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R. R. Marrett and the Study of Religion*

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ABSTRACT

In the history of the academic study of religion, only cursory reference has been given to Marett. Yet the "mana theory" associated with his name has become a common part of the religious studies vocabulary. As Tylor's successor at Oxford, Marett is included among those who sought for the origin of religion. He is the acknowledged "father" of the pre-animistic theory of religion's origins. On the other hand, as Lowie comments, he "clearly forestalls contentions latterly supposed peculiar to the functionalist school." Along with Frazer and Lévy-Bruhl, he has been denounced as one of those thinkers who divided society into two compartments, the one advanced, adult, and well-adjusted, the other savage, childlike, and unbalanced. He has been dismissed as an "armchair anthropologist," but he is, nonetheless, quoted often with authority. Hence the purpose of this paper is to reassess Marett's writings on religion within the context of his socio-psychological method; to suggest that the "pre-animistic theory" was an explicit critique of the search for the origin and evolution of religion; and, thirdly, to assess his influence on the study of religion.

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The *fin-de-siècle* marked the end of the search for religion's primordium, and the seeds were sown for a new direction in the study of religion. The evolutionary worldview, connected as it was with the idea of progress, had established the paradigm for studies in religion from Comte through Frazer. On the one hand, the evolutionary idea allowed for a recognition of multiple modes of thought; at the same time, it maintained the absolute validity of one such mode—the positivist. "Primitive thought," on the other hand, was widely assumed to represent a lower stage of development. In a lecture delivered in 1867 to the Royal Institution of Great Britain, E. B. Tylor summarized the orthodox position:

> Now there also exists evidence, by means of which it is possible still to trace, in the history of man's mental condition, an upward progress, a succession of higher intellectual processes and opinions to lower ones (1868:391).

Tylor, recognized as the leading authority on "primitive mentality," outlined and described a progressive development from the darkness of religion to the light of science. Given nineteenth-century assumptions about the priority of reason, the origin of religion was to be found in the human intellect in its childlike state. Myths, understood as expressions of animistic thinking, are essentially rational attempts of "lower peoples" to make sense of their environment. The entire basis of animism is that faulty reason is the *sine qua non* for the coming into being of religious phenomena. This rationalistic modernity explicit in Tylor's anthropology culminates with the publication of Frazer's *Golden Bough* in 1890.

The *fin-de-siècle* designates also a new world of thought beginning to take shape. For the post-Tylorian anthropologist it was a period of transition which lasted until the ascendency of functionalism. The passionate interest in religion, its origin and evolution, which dominated Tylor and his contemporaries, was gradually displaced by the diffusionist views of W. J. Perry and Elliot Smith. Pre-Malinowskian anthropologists engaged in the reconstruction of pre-history rather than the exposition of religious consciousness. Secondly, anthropology was becoming a subject of field research; philosophical explanations of religion by its origin were discounted. Nonetheless it was also a period in which there were significant theoretical contributions to the study of religion. One of those contributors during this transitional period was Robert Ranulph Marett (1866–1943).

However, in a history of the study of religion, Marett is an anomaly. As Tylor's successor at Oxford, he is included among those who sought for the origin of religion. He is the acknowledged "father" of the pre-animistic theory of religion's origins. Along with Frazer and Lévy-Bruhl, he has been denounced as one of those thinkers who divided society into two compartments, "the one containing the member of an advanced society who reasons on scientific lines with an adult and well-adjusted mind, the other containing the savage, the child, the insane or unbalanced" (Steiner, 1956:111). Yet, as

Lowie comments (1937:111), he "clearly forestalls contentions latterly supposed peculiar to the functionalist school." Dismissed as a "genial and ebullient classical philosopher" (Evans-Pritchard, 1965:35), and an "'armchair anthropologist'" (Ruel, 1968:566), he is, nevertheless, quoted often with authority /1/. Hence the purpose of this paper is to reassess Marett's writings on religion within the context of his anthropological method; to suggest that the "pre-animistic theory" was an explicit critique of the search for the origin and evolution of religion; and, thirdly, to assess his influence on the study of religion. Marett's influence in England was minimal although his impact was more substantial in Germany and elsewhere, for example on Preuss, Wundt, Otto, and Van der Leeuw.

