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This is exactly the sort of book which is worth translating. A scholarly book, it has already made its impression among scholars; and both interest of subject and exposition of the theories advanced recommend it to a wider public. Embodying several articles first published in M. Durkheim "Année Sociologique,"^[1] it yet shows modifications of the earlier views; and presents what appears to be the author's final word on the theory of religion. M. Durkheim is known as a leader of a school of thought whose influence has spread during the last ten years; in Paris, MM. Lévy-Bruhl, Hubert, Mauss, Hamelin, and others, and in England notably Miss Jane Harrison, Mr. Cornford, and Mr. A.B. Cook, bear witness to the fertility of Professor Durkheim's ideas. His present volume, well translated, though with less literary finish than the original, ought to be read not only by specialists, but by everyone who is interested in the history and in the future of religion.

M. Durkheim's argument may be unravelled into three strands. There is first an examination of the facts of primitive religion (based chiefly upon the researches of Spencer and Gillen, and Howitt, into Australian society), in which the author is concerned with the meaning of totemism and the periodic festivals of the Australians. This argument, which may be considered upon its own merits, attempts to provide a more satisfactory interpretation of these phenomena than

those put forward by earlier anthropologists, especially Max Müller, Lang, and Frazer. Max Müller's view, which was mainly based upon Sanskrit philology, and which examined primitive religion mainly through its myths, saw in the primitive pantheon a personification of the larger forces of nature, and found in the primitive mind a sentiment of awe and wonder at these forces, a fundamental intuition of the "infinite." M. Durkheim does not attribute the origin of religion to wonder or speculation, and sees in mythology only the attempt of the savage to rationalise and justify his own religious practices, in regard to the true origin of which he is as much in the dark as the scientific investigator. The second type of explanation which M. Durkheim criticises is that of "animism"—the classic example of which is Tylor's dreaming aborigine who finds that his soul in sleep can part company with his body and roam the forests, and who comes to invest the objects about him with a separable soul like that which he attributes to himself. The idea of the soul, according to M. Durkheim, is derivative. The true beginning of religion he finds in the "group consciousness."^[2] He shows how this group consciousness accounts for totemism. The second strand of his argument traces the development of the categories: space, time, number, cause, &c., out of the group consciousness. This line of argument, which is of interest chiefly to technical philosophers, is inadequately developed and may be neglected in so brief a discussion as the present. The third strand of argument takes up the ultimate function and destiny of religion in our own civilisation. The doctrine of group consciousness is the basis of the whole theory.

On one side the consciousness of man is limited by the individual's needs and activities. The individual marries and begets; hunts and fishes, builds and labours, and these are interests of a purely individual consciousness. The instinct for association and community with other men is not merely defensive or economic, nor is the community an accident of common descent. It is a religious instinct. For the savage or the civilised man, a solely individual existence would be intolerable; he feels the need of recreating and sustaining his strength by periodic refuge in another consciousness which is supra-individual. Totemism is the organisation of the group, and the religious festival is its expression. "By uttering the same cry, pronouncing the same word, or performing the same gesture in regard to some object individuals become and feel themselves to be in unison."^[3] Collective sentiments find expression spontaneously in a material emblem. Durkheim, following Strehlow, thinks that each group took as its insignia the animal or plant that was the commonest in the vicinity where it had the habit of meeting. The totem is more than an heraldic crest. The cockatoo men are cockatoos, they partake in a common nature from which other men are excluded, a common nature which it is the function of the religious festival to arouse.

The life of Australian society corresponds more closely than any other to this distinction between individual economic existence, of low intensity, and a collective existence which finds expression in the wildest religious excitement. For the greater part of the year the Australian clan dissipates into its constituent families, which wander about and seek their sustenance where they can. At regular intervals the families reassemble at a determined spot, to participate in the "corroboree." Then "a sort of electricity is formed by their collecting which quickly transports them to an extraordinary degree of exaltation."^[4] The wildest orgies take place; with every stimulant of noise, torchlight, strange masks, and drink, the savage seems to himself to have become a new being. Hence the savage lives in two worlds, the one commonplace, practical, a world of drudgery, the other sacred, intense, a world into which he escapes at regular intervals, a world in which he is released from the fetters of individuality.

