. Furthermore, there are so many examples of tales of miracles that have been shown to have been false. Thirdly, miracles are usually believed to have occurred among "primitive and barbarous peoples" in the distant past, and become less frequently attested to in more "enlightened ages." This shows us that the value of the testimony is suspect the more the distant it is in the past. Fourthly, testimony to miracles occurring in one religion and which also forms the basis of its claim to the truth of the religion cancel out the miracles of another religion similar to two witnesses to a crime whose testimony is then cancelled out by other two witnesses who provide contrary evidence.

Hume provides three examples of miracles, which today would be studied under the subdiscipline of the anthropology of religious healing (2007b: 88–90). The first example is the case reported by the historian Tacitus about the Emperor Vespasian. He tells us that a blind man in Alexandria received a vision telling him to seek out the Emperor who by means of his spittle and the touch of his foot cured him. The second example he gives of a church doorkeeper without a leg who rubbed holy oil on the stump until it grew back again. Hume says that all the people, the church, priests, villagers all attested to, that this miracle occurred. The one person who disbelieved that it happened was the cardinal who laughed at the testimony rather than tried to dispute it, and needless to add, Hume thinks that the cardinal's attitude was the rationally correct one. The third account Hume gives is that of the Jansenists pilgrimage to the tomb of Abbé Pâris in France in 1727. Here, pilgrims (who were called *convulsionnaires*) claimed to be healed, the deaf could hear, and the blind could see as well as people experienced convulsions and performed extraordinary feats when they came in contact with the tomb. Hume tells us that the prodigious nature of the tomb was believed to have caused miracles which were all attested to by the most reliable, educated, and dignified of people (2007b: 90; endnote 128). He concludes that even when all those involved in the accounts are genuine, the events these accounts testify to are still so improbable that they must be false and that no miracle occurred. Against such a testimony we can only say that miracles are impossible and such denial should be sufficient for rational people.

For Hume all testimonial assertions about the occurrence of miracles can only be false because they are impossible to be experienced by people and must be based on either a misunderstanding of the natural cause of the event or are based on a false account of an event to serve someone's benefit, for example, to establish the truth of a religion. At the end of "Section X" (2007b: 95), Hume makes the point that faith itself is a miracle, a comment that most commentators have understood to have been made tongue-in-cheek. If for Hume miracles cannot happen and all attestations to them are based on misunderstandings, are false, or claims benefitting someone for some ulterior drive, then faith as a miracle partakes in this false experience benefitting ulterior bigoted and superstitious motives.

E. B. Tylor and David Hume

Historians of science have argued that towards the end of the enlightenment and during the first decades of the 19th century a certain stalemate was established between materialism and theologically based science (Turner 2010: 87 ff.). But this was not to last for long, as from 1840 until 1870 naturalist scientists and philosophers made a second and decisive onslaught against what would be termed "God Talk" in science culminating in Darwin's "Origin of Species" (Turner 2010: 106). Tylor was researching his material for "Primitive Culture" (1920 [1871]) just at the end of this period and his work provided the sciences with a discipline that would take charge of "soul" and "spirit" matters from the materialist philosophical standpoint. Although there was something of an anthropology before 1871, in the form of *Ethnographie, Ethnologie, Völkerkunde, and Volkskunde* (Vermeulen 1995; Stagl 1998), Tylor managed to carve a materialist based discipline out of philosophy, theology, and missionary writings as well as from these earlier disciplinary bits and bobs of ethnographic enquiry and racist cannibal clubs.

Hume, though not a materialist-atheist, had a direct influence on Tylor. In "Primitive Culture" Tylor describes "The Natural History of Religion" (Hume 1995) as "more than any other work the source of

modern opinion as to the development of religion" (1920/1: 477). He pays respect to Hume by quoting him on the psychological origins of natural religion as well as following Hume's rejection of the degeneration thesis and the affirmation that monotheism developed out of early forms of spirit-belief and polytheism. Tylor's "Primitive Culture" does at times read like an elaboration of some parts of the "The Natural History of Religion" particularly when he enters into the chapters on polytheism and monotheism. In general, his argument is that of Hume's. Tylor's method of selecting ethnographic facts, based on what he called "the test of recurrence" from a vast data base of similar reports by people from different backgrounds and periods, was also shaped by Hume's problem of valid testimony in "Of Miracles" (Tylor 1920/1: 9). However, Tylor makes certain philosophical materialist amendment to Hume (1995). He reversed Hume's idea that "superstitious atheists" (those believing in angels and fairies without the belief in God) and materialist-atheists were in one camp in contrast to theists who were in another (Hume 1995: 13). For Tylor, the animist and the monotheist were within the same category of spiritualists (animism) in contradistinction to the materialist-atheist. Secondly, Tylor follows Comte who made a separation between spirit belief and polytheism. Comte separated the first category out from Hume's category of polytheism and called it fetishism (1896: 7). Tylor corrects him by calling it animism, while reserving the name fetish for the attachment of spirit to matter, of which he saw idolatry as one advanced type. Further, although Tylor does not say it, he would have regarded Hume's deist position as the last vestige of an idea that emerged at the dawn of human culture – animism.