Marett was one of a number of classically trained scholars (Frazer, Lang, and Jane Harrison were others) attracted to the developing subject of anthropology. They were intrigued by the similarities between the beliefs and practices of the Greeks, Romans, and certain primitive peoples; the latter were thought to shed light on the classics. In 1893, while a tutor in philosophy at Exeter College, Marett won the Oxford University Green Memorial Prize for an essay on "The Ethics of Savage Races," and so came into the orbit of Tylor. On Tylor's retirement, he was appointed reader in social anthropology, a post he held from 1910 until 1936. When a chair of social anthropology was created (1934), Marett occupied it for one year until his successor, Radcliffe-Brown, could take up his duties. In addition, he served as rector of Exeter College from 1928 until his death.

Unlike the heavy comparative (and sometimes ponderous) works of many of his contemporaries, Marett's books were originally lectures and addresses. "He excelled in the nicely illustrated argument which examines in brief compass a new idea, approach, or observation" (Ruel, 1968:566). *The Threshold of Religion* (1909, 1914), *Man in the Making: An Introduction to Anthropology* (1928), and *Head, Heart and Hands in Human Evolution* (1935) are collections of scattered essays and talks; in *Psychology and Folklore* (1920), essays 1–5 are Presidential Addresses delivered to the Folklore Society in the years 1914–18; *Faith Hope and Charity in Primitive Religion* and *Sacraments of Simple Folk* are respectively the Gifford Lectures, 1931–32, 1932–33. Marett refers to the latter two items as "the soundest and best, of my studies in anthropology" (1941:249). In addition he authored *Anthropology* (1912), *Tylor* (1936), *A Jerseyman at Oxford* (autobiographical; 1941), numerous reviews, and encyclopedia articles.

The context in which Marett develops his theory of religion is anthropology, and "Anthropology is the child of Darwin" (1912a:8). To reject Darwin is to reject anthropology. For Marett, as for Tylor, Darwin provided the key for fastening "the multitudinous particulars together with the tie of the universal" (1934b:47). Contrary to Tylor, however, Marett did not identify the evolutionary sociology of nineteenth-century Darwinism with the idea of progress; rather he divorced evolution, understood in Tylor's terms as "the history of man's mental condition," from the idea of progress.

> It is the mark of a crude evolutionism to assume that more complex stands for better all round. So let us as far as we can be content to note that the mental life of the simple society is different from that of the complex society, without being necessarily better or worse on that account. Everyone of us is after all a potentiality of opposites (1924:38).

When Marett refers to "man in evolution" as the subject of anthropology, he means that anthropology is "among the biological sciences and accepts their naturalistic and evolutionary outlook" (1912a:7). Naturalistic in the sense that there is a continuity between all forms of life, and man is a part of that continuity; his appearance "was due to no special creation." Evolutionary in the sense that "the human race has experienced no Fall of Man, but on the whole has been growing more highly organized, primarily as regards its bodily and mental constitution" (1934a:84). In other words, evolution implies no more than the process of becoming more complex; "it is no part of his evolutionary presupposition that man has done well to abandon the simple life. This is a question of value, not of fact" (1934a:36).

Does the movement toward complexity imply progress? For Marett the answer is yes, but the process is not universally unilinear (1934b:51), and occurs *within* particular cultures. "Custom [culture] is king" (1912a:83). In 1912, Marett defines culture as "the aggregate of the forces of social suggestion at work at anytime in a given society" (1912b:426); in 1920, it is defined as "communicable intelligence" (1920a:162). The evolution of culture —Marett prefers to call the venture "an elaboration"—is the process "whereby a communicable intelligence becomes more communicable and more of an intelligence" (1920a:162). Typologically, therefore, cultures can be grouped as either "civilized," those with larger and looser organizations which permit a greater degree of communicable intelligence, or "savage," /2/ those which are homogeneous and unicellular (1924:41). The former progress from within ("intensive progress"); the latter from without ("intrusive progress") through culturecontact /3/ (1920b:236). The stuff of progress is self-consciousness which allows the individual to "establish a kingdom of ends . . . for the benefit of the self" (1934a:84). Thus Marett ends his 1912 text, *Anthropology*, with a chapter on "Man the Individual."