In Australian religion M. Durkheim finds the essential elements of all religion. For M. Durkheim *communion*, not worship, is the fundamental sentiment. He goes on to trace the origin of the idea of the soul, the beginnings of sacrifice, asceticism (gain of power through suffering), and the evolution of gods. While he makes the cult, not the myth, the essential of religion, he yet sees in

totemism the genesis of scientific explanation, in imitative ceremonies the genesis of the notion of cause (“like produces like”^[5]), and in the magical *mana*, *orenda*, or *wakanda* the germ of the idea of force.

In his conclusion M. Durkheim permits himself some speculation on the future of religion. The religious side of man’s nature can never disappear.

“Its object is to raise man above himself and to make him lead a life superior to that which he would lead, if he followed only his own individual whims; belief expresses this life in representations; rites organi[z]e it and regulate its workings.”^[6]... “The believer who has communicated with his [g]od is not merely a man who sees new truths [...] he is a man who is stronger.”^[7] But here are two attitudes essential to religion. “The one is turned toward action, which it demands and regulates; the other is turned toward thought, which it enriches and organi[z]es.”^[8] Beyond the bounds of science, which is for ever incomplete, there lies the province for faith “when the practical exigencies and the vital necessities which we feel without distinctly conceiving them push thought in advance.”^[9] At present we are going through a stage of transition, of moral mediocrity. But “a day will come when our societies will know again those hours of creative effervescence, in the course of which new ideas arise and new formul[ae] are found which serve for a while as a guide to humanity.”^[10]

There is a suggestion of Bergsonism in these last words, although M. Durkheim is not in accord with the detailed views of Bergson. It is impossible in a short review to offer much criticism of a book so important and so well filled with original ideas; it is enough if the reviewer can provoke interest in what is perhaps the most significant, and is one of the most fascinating, of books on the subject of religion which have been published during the present century.

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NOTES

1. [Cf., outre les nombreuses « Analyses » de sociologie religieuse publiées dans *L'Année sociologique*, Émile Durkheim, « La prohibition de l'inceste et ses origines », *L'Année sociologique*, 1 (1896-1897), Mémoires originaux, 1898, p. 1-70; *ibid.*, « De la définition des phénomènes religieux », *L'Année sociologique*, 2 (1897-1898), Mémoires originaux, 1899, p. 1-28; *ibid.*, « Sur le totémisme », *L'Année sociologique*, 5 (1900-1901), Mémoires originaux, 1902, p. 82-121; Émile Durkheim et Marcel Mauss, « De quelques formes primitives de classification. Contribution à

l'étude des représentations collectives », *L'Année sociologique*, 6 (1901-1902), Mémoires originaux, 1903, p. 1-72 et Émile Durkheim, « Sur l'organisation matrimoniale des sociétés australiennes », *L'Année sociologique*, 8 (1903-1904), Mémoires originaux, 1905, p. 118-147]

2. [« Origins of these [Totemic] Beliefs. Origin of the Idea of the Totemic Principle or Mana », Durkheim 1915, Book 2, chap. 7, p. 230]

3. [« Origins of these [Totemic] Beliefs. Origin of the Idea of the Totemic Principle or Mana », Durkheim 1915, Book 2, chap. 7, p. 230]

4. [« Origins of these [Totemic] Beliefs. Origin of the Idea of the Totemic Principle or Mana », Durkheim 1915, Book 2, chap. 7, p. 215]

5. [« The Positive Cult. 2. Imitative Rites and the Principle of Causality », Durkheim 1915, Book 3, chap. 3, p. 356]

6. [« Piacular Rites and the Ambiguity of the Notion of Sacredness », Durkheim 1915, Book 3, chap. 5, p. 414]

7. [« Conclusion », Durkheim 1915, p. 416]

8. [« Conclusion », Durkheim 1915, p. 428]

9. [« Conclusion », Durkheim 1915, p. 431]

10. [« Conclusion », Durkheim 1915, p. 428]