Tylor's First Meaning of the Term Animism

Tylor's term animism was a reworking of a term originally introduced by Stahl (1707) for a philosophical position that he would also have called an advance form of animism. Tylor has three interrelated meanings to the term. The first meaning defines animism as the most archaically primitive form of human knowledge and understanding about the world that emerged at the dawn of humankind and which was still exemplified by the religious beliefs of the indigenous peoples living in the British Empire and beyond (1920/1: 21). Based on the ethnographic data Tylor introduced a hypothetical-construct of a "savage philosopher" who lived at the dawn of humanity (1920/1: 428). This early philosopher sought answers to two biological questions: 1) "What are the images one sees in a dream?" and, 2) "What is the difference between a live and a dead body?" The answers produced the belief in a soul and subsequently spirits (Tylor 1881: 343). Tylor's savage philosopher is a "savage Cartesian" who concludes, "I dream therefore I am and when I die I enter the space of my dream"; the "I" in his dreams becomes evidence for the existence of his "soul-self." Echoing Hume, once humans had a sense of their soul-self, they projected it onto the world as spirits for an explanation for cause/effect events they encountered (Tylor 1920/2: 108, 120; 1881: 357). Here, I disagree with Stringer (1999: 544) who seems to deny the first meaning of animism and argues that it was not a theory of origin. Once we bring Hume's "Natural History of Religion" in to the conjectural model and recognize that Tylor merely inserted the "revealed soul" before the human anthropomorphic projection on to nature, it then does become a conjectural theory of origin because this was Hume's conjectural model.[7]

Tylor, following Turgot (2011) and Comte (1896), held an overarching progressionist view of human culture as advancing civilization within which "patterns of culture" (Ingold 1986: 39) emerged, were propagated and defused, degenerated, dwindled, and disappeared (Tylor 1881: 18; Stocking 1987: 15). Although Tylor does mention culture in the Herdt/Boas sense of something that a particular people have (a *volksgeist*), in a passing sentence he is concerned with culture as something that is in contrast to nature and that all humans have no matter how rudimentary and of which all the myriad *volksgeist* of humanity were a part of. This culture had developed through three stages, that of savagery, barbarism, and civilization, and each stage had its low and higher development. Tylor also uses the term civilization in two ways. The first is the progressive movement of culture through the stages leading to the second meaning of civilization which according to him started with the invention of writing and is still developing (Tylor 1881: 24).

Central to this model was the concept of survivals, which meant any item of culture that emerged as a solution to human problems at one stage of civilizational development but continued to persist in more advance stages (Tylor 1920/1: 16; 1881: 15) a theme he developed from Comte (1896: 6). Beliefs that survived were superstitions that persist-

7 Stringer, who like me, came to appreciate Tylor by simply reading him closely, has problems (and understandably so) with his three-stage-development model, and I agree with Stringer that Tylor's theory can work without the three-stage model of human society, but we cannot ignore what is still a fact in his work.

ed against rational invalidation and transformed to be accommodated within the higher culture (Tylor 1920/1: 71). Tylor decided not to use the word "superstition" because in his day it had become a term of reproach (1920/1: 72). Animism was the most successful survival (superstition) from the dawn of mankind's existence. This concept of animism and the conjectural search for origins as well as the civilizational developmental model on which it was based, was later rejected by the fieldwork generation but has recently been revived by some authors in highly modified models of human/environment agency.

In relation to the people he called "savages," Tylor was working with some ethnographic reports about phenomena that would later be called shamanic. This made him see in animism an early psycho-religious complex underlying the anthropomorphic knowledge systems of early humans (1920/1: 484). Foreshadowing Evans-Pritchard who never worked with shamans (and who unfairly dismissed Tylor's socio-psychology as trivial; 1962: 35), Tylor asserts that rather than being effected by a universal deficiency of reasoning, this knowledge-system was based on immediate sensorial experiences and rational within its own sphere of logic. However, Tylor concludes that ultimately this knowledge was based on a misunderstanding of nature due to "inveterate ignorance" (1920/1: 23). By "inveterate ignorance" Tylor, following Hume, meant knowledge that was based on a philosophical worldview that projected the human-self onto nature as an explanation for natural effects for which the causes were yet unknown to people.

The Second Meaning of Animism

The second meaning of the term animism was incorporated into anthropology and formed the frame for the study of other people's spirit-based knowledge and beliefs. Tylor rejected the view (that Hume had also mildly entertained) that some human groups did not have a religion and provided his famous minimum definition of religion being "the belief in spirits" (1920/1: 424). Hence, all humans had some form of religion and it was through religion that Tylor could incorporate the whole of humanity within the development of human civilization (culture). For Tylor animism was not just a religious type but in the second meaning it was religion (Harvey 2010: 18).