Expanding on the two types of society, Marett suggests the necessity of conceiving of two social phases ("they are in no sense 'ages'"). The one is *synnomic* in which customs form the bond of society; the other is *syntelic* in which ends or ideals establish the bond. "The one is a reign of habit, the other a reign of reflection" (1912b: 426). Corresponding to the phases are two ways of being rational ("directive intelligence"). Reflection, or discursive apprehension, characterizes the *syntelic* type of society; intuition, or massive apprehension, is common to the *synnomic* ("savage") type. Typically, Marett uses metaphor to express the difference. "For intuition, the mystic, marriage is marriage; whereas reflection, the match-maker, is aware of the possibility of divorce" (1924:43). Yet the social phases and their respective modes of reason

suggest relative, not absolute, relationships. The reflective mode is operative also in *synnomic* societies, the intuitive mode in *syntelic* societies (1911:66). On this point, Marett is critical of Lévy-Bruhl's term "mentality" as if the two modes are immutable.

> M. Lévy-Bruhl has described the essential savage as a mystic, and the opposite of a mystic is apparently a positivist. It is highly doubtful, however, if there is a true positivist belonging to the human species; for the type is subhuman. There never was a more ardent mystic than the physicist who explores immensities ranging from the galactic system to the electrons constituting the atom (1934a:97).

Secondly, the "savage is not perpetually spook-haunted." Insofar as "his life consists in the day's work, the savage tends to be literal-minded; but so far as it consists in ceremony, he can afford to be symbolic-minded" (1924:46).

Nonetheless Marett did accept some assumptions of contemporary social psychology, for example, *synnomic* societies tend to produce a mentality which is "mobbish" (1920:166). He could agree with Le Bon's general principle that the part played by reason in a "mobbish society" was minor compared with instinct /4/. On the other hand, significant differences separate Marett from his fellow social psychologists. He did not reach Le Bon's pessimistic conclusion that, in a crowd, the individual acts contrary to his own best interests. Instead he followed his friend, the Oxford social psychologist William McDougall, who thought rather well of the "group mind" and its potential beneficial effects on human behavior /5/. In fact he argues (prior to Malinowski) that the field-worker or anthropologist who disparages the *synnomic* mentality suffers from a tendency to nominalism (1920:166). In other words, he depends too much on what his informants "choose to tell." "The contents of each parcel are judged by what the label declares; and, if there is no label, the parcel is rated as no better than empty" (ibid). Secondly, contrary to Steiner's criticism mentioned above, Marett did not hold to the Law of Recapitulation, whereby the "savage" was thought to think like a child and the characteristics of children were those held by "savages" /6/.

Marett's rationale for studying the "savage," is, first, because they are on a smaller scale; and, in the next place, "the difference in culture between observer and observed produces on the mind's eye an effect of concentration not unlike that caused by the distance of time" (1934a:83). "Savage society" can be studied "statically" in which each institution is characterized and placed in relation to the others; in this way they "appear as forms of 'social organization'." Or they may be studied "dynamically" as custom, where the parts of the whole are contemplated in movement (1912a:153). Three approaches can be distinguished: individual psychology, social morphology, and social psychology. The former, employed by Tylor, Frazer, and characteristic of nineteenth-century British anthropology, is inadequate, first, insofar as it assumes that the individual is not only "self-contained," but "self-complete" (1909a:133); secondly, in its apriorism or tendency to reduce

psychological elements to non-psychological conditions, for example, race, economics, and geography (1909a:122; 1912a:chs. 3,4). Similarly, Marett, though influenced by Durkheim, objects to his social morphology when it tends to identify a belief or an idea only with a particular organization of society (1909a:136). Social psychology, which he considers superior to other approaches, seeks to balance (not exclude) the methods of individual psychology and social morphology. The application of this method to the study of religion aims at translating "a type of religious experience remote from our own into such terms of our consciousness as may best enable the nature of that which is so translated to appear for what it is in itself." Marett intends, therefore, neither a naturalistic nor metaphysical explanation of the origin of religion. Rather he concentrates his efforts on a psychological analysis of "savage religion." "I have not sought to explain so much as to describe . . . how it 'feels'—to live in such a wonder-world" (1909a:xxiii, xxviii). In summary:

> Comparative Religion is a branch of empirical science which aims at describing in formulæ of the highest generality attainable the historical tendencies of the human mind considered in its religious aspect. Its method will primarily be that of a Social Psychology (1909a:144).

