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Q4(c)

Critically examine James Frazer's theory of evolutionism. Elucidate the place of religion in modernity

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2025 · Anthropology GS 1 · 15 marks · Classical evolutionism (Tylor, Morgan and Frazer)

(a) Classical evolutionism (Tylor, Morgan and Frazer)

Facts & figures for this PYQ only.

Numbers move. Confirm the latest Budget, Economic Survey or census round. This sheet is for revision, not a substitute for the model answer.

<https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/anthropology-gs-1/2025/critically-examine-james-frazers-theory-of-evolutionism-elucidate-the-place-of-religion-in-modernity/>

The Golden Bough

Frazer's comparative study of myth and religion, and the classic statement of magic-religion-science evolutionism.

Sympathetic magic

Frazer's law of similarity (like produces like) and law of contact (once together, always linked).

Malinowski on magic

Trobriand magic as practical and emotional technique in fishing and gardening. A field rebuttal of armchair intellectualism.

Weberian disenchantment

A thesis that modern rationalisation thins magical explanation. Empirical religion in modernity is more stubborn and political than a completed disenchantment.

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