In vol. 2 of "Primitive Culture" (1920) Tylor developed his narrative of stages to show how (mono)-theism emerged from animism and polytheism. It is in these chapters where "Primitive Culture" reads like a detailed elaboration of Hume's "Natural History of Religion" (1995). For Tylor the early savage and contemporary indigenous peoples did not have a conception of monotheism and any evidence to the contrary was either based on monotheistic influence or missionaries searching for proof of God amongst them (1920/2: 334; 1892). Keeping close to Hume, he says that polytheism is a department of animism (1920/2: 254) as he also suggests Hume's theory of henotheism (1920/2: 334) as well as Hume's model of the one selected deity presiding over a pantheon that reflects the social system of the sovereign presiding over his lords (1920/2: 335). And again, echoing Hume he stresses that animistic morality is not an abstract system of right and wrong, but based on a theory of pleasure and pain (1920/2: 318).

Tylor's second meaning of animism came to be synonymous with the theologian's idea of natural religion as well. Tylor makes a number of references to natural religion and states that animism expands "to complete the full general philosophy of Natural Religion among mankind" as well as being its direct product (1920/2: 108, 356). The concept of "natural religion," which implied "religion by reason" as against "religion by revelation" (1920/2: 356) sits oddly in Tylor's work as animism implies some form of revelation through dreams (enthusiasm). Stocking tells us that Tylor started writing a final book on natural religion but could not complete it as he could not go beyond the term animism (1987: 260). It is strange that Tylor could not see that this concept sat in his materialist work as a "survival" from philosophical theology and his term "animism" (in its second meaning as "religion") superseded it.

The Third Meaning of Animism

The third meaning of animism is philosophical – "the deep-lying doctrine of Spiritual Beings which embodies the very essences of Spiritualistic as opposed to Materialistic philosophy" (Tylor 1920/1: 425; 1881: 342). This meaning which connects the other two meanings of animism seemed to have been critically dubbed as intellectualist, ignored, or was simply taken for granted by anthropologists as it formed part of the structural philosophical groundwork on which the discipline stands (but see Stringer 1999: 546). It is against this philosophical meaning of animism that the ontological meta-frame of anthropology was carved out and established by Tylor and his philosophical importance in the history of materialism comes to the fore.

In the "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," Hume indicates that it was John Locke who first pointed out that religion was a "species of philosophy" (2007a [1779]: 14) and Comte also referred to fetishism as being a philosophical theology (1896: 10). Tylor follows this proposition and also treats animism as a philosophical principle. He would have preferred to have used the word "spiritualism" rather than animism but because the term had a specific meaning in his day referring to a sect of people practicing spirit séances, he had to find another word (1920/1: 426). The term spiritualism would have made the philosophical side of his work clearer. He would have probably written of savage, barbaric, and civilized spiritualism, which at one point he does do (1920/1: 156). The philosophical meaning of the term animism also commits him to the idea that belief in spirits is the minimum definition of religion as he could then show the continuity of religion throughout the civilizational development of human Culture. He writes, "the conception of the soul is, as to its most essential nature, continuous from the philosophy of the savage thinker to that of the modern professor of theology" and "unites in an unbroken line the savage worshipper and the civilized Christian" (1920/1: 501 f.). Theology was nothing more than an advanced form of animism.

One of Tylor's main concerns in "Primitive Culture" was to cut theology out of anthropology once and for all and in so doing makes the discipline scientific. He bemoans missionary-ethnographers who tended to write about "heathen religions" in terms of religious truth and who portray them with hatred, ridicule, and hostility (1920/1: 420) and makes it clear, and in no uncertain terms, that theology of any sort is not to enter anthropology other than a subject of scientific ethnographic study. "God Talk" was not allowed in the discipline that took for its task to talk about souls, spirit, and even God – what was conventionally the domain of theology. The ethnographer had to discuss issues that were the concern of theology in neutral terms, as mythical belief, as well as provide insights into religious practices that were beyond the remit of the religious specialist who was steeped in their own dogma and could not see beyond it (Tylor 1920/2: 363). Ethnography of religion was to be a materialist enterprise in which the "spiritual" could not have ontological validity and all knowledge based on its presupposition must be in error. Tylor did not see that his own derision which tarred the knowledge of others as false intellectually mirrored that of the missionaries religious derision of the same – they were birds of a civilisation feather!

It was not just the missionaries who were advanced animists though. Animism (spiritualism) had also infiltrated philosophical thought. All the philosophers from Plato through to Descartes, Berkley, Leibniz, and all the others who were theorizing about souls and God were in fact philosophizing about an erroneous surviving concept from the dawn of mankind, and for Tyler they were wasting their time. These revered philosophers were nothing more than advanced animists, and even those who were materialists were sometimes still perpetuating survivals from the original philosophical error (Tylor 1920/1: 484). For example, Tylor, says that the word "idea" is a survival from an animistic origin and that those philosophers of the philosophy of perception, who posit an "impression" between the perceiver and the material object, were also using an advanced notion that they had inherited from this original "savage doctrine" of human thought. (1920/1: 498).