The problem addressed by Marett is Tylor's "minimum definition of religion." It will be recalled that the accepted theory was Tylor's animistic hypothesis which he defined in two ways. In relation to mythology, animism was defined as "the belief in the animation of all nature, rising at its highest pitch to personification" (1871:I, 285); in relation to religion, it stood for "the belief in Spiritual Beings" (1871:I, 424). The first objection to Tylor's minimum definition came from Andrew Lang. In *The Making of Religion* (1898), Lang argues that animism as the all-embracing definition is inadequate in that it does not account for the presence of "high gods" in some primitive cultures (cf. Marett, 1929:8). The second attack comes from Marett. First, the definition is incomplete in that religious practice is omitted. Following W. Robertson Smith, he posits ritual as primary for primitive religion, "whilst dogma and myth are secondary." Tylor's definition is "too intellectualistic." Secondly, Marett notes that belief "is not exclusively towards the spiritual . . . but is likewise towards the quasi-material, the indwelling principle of vital energy in material objects." Nonetheless he credits Tylor's definition for calling attention to the "need of characterizing both the religious attitude and the religious object to which the former has reference" (1911:63). As an alternative to animism as a "minimum definition," Marett suggests "supernaturalism." Central in his account is the idea of *mana* for which he is noted in the study of religion. Prior to discussing the significance of this concept for Marett, it needs to be seen in context.

A definition of religion is needed for historical, not for analytical purposes. "Its function is to delimit, not a system, but a tendency; the thing signified being, not fixed, but in process" (1927:91). In order to grasp its

specific nature, a definition must satisfy two criteria. It must be distinguishable wherever it occurs by its outer traits; having so distinguished it, one must be able to discern its inner motives (ibid.). In 1911 (64), Marett offers the following definition:

> We may define, then, the religious object as the sacred, and the corresponding religious attitude as consisting in such manifestation of feeling, thought and action in regard to the sacred as is held to conduce to the welfare of the community or to that of individuals considered as members of the community.

In 1927 (93), the definition is shortened to read: "Religion is the cult of the sacred as symbolic of an infinite good."

The sacred exhibits both negative and positive aspects. In its negative aspect the sacred is first and foremost forbidden; in other words, it is taboo /7/. Taboo is that quality which marks the sacred off from the profane; it is something to be shunned. Since that which is taboo has the consequence of punishing the one who breaks the taboo, "taboo comes to stand for uncleanliness and sin." In isolating the sacred (as "self-protection") from the profane, taboo carries the "connotation of ascetic virtue, purity, devotion, dignity, and blessedness." Secondly, the sacred is mysterious; "what is strange, new or portentous is regularly treated by all savages as sacred." And the sacred is secret. Esotericism is a mark of all primitive religion with "its insistance on initiation, its exclusion of women, and its strictly enforced reticence concerning traditional lore and proceedings" (1911:64).

In its positive aspect the sacred is potent, its potency signified by *mana* or the identification of the efficacy of sacredness with "mystic and magical power." The term *mana* and its derivatives are used to express "thought, memory, emotion, desire, will—in short, psychic energy of all kinds. It also stands for the vehicle of the magician's energy—the spell." The sacred is also animate; in other words, "personality, will or vitality" are attributed to it. Lastly, it is "ancient." There is a connection between the sacred and the traditional which leads to ritualistic conservatism and ancestor worship (ibid.). Marett sums up the positive and negative qualities of the sacred:

> Altogether, in *mana* we have what is *par excellence* the primitive religious idea in its positive aspect, taboo representing its negative side, since whatever has *mana* is taboo, and whatever is taboo has *mana* (1911:64).

Psychologically, *mana* is preceded always by taboo.

> Every crisis tends to be met in the same way, namely, by a ceremonial movement symbolizing first a tension, more or less prolonged, and then a release celebrated in a sort of major key that takes the place of the previous minor. For there is always this progression in the emotional tone—from *tabu* to *mana*, from Lent to Easter (1935:98).

The characteristics of the sacred's manifestation are recognized to be the same in all its phases. Its activity is always fecund ("Blessings come, evils go"), ambiguous ("It will heal or blast, according as it is handled with or without due circumspection"), relative insofar as anything has the possibility of being sacred, and transmissible (". . . this activity originates at certain centers [and] it tends to spread therefrom in all directions") (1911:65).

