

The Origin of Belief in a God

The Athenaeum (Londres, 3 août 1912)

Andrew Lang

S. Baciocchi and F. Théron (ed.)



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Dr. Durkheim's new book, 'Les Formes Élémentaires de la Vie Religieuse' (Paris, Alcan), has come [1] pp. 414-5 into my hands. I am anxious to protest briefly against Dr. Durkheim's statement [2] that, in my opinion, some savage peoples have arrived at their idea of an All Father. For this "sort of [3]" par une sorte d'intuition sur la nature de laquelle on refuse de s'expliquer". That page, in the second edition [4] intuition" Dr. Durkheim quotes my 'Making of Religion' p. 331. I have not at hand, but in the [5] (1900), is concerned with the Poltergeist! The first edition (1898) I protested that I had never advocated any idea of a primitive [6] second and third (pp. ix-xii) revelation such as critics had attributed to me. I also gave what to me seems the most probable as [7], "une interpretation théologique theory of the origin of the All Father belief. It is not " Dr. Durkheim declares it to be (p. 415). Moreover, I "hastened to add that another theory might - no more theological than the first - and Dr. Durkheim has a third. I do not [8] be entertained" take much interest in any of these theories: it is enough for me that Dr. Durkheim accepts the evidence for the All Father belief in Australia. But when Dr. Durkheim (p. 267, note 1) says that, in he credits me with a view [9], "elle serait due... à une sorte de révélation primitive my opinion, " which I never expressed, and which I have repeatedly disclaimed.

A. Lang

[The above was received shortly before the writer's death.]

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Lang (Andrew), *The Making of Religion*, London / New York / Bombay, Longmans, Green, and Co, 1898, 380 p.

Lang (Andrew), « Preface to the Second Edition » et « Preface to the Third Edition (May 1909) », *The Making of Religion*, Third Edition, London / New York / Bombay / Calcutta, Longmans, Green, and Co, 1909, p.vii-viii et p. ix-xxiv

NOTES

1. [« La notion d'esprit et de dieux », Durkheim 1912, livre 2, chap. 9, p. 414-415]
2. [« La notion d'esprit et de dieux », Durkheim 1912, livre 2, chap. 9, p. 414]
3. [Durkheim se réfère bien à la première édition, Cf. Andrew Lang, *The Making of Religion*, London / New York / Bombay, Longmans, Green, and Co, 1898, p. 331]
4. [Andrew Lang, *The Making of Religion*, London / New York / Bombay, Longmans, Green, and Co, 1898, 380 p.]
5. [Andrew Lang, « Preface to the Second Edition », *The Making of Religion*, Third Edition, London / New York / Bombay / Calcutta, Longmans, Green, and Co, 1909, p.ix-xii]
6. [« La notion d'esprit et de dieux », Durkheim 1912, livre 2, chap. 9, p. 415]
7. [Andrew Lang, « Preface to the Second Edition », *The Making of Religion*, Third Edition, London / New York / Bombay / Calcutta, Longmans, Green, and Co, 1909, p. xii]
8. [« Origine de ces croyances [totémiques] - Examen critique des théories », Durkheim 1912, livre 2, chap. 5, p. 267 n. 1. Durkheim ajoute cependant, dans la même note, que « Lang ne fait pas intervenir cette idée dans son explication du totémisme »]