Tylor saw it as imperative for him to establish the scientific validity of anthropology as the discipline that could study other people's spirit-based knowledge systems as religion. He writes that he recognizes that he has written "soullessly of the soul" and "unspiritually of the spirit" but he did so purposefully, as he was expressing a plan "to work along a distinct intellectual line" (1920/2: 359). That plan was to discuss religion within the great philosophical doctrine of animism originating in the early thoughts and practices of mankind through a materialistic philosophical frame of understanding (1920/2: 359).

For Tylor, animism (first sense) was the origin of all religion (second sense) against which a materialist-based anthropology could wall off its spiritualist philosophical claims to truth (third sense) and give the discipline a methodical vantage point that would allow the ethnographer to study animism in all its adapted cultural manifestations. With such "irreverence" towards theology as well as towards certain enlightenment philosophers, Tylor was able to extract his empirical discipline out of philosophy while distinguishing it from the theological study of religion.

Tylor ends his first volume (1920) with the most intriguing pronouncement of the triumph of the materialist philosophic vision and one, which seems to provide an answer to Hume's own ending in "The Natural History of Religion" (1995). There, Hume writes, "did we not enlarge our view, and opposing one species of superstition to another, set them a quarrelling; while we ourselves, during their fury and contention, happily make our escape, into the calm, though obscure, regions of philosophy?"

(1995: 55) Tylor ends with "the divisions which have separated the great religions of the world into intolerant and hostile sects are for the most part superficial, in comparison with the deepest of all religious schisms, that which divides Animism from Materialism" (1920/1: 501). It would seem then, that Hume's retreating skeptical philosopher in "The Natural History of Religion" (1995) returns in "Primitive Culture" with a vengeance as Tylor's materialist ethnographer (anthropologist) and this pronouncement of triumph of materialism against animism formed the philosophical bedrock of the discipline of anthropology.

Andrew Lang's Critique of the Hume/Tylor Genealogy

Andrew Lang, "a droopy Scottish aristocrat of letters" as Stocking called him (1995: 54), who once said of himself that he would have been a really big "swell" in anthropology if there was any money in it (Stocking 1987: 263), was a folklorist who also meddled in anthropology after being introduced to Tylor. Although at first one of Tylor's students, he later defected. In 1898, he published "The Making of Religion" in which he criticized the materialist direction that anthropology had taken over the previous thirty years mostly due to Tylor's influence. Lang argued against two major points found in the Hume/Tylor genealogy. The first argument (chapters 1–8) was against the rationalism that determined with certainty what should be accepted as valid knowledge and that animism was in fact based on valid knowledge, the second (chapters 9–16) was his argument against the idea that indigenous peoples did not have a belief in some form of creator being prior to monotheistic influence. In the last chapters of the book, Lang skeptically provides another model for the origin and development of natural religion in which he wanted to show contra to both Hume and Tylor, that the early "savage" could have attained a belief in some kind of creator being. Although he accepts Tylor's point (1892: 187), that many traditions were influenced by missionaries and other monotheists, nevertheless, there were extent tribes who were not exposed to such influences and yet did exhibit notions of a distant creator. He points out that all the authors err in assuming that a High God Creator being must be a spiritual being and could only have emerged after humans had an idea of spirits (Lang 1898: 176). Taking the ethnography of the Bushman, the Australian Aborigines, and the Andaman Islanders (whom the Victorians saw as representatives of the most lowest levels of human culture) as his examples, he tried to show that they all believe in an immemorial, deathless, and fleshless being (Lang 1898: 182, 203), which was never born and which, although distant, was yet all seeing and knowing and an exemplar of tribal morality (Lang 1898: 207). This reference to morality was also a critique of both Hume and Tylor's position on "savage morality" which stated that it was based on pleasure and pain rather than on some form of theological judgment. Lang also pointed out that belief in such a being did not entail rituals of propitiation nor sacrifice in contrast to the animistic "hungry ghost" seen in dreams who demands to be fed (Lang 1898: 229). Again, by way of refuting Hume's (and Tylor's) theory, he points out that all these tribes did not have a chief or a king and, therefore, the idea of a one god developing as a reflection of a hierarchical society with a king at its top was incorrect.