The "savage" responds to the sacred and its activity as the "supernatural" which arises "when feeling would seem for the time being to have outstripped the power of 'natural,' that is reasonable explanation" (1909a:10–11). Supernaturalism, therefore, refers to a mental attitude which has the sacred as its object. The mental attitude is expressed through feeling, thought, and action (1921a:119–20). Primary for Marett and in contrast to Tylor is the emotional aspect. "I hold that religion is, psychologically regarded, a form of experience in which feeling-tone is relatively predominant" (1906:267). This fundamental feeling is best expressed by the term "awe, which drives a man . . . into personal relations with the supernatural" (1909a:13, 15). Awe is defined by Marett as "a tertiary compound of fear, wonder, and negative self-feeling" (1921a:119). Yet it is not equivalent to pure fear, but stands rather for a "submissiveness tempered with admiration, hopefulness, and even love" (1935:88). Finally, feeling attains to expression in action ". . . savage religion is something not so much thought out as danced out," (1909a:xxxi). The function of the religious attitude is "to be recreative" (1935:124), resulting in "the consecreation of life, the stimulation of the will to live and do" (1911:65).

Since *mana* is central to Marett's understanding of rudimentary religion something more needs to be said about it. In the Introduction to the second edition (1914:xxii) of *The Threshold of Religion*, he says, "I do not hesitate to regard the general notion exemplified by *mana* as the category that most nearly expresses the essence of rudimentary religion."

Fifteen years earlier, in 1899, Marett had been invited by the British Association to "enliven what threatened to be a dull programme with something 'really startling.'" The "hurried statement," entitled "Preanimistic Religion," emphasized the feeling-tone of supernaturalism described above. As he reports, "I arose next morning to find myself—notorious" (1941:156–157). E. S. Hartland "seized" the paper for *Folklore* (June 1900), and Marett's reputation was secured. Wundt gave prominence to the "preanimistic hypothesis" in his *Völkerpsychologie* (1900).

> Nay, he even turned my adjective into a noun and spoke of "*der Marettische Präanimismus*"; so that my mild protest against the all-sufficiency of the Tylorian animism must henceforth rank as a rival "ism", the least of that vast host of pretentious abstractions (1941:159).

An ensuing controversy raged over the meaning of *mana* and centered on its signification within the Melanesian context and whether or not the concept

had a personal or impersonal source. Codrington, on whom Marett and others founded their theories, had said:

> It is a power or influence, not physical, and in a way supernatural; but it shows itself in physical force, or in any kind of power or excellence which a man possesses. This Mana is not fixed in anything, and can be conveyed in almost anything; but spirits, *whether disembodied souls or supernatural beings*, have it and can impart it; *and it essentially belongs to personal beings to originate it*, though it may act through the medium of water, or a stone, or a bone (1891:119).

Those (Malinowski, Van der Leeuw, and others) who regard *mana* as an "impersonal force" in substantiating their respective positions use ellipses for the italicized sections. The problem has been discussed elsewhere /8/ and need not be repeated here. What is significant is that those who argue for its local meaning on ethnographic grounds, or its source—whether it is personal or not—miss Marett's main point.

> Thus, even if it be true, as Codrington's somewhat guarded account leads one to suspect, that in Melanesia *mana* has been more or less successfully incorporated in an animistic system, to be a ghost or spirit, there is no reason why, for the general purposes of comparative science, *mana* should not be taken to cover all cases of magico-religious efficacy, whether, the efficacy be conceived as automatic or derived (1915b:379).

As a generic term signifying the positive aspect in primitive religion, the concept of *mana* serves also as a specific critique of the search for an origin and evolution of religion. In the first place, *mana* calls attention to the common element in magic and religion. It "enables theory to treat the magico-religious as a unity in difference, the unity consisting in wonder-working power and the difference in the social or anti-social use to which it is put by the rival systems" (ibid.). One cannot argue, as did Frazer, for a progression from magic, through religion, to science (cf. 1920b:168f). In the second place, Tylor's rationalistic hypothesis viewed progress as a movement from faulty to clear thinking, from religion to positivism. The idea of *mana* shifts the locus of religious "essence" from reason (belief) to feeling (awe). On this basis, the extraordinary remains historically concomitant with the ordinary.

> Indeed . . . the emotional nature of man is on the whole so stable as to vary little in its most characteristic manifestations from age to age and from race to race. Thus, even in a psychological sense, we are justified in speaking of the everlasting values (1920b:70)

The "savage" is neither more nor less religious or moral than the "civilized" (1936:166).