Foreshadowing Evans-Pritchard's (if I-were-a-horse critique of Tylor[8]), Lang accused both Hume and Tylor of thinking omnisciently and argued that we really do not know what early humans thought and, therefore, it could just as well be the case that the early savage first believed in a High God and later developed animism (Lang 1898: 20, 64, 220). He further points out, somewhat unintentionally echoing Hume's concept of demonic theism, that there is really no religion that is purely monotheistic and, therefore, the combination of a High God and belief in multiple lesser deities was possible as well (241). To complete the critique, Lang presented a counter-model to the Hume/Tylor progressionist theory. He argued, that the tribal High God could be seen as coming first (theism), but since this god was too distant, humans later developed animism and people being who they are could "go a whoring" (in Lang's words) to "wheel and deal" benefits from hungry ghosts seen in dreams (282). Lang's real aim was to show "that (ethnographic) facts can be regarded in the light of degeneration as well as in the light thrown by anthropology" and adds that he "only ask for suspension of judgment and hesitation" (329). Lang's skeptical argument would have a direct influence on Wilhelm Schmidt SVD who

8 In "Theories of Primitive Religion" (1965), Evans-Pritchard criticized Edward Burnett Tylor's animist theory of religion as a Kipling-like "just so" story. He iced the critical cake by claiming that Tylor had committed the "if I were a horse" fallacy, which goes something like this: Because we are not horses, have never been horses, and can't know what it is like to be a horse, our speculations about horse-sense probably have little or no connection to horse-reality. Evans-Pritchard claimed that the same reasoning applies to speculations about (or explanations for) "primitive religions."

later developed the High God model (Zimoń 1986: 245). Although this argument became obsolete in mainstream anthropology, there have recently been some empathetic commentators and even revivalists of the theory.[9]

But what of animism and the belief in souls and spirits? Lang saw the soul and spirit belief as knowledge systems that might even have a basis in truths that Tylor's materialism and Hume's rationalism could not handle. To make his point that what first seemed to be irrational "savage belief" maybe rooted in truth, he gives the example of northern Native American belief about the aurora borealis (Lang 1898: 4). He points out that northern Native Americans made a connection between the electrical sparks that were emitted when rubbing deer hide on a cold night with the phenomena of lights seen in the northern sky and interpreted it as deers rubbing together in the heavens. Lang's point was to show that indigenous peoples may already have made valid rational connections about the phenomena of electrical phenomena within the limits of their environmental knowledge and suggests that this is probably even stronger with psychological-based knowledge.[10]

In a somewhat Foucaultian-type power/knowledge argument, Lang chides science as well as medical doctors for prejudging what is valid knowledge, while at the same time dismissing other forms of knowledge claims without real evidence (1898: 26, 38). By alluding to Hume's dismissal of miracles he gives the example of how hypnotism was finally accepted as science after its original rejection. Lang takes issue with Tylor's comment (1920/1: 133 f.) that accused magicians of being deceivers who only read the emotional expressions of the people in front of them, or engage in deceptive acts of sleight-of hand to induce belief. Instead, these examples show that a sophisticated understanding of human psychology was needed to induce persuasive suggestion for the purpose of the ritual (Lang 1898: 23). Lang emphatically asserts that indigenous practitioners might have reached psychological truths long before the late 19th-century psychologists had discovered them (7). He stressed, that Tylor was writing before the psychologists Wundt, James, and others (although he does not mention Freud). Animism, then, might be based on certain valid forms of psychological knowledge that science only recently has come to appreciate as well as on other truths that it might yet have to come to terms with. Tylor did give Lang's psychological approach to the phenomena some recognition (1902: 49).

As part of his account of the development of rationalism Lang then turned his critical attention to "Section X" and accused Hume's rational dismissal of the validity of miracles and the reports about them as irrational and unscientific. He called Hume's essay "Of Miracles" (1748)" "a tissue of fallacies which might be given for exposure to beginners in logic" and argues that Hume totally contradicted himself in this essay to the level of absurdity in order to dismiss the possibility of miracles (Lang 1898: 17). Whereas Hume first said that there could be no valid witnesses to a miracle in his quartet, reasoning as to why miracles were impossible, he then goes on to say, both in the text and in a footnote about the Jansenists Abbé Pâris' healing phenomena, that the events were attested to by the most reliable and prominent people of Paris (Lang 1898: 15–21). Nevertheless, Hume still denied that such events attested to had occurred, events that Lang points out would later be ordinary incidents in Charcot's medical practice (Lang 1898: 326). Lang asserts that with the development of facts in experimental psychology the pendulum has swung against Hume (1898: 36) and that something marvelous did occur at the tomb and could be interpreted according to naturalist principles of suggestion and hypnotism; an explanation that would not be too out of place in late 20th-century medical anthropology. By affirming that the Jansenists' miracles were explainable by the science of his day, Lang was affirming that these occurrences were not "miracles" at all but "marvels" (1898: 26) that were explainable by analogous scientific experiences. To be fair to Hume, Lang did not notice his subtle distinction between "marvels" and "miracles" and we should keep in mind that Hume was writing against divine intervention (miracles) in an age before the discovery of the unconscious (Ellenberger 1970). Hume would have had to concede to Lang on this point if late 19th-century psychology was available in the mid-1700s.

Lang and the Problem of Numinous Experiences

One of Lang's critical points against both, Hume and specifically Tylor, was that neither had actually gone out to test whether the miraculous did occur (1898: 13). They simply dismissed it outright and Tylor's materialist frame was based on a philosophical standpoint that had not been philosophi-

9 See Stringer (1999); Willerslev (2011); but also Kolig (1992).

10 To be fair, Tylor probably would have accepted Lang's point about the aurora borealis but could have added that if they would still have persisted in believing in the deer-myth after being introduced to the notion of electrical currents, then the deer-myth would be a superstitious survival.

cally proven but only assumed as it fitted in with the materialist science of his day (1898: 44).

Lang had another reason to challenge Tylor's materialism. According to Stocking (1995: 56), when at St. Andrews he saw a ghost (!), such an experience would have been enough to prompt Lang's questioning of Tylor's approach that "he doesn't ask whether these phenomena are real" (1898: 50). Lang was the first to raise the problem of religious and numinous experience in ethnographic knowledge – but unbeknown to him not the first to confront the problem in fieldwork.

Tylor did carry out a short period of fieldwork in November 1872 among Spiritualists to see whether there was any truth in their activities (Stocking 1971). This was not really ethnographic fieldwork but a quest for validity of Spiritualism based on a yes or no score card, in a procedure Tambiah (1990: 46) calls "decisive falsification," and he ticked no. What Tylor "ticked" as "no" was not that occurrences did not happen, as he did experience seemingly "numinous phenomena" which were also attested to by others, some of whom were the most eminent and trustworthy people of his day who had no reason to lie (Stocking 1971: 101; 1987: 191), and, thus, in theory would pass Hume's criteria of valid testimony. What he dismissed was that these happenings were caused by spiritual phenomena ontologically existing behind the material world; and here we might recall Hume's extended definition of miracles in his footnote. Tylor was well aware that "tricks," as he called them, occurred, but he was concerned with the veracity of the spiritual philosophy claiming to be the cause of the "tricks," and which he saw as ontologically improbable (1920/1: 154). He skeptically concluded his diaries with "blessed are they that have seen and yet have believed" (Stocking 1971: 104; 1987: 191). Tylor kept his materialist philosophical barrier up even when there appeared to be some "evidence" that could have challenged it (Stocking 1987: 191). The "tricks" could be "marvels," but they were not "miracles" and it would seem that fortunately for him Lang did not read his diaries.

Lang was writing during the period just prior to the development of participant-observation as a research method and most probably would have appreciated the concept of fieldwork itself. He particularly would have empathized with one fact of ethnographic research; the fact that many (but for sure not all) field researchers have had numinous experiences in the field.[11] In a critique of Tylor's "modern man of reason," Lang affirms that "the civilized man is capable, beyond doubt, of being *enfantosme*" (1898: 62). Nevertheless, as Edith Turner (2003: 113) tells us, the possibility of being *enfentosme* while doing ethnographic field research and talking about it, is one of anthropology's taboos which schematically divides its practitioners into two groups – the non-experiencing rationalists who seem to follow the Hume/Tylor position (since this is the position of rational materialist science) and oppose any mention of it, and the experiencers who take Lang's position (although unknowingly so because people do not usually read Lang). The philosopher C. D. Broad (2000: 257) argued that people who have religious experiences are like people sensitive to music, while others can be likened to people who are tone-deaf. This tempts a question of whether researchers in Turner's Hume/Tylor camp are simply equivalent to tone-deaf critics writing about music they cannot hear and makes us wonder whether Tylor simply toned himself deaf to Spiritualism, a point that Stocking suggests (1987: 192). Nevertheless, the Hume/Tylor position keeps researchers of the "Langian" camp intellectually tethered on a taught string preventing them from getting lost in the cave of mystics or from going mad by maintaining Tylor's reminder that seeing (experiencing) should not entail believing. Lang originally characterized this as a choice between being "a Plotinus in two worlds or ending up in Bedlam" (see also Turner 2003: 113; Goulet 2006: 228).

But the dangers of a researcher "ending up in Bedlam" does suggest that anthropology's taboo on talking about such experiences should be lifted for one very important reason: professional research ethics. Such experiences could be blissful, yes, but also traumatizing and even delude the researcher to the point of not seeking help. The possibility of harmful experiences in the field should be the concern of anthropological research ethics that entails protection of not only the people the researcher is studying in the field but *also the researcher as well*. This was not a problem in Tylor's day (from whence the taboo emerged), but the irony might be that the discipline's established materialist metaframe, which provides anthropology with its ontological point of discursively referencing religious data, also provides for the context for experiencing "spirit revelations" in the field. Nonnative researchers (especially novices) enter the research field after having been exposed to ethnographies detailing indigenous concepts as well as embodying relativistic theoretical outlooks. They are encouraged to be open to difference as well as bracket off the rational predispositions of disbelief in the indigenous