When Marett refers to "pre-animism" or "animatism," he is not maintaining that "pre-animistic religion" is a system of ideas chronologically prior

to animism. Rather he means merely that psychologically and logically that which is indistinct precedes that which is distinct, the undifferentiated precedes the differentiated, the pre-reflective precedes the reflective (1909a:xi). In this sense the term "pre-animism" is justified. Elsewhere (1911:228), Marett has argued the futility of the search for origins.

> Now anthropological theories of the origin of religion seem to me to go wrong mainly because they seek to simplify too much. Having got down to what they take to be a root-idea, they straightway proclaim it *the* root-idea. I believe that religion has just as few, or as many, roots as human life and mind.

He sums up his choice of the term *mana* in the following way:

> *Mana* is selected by me for special emphasis merely because it comes nearer than any other available term to the bare designation of that positive emotional value which is the raw material of religion, and needs only to be moralized—to be identified with goodness—to become its essence (1909a:xxxi).

Hence, Marett offers us neither a naturalistic nor a metaphysical explanation of the origin of religion. The search for religion's primordium had required the investigator to establish both a single starting point and chronicle of the stages of human rationality. Marett, on the other hand, although he addresses himself to Tylor's minimum definition, rejects single causality and the reduction of religion to an "ism" ("I repudiate all the 'isms', if necessary with my last breath," 1941:152). Rather, his concern was to explore and describe the dimensions of religious consciousness, their social and anti-social use within respective cultural configurations. Religion was something more than a rational attempt to explain and control nature. Marett's revolt against positivism struck a blow against determinism and reductionism.

A primary influence leading up to the formation of the "pre-animistic hypothesis" was Marett's Platonism. As a student he studied under Jowett and the Nettleships at Balliol. Later, in 1902, Marett contributed an essay on "Origin and Validity in Ethics" ("the nearest thing to a confession of faith," 1941:153) to a symposium on personal idealism. In it he says:

> There is at least a half-truth . . . that a man is born either a Platonist or an Aristotelian, a Stoic or an Epicurean, an intuitionist or a utilitarian, an idealist or a materialist. We are spiritually-minded or worldly-minded, believers or sceptics, romanticists or realists, and so forth, primarily at least in virtue of a certain fundamental endowment of massive sentiment (1902:238) /9/.

Although Marett proposed to reconcile the two positions, he remained the idealist. He was influenced by the Darwinian revolution and its attempt to offer natural reasons for the human condition; nonetheless, he adumbrated the idealist themes of an organic character of society, the Platonic ideal of the unity of human experience, human freedom, and the meaningful character of

history. The attempt at reconciliation was carried over to the "apparent" conflict between religion and science which motivated Marett to suggest the tabu-mana formula as a comprehensive minimum definition of religion. In the Introduction to E. O. James, *Primitive Ritual and Belief*, he writes:

> . . . anthropoligist and theologian may well be called upon to take counsel together with a view to common action. Could they but decide to assign one and the same meaning to the term Religion, much benefit would result. The lay mind would no longer be puzzled by verbal contradictions concerning first principles. Moreover, the ancient and unprofitable controversy between Religion and Science would be mitigated by the removal of a primary cause of mis-understanding (1917:xii).

Marett's sucess at reconciliation lay, if not in the theoretical sphere, in his training of field anthropologists ("It is more important to produce men than books," 1941:226). The teaching of anthropology at Oxford had begun in 1884, with Tylor's appointment, but he had few students. It was not until 1905 that the subject received wider recognition. In that year, a committee in anthropology was established and a diploma in anthropology inaugurated (of which Marett was a prime mover). A number of students were graduated who later made significant contributions, including A. C. Hollis, R. S. Rattray, and C. K. Meek. Marett, who held the post of reader in social anthropology until 1934, argued that the teaching of anthropology should be directed toward field work. In 1912, he writes (quoted by Wallis, 1957:790):

> As I have aready said, the inert, custom-ridden aspect of primitive society is largely an effect of distance—in other words, the effect of a want of intimate knowledge and sympathetic interest on the part of the civilized observers. We portray the wood after a fashion. It suits our sketchy methods well enough to represent it as a dead mass of color. But we have not sought, so far, to render the subtle values of the individual trees. Yet only by so doing can we hope to do justice to the spirit of the wood, which is a spirit of life and growth.