11 See, for example, Peters (1982); Young and Goulet (1994); Turner (1993).

sign systems of others. Hypothetically, it could be that researchers as individuals might be sensitive to particularly different numinous sign systems, and it is really the luck of the draw whether the people, the researcher has chosen to carry out their research, practice a tradition that she then proves to be sensitive to during fieldwork. Such experiences, if they occur, are part of the experience of what Coffey calls the "ethnographic self" (1999) and can also be seen as a nontechnical research method (Goulet 2006: 220; Engelke 2002). By treating this possible fact of participatory fieldwork as a taboo in anthropology is to irresponsibly posit it as a miracle in Hume's sense as an occurrence beyond human experience. But marvels can happen, as Lang pointed out, and the gosling ethnographer should be aware of this and know what to do if and when it occurs.

Lang and Spiritual Dualism

Lang recognized that Tylor determined that anthropology would be a materialist-based discipline and that he sliced it off from a greater dualistic holism with philosophical Spiritualism to achieve the scientific acceptance of the British Academy (1898: 43 f.). He felt that Tylor's materialism was an unproven presupposition and we can say that Lang's critique of Tylor's animism was a critique of it in its third sense.[12] Lang was open to the idea of directly bridging anthropology with belief in some kind of spirit reality existing behind the material world, which would also validate the veracity of indigenous peoples' knowledge systems.

In "Of Miracles" (1748), Hume's fourth claim as to why miracles could not be true stated that if the miracles of one religion validate its claim to truth, then this invalidates the miracles of another religion. This claimant foreshadowed the relativist anthropological position that all religions are respectfully treated as valid (precisely for this reason!). Lang countered Hume's relativism with what he called the "X region of our nature" (1898: 69). By this he meant human phenomena that are difficult to talk about and even explain but do occur in human experience. Hypnosis and suggestion were part of this "X region" as well as, for example, the Polynesian *mana* (1898: 216). Lang's concept of the "X region" comes close to Borch-Jacobson's (1993) idea of the "non-existent X" that emerges through human social interaction and takes its form depending on the discourses about it. Borch-Jacobson tells us how this X was transformed in European society from the kind of phenomena that Hume was writing about on the Jansenists healing, to Mesmerism, then being diluted into hypnotism only to be further rationally diluted by Freud into the transference, and finally its rationalization reaching its point of completion in Lacan's linguistic sign (1993: 99). Borch-Jacobson's account of the "non-existent X" (non-existent because it does not exist outside of relative human relations) is still within a strictly materialist/naturalist model. But Lang saw other phenomena as part of this "X region", such as hallucinatory/visionary "Crystal Ball Gazing," telepathy, and although he does not explicitly say this, one gains a feeling that he is implying it, a spirit world beyond the immediate material one. Lang was ready and willing to unframe anthropology from its materialist philosophical meta-frame and supersede it with a philosophical outlook that would have come closer to what we today could call a multicultural and postmodern spirit of which all religions are but local manifestations.

Conclusion

Historians of anthropology, focusing on Tylor's progressionist theory, have rightly point out that he was influenced by Turgot and Comte (Hodgen 1931). Interestingly, none of these authors reference Hume (1995). Whereas Tylor for sure developed some of Comte's passing insights, it would not be exaggerating to say that David Hume's "Natural History of Religion" is the parental template for Tylor's "Primitive Culture" and "Of Miracles" provided him with rational guidelines of how to work with testimonies of ethnographic data. If, as according to Ingold, Tylor, who launched the systematic study of religious cultural form, was the "Grandfather of Anthropology" (1986: 29), although I myself would opt for father (Goldenweiser 1912: 372), this textual genealogy makes David Hume the great grandfather (or grandfather of the discipline). But Hume was not an atheist-materialist and neither did he see atheism as an option in his day (Mounce 2000) but was working skeptically (or critically) within a theistic rational-frame of reference. Hume's mitigated skepticism seemed to have taken his readers up to the promised land of atheistic-materialism (to borrow a biblical metaphoric phrase from Lévi-Strauss), but he did not enter there himself. In fact, he did not think that anybody would or should so. In the "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion" he makes Philo say that no one can really be an atheist, and that the atheist is a double fool for both thinking and

12 The tribal High God critique was against his first meaning of animism.

speaking out his fallacy as well (2007a: 15). Hume's mitigated skepticism (Coventry 2007) was more an epistemological process of reasoning to skeptically bring to the fore arguments that showed up the superstitious dogmatism and bigotry of theological arguments and religious practice (Falkenstein 2003: 7). Nevertheless, once natural religion was shown to be rooted in human, social, and psychological necessities and miracles out of delusions and fraud, then the question remained to what degree are the arguments for "true religion" rooted in the same natural source? Hume's mitigated skepticism of religion was intended to throw the idolatrous-demonic water of religious superstition and bigotry out of the bathtub of religious theistic philosophy, but instead his works helped throw the divine baby out as well (see Kail 2007: 211). Feuerbach in 1841 referred to such philosophers, who hollowed God out by eliminating all His known attributes, as being "subtle sly atheists" (1957: 14) and Tylor may have understood Hume in terms akin to this view as well.