What can be said about Marett's contribution to the study of religion? As I stated in the first part of this paper, evolutionary positivism died out at the beginning of the twentieth century. A new model for the anthropological study of religion was not established until Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown refined their functionalist approach after the First World War. In the interval there was a revival of the study of cultural diffusion, against which Marett delivered one of his most vitriolic attacks in the 1927 Frazer lecture. In England, although Marett's views were accepted by such leading persons as E. S. Hartland, a more receptive audience was to be found in Germany, first in Wundt and Preuss, later in Otto. Wundt misread Marett's "preanimistic hypothesis" as a "representative theory of the origin of religion . . . My chief concern was simply to urge that primitive or rudimentary religion . . . is at once wider, and in certain respects a vaguer, thing that 'the belief in spiritual

beings' of Tylor's famous definition" (1909a:viii). Preuss accepted Marett's theory, but distorted it to read that religion originated in "primal stupidity" (*Urdummheit*), a view Marett would never have accepted.

Otto, in his well-known *The Idea of the Holy*, came closest to corroborating Marett's "mana-taboo formula." He refers to Marett as the one who "more particularly comes within a hair's breadth of what I take to be the truth of the matter" (1929:15, n. 1) /10/. Both begin with experience, but for Otto the religious experience is *sui generis*; for Marret it is not. He is more cautious and suggests that "awe" may be a compound of natural feelings such as fear, love, reverence, etc. (1932, 1933a). The experience is conditioned both by "antecedent historical conditions" and "psychological conditions operating here and now" (1920b:127). This would become the position of Malinowski, except he would eliminate the historical dimension.

In the history of the study of religion, only cursory reference has been given to Marett. Yet the "mana theory" associated with his name has become a common part of the religious studies vocabulary. Similar views were being developed by others, namely Hubert and Mauss /11/, to whom Marett makes reference in his autobiography. "Both of us," he says, "undoubtedly hit the same bird, and theirs was the heavier shot; but I fired first" (1941:159).

NOTES

/1/ For example, J. H. M. Beattie, "On Understanding Ritual." *Rationality*. Ed. by Bryan R. Wilson, 1977:250, 267. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

/2/ The term "savage" designates "nothing other than 'silvaggio,' a 'forester' or 'woodlander' . . . Now such a label would not be inappropriate if it could be made to carry a purely economic, as distinguished from a moral, connotation. Economically regarded, the class of savage or wild folk includes all those who live in close dependence on the immediate physical environment. The savage is thus the veritable 'child of nature,' since his natural surroundings so largely make him what he is" (1920b:30).

/3/ ". . . the progress which anthropologists describe by the colourless name of culture-contact normally amounts to the systematic exploitation of a weaker by a stronger people" (1924:41).

/4/ Le Bon, Gustave. *The Crowd* (*La psychologie des foules*). 1930, ©1895. New York: Macmillan.

/5/ McDougall, William. *An Introduction to Social Psychology*. 1908. London.

/6/ Steiner, Franz. *Taboo*. 1956:111. London: Cohen and West.

/7/ Marett's concept of "taboo" has been discussed by Steiner (ibid.), and need not be repeated here.

/8/ For example, Firth, Raymond. "The Analysis of *Mana*: An Empirical Approach." *Tikopia Ritual and Belief*. 1967, ©1940:174–194. London: George Allen and Unwin. Lehmann, F. R. *Mana. Der Begriff des "auszerordentlich Wirkungsvollen" bei Sudseevolkern*. 1922. Leipzig: Otto Spamer.

/9/ Compare Van der Leeuw (1938:83, 88): "While Dynamism attempts to understand the experience of the environment in its potency, Animism aims at interpreting it as an encounter between two wills, or souls or spirits:—those of man and of his surroundings . . . But at all periods there has been Dynamism as well as Animism while both still exist to-day side by side . . . Animism and Dynamism therefore designate not eras, but structures, and are as such eternal."

/10/ In his article on "Mana" in *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th edition (1929b:771), Marett acknowledges the similarity of Otto's thesis.

/11/ Hubert, H. and Mauss, M. "Esquisse d'une Théorie générale de la Magie." *l'Année Sociologique*. 1902/3, VII:1–146.

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