Tylor, working out of this protestant rationalism (Evans-Pritchard 1962: 35; Tambiah 1990: 19) made sure that anthropology was not destined to share with theology its ontological dualism in which spirit was to have an ontological reality beyond the phenomena of experience. Neither was anthropology forged to take the neutral stance that characterizes the discipline of philosophy where philosophers are given an intellectual arena to argue about the existence of God, the soul, life after death, and so forth. The anthropological arena where positivists and cultural materialist on one side, as well as poststructuralists and cultural relativists on the other, can fight out their approaches and theories is well bounded within a materialist meta-frame (Bloch 2012). But as Lang suggested, it was a meta-frame torn out of an original holistic dualism with the ontological reality of "spirit," and many fieldwork-anthropologists have felt uncomfortable ever since (see what reads as an apology for disciplinary agnosticism by Evans-Pritchard's 1962 chap. 2) to the degree that even when the numinous is experienced, anthropologists do not really know what to do with it – as we cannot anthropologically privilege the veracity of one religion and its miracles over another (Hume's fourth reasoning as to why miracles cannot be true). Thus the meta-frame of materialism serves as a leveler of religious and spiritual ontological validity of any one tradition. Nevertheless, it was suggested that the discipline's failure in properly addressing the fact of numinous experiences in the field within a materialist-based social science, that takes as its research hallmark reflective immersion in the lifeworlds of others, may prove to be a violation of disciplinary research ethics, as it could prove harmful to the researcher as well as raise concerns of responsibility for the host community.

In a somewhat Freudian Oedipal-type saga much of twentieth-century anthropology had really reduced Tylor's importance in the history of the discipline to such a degree that, when Mary Douglas mentioned him in passing in one of the late-20th-century's most important book on anthropology of religion, she called him Henry Tylor claiming that he wrote a book about relics that disappeared into folklore and, thus, implying his work was of no real consequence (Douglas 1966: 14; see Stringer 1999: 553, fn. 2). No consequence? Tylor captured the materialist philosophical foundation that made anthropology a scientific discipline as well as influence all authors writing subsequent to 1871. They all now had a term to work with, animism, even as they disagreed with Tylor on certain issues. Philosophers and psychologists, such as Kingdon Clifford, Nietzsche as well as Wundt, and most importantly Sigmund Freud, were all influenced by Tylor's "Primitive Culture," which was translated into German and Russian within the first three years of its first edition. Colonial researchers introduced the term animism to the colonies and the term as well as the concept formed part of Southern modernist discourse on spirit belief prevalent in postcolonial countries. If La Fontaine (1985) once commented that anthropologists are more Tylorian than they would like to think, I would add that every time an author discourses on indigenous spirit-based knowledge as religion, they are Tylorian and this is done so within his materialist meta-frame as well.

Douglas, as it would seem, confused "Henry" with Andrew Lang who did write books that were lost to folklore. Lang stood at the very end of the 19th century as a singular skeptical voice trying to warn anthropology not to be too hasty in its materialist judgments just as the tidal wave of materialism was to gush over into the 20th century. Taking upon himself the position of a Humean skeptic "in reverse," Lang was to the Hume/Tylor genealogy what in the "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion" Philo was to Cleanthes; providing a mitigated skeptical argument, which he believed would not be taken seriously (see his preface). In many respects, Lang was really in advance of his time and probably would have felt comfortable with the discipline's theoretical developments during the latter half of the 20th century. To my mind, Lang should be taken out of his footnote status in anthropology as his work forms an early "mirroring prong" that brings to the fore the Hume/Tylor genealogy in the foundation of the discipline (and not just the commonly assumed

Comte/Tylor one), as well as raising certain issues about numinous ethnographic experience. Through Lang's critical mirror we also see the importance of Edward Burnett Tylor's "Primitive Culture" (and the discipline he helped forge) in the development of materialist thought – and that (like it or not) it was due to Tylor that the anthropologist (*as anthropologist*) is fundamentally a *homo materialis*.

An Afterthought

In the "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion" Hume made Philo say that atheists of his day were double fools for not just thinking but also speaking that there is no God (spirit) (2007a: 15). If Lang's critique of Tylor's third meaning of animism will prove correct, then Tylor's materialist meta-frame may have made anthropologists into triple fools, for now they might experience spirit in the field as well and yet discourse about it in rationalist-materialist terms of phenomenal-experience that still does not allow for the ontological validity of spirit. But then, if Lang's critique would prove correct then the anthropology of religion would probably be nothing more than a handmaiden of theology and Papa Tylor would be turning in his grave for sure!

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