

ANXIETY AND SOCIETY

I. THE HUMAN REVOLUTION

The theories about the origins of humanity contain, for the most part, a strange contradiction. For one thing, we acknowledge that the human mind is basically different from animal intelligence; indeed, there are few writers who question the revolutionary nature of the change that has occurred in the psychic makeup of living beings as a consequence of the advent of conceptual thought, of conscious reflection, and of objective knowledge of the world. "Human intelligence," writes Le Roy, "presents a completely original, distinctive feature; there is something exceptional and unique about it that is not to be found anywhere else,"¹ while Durkheim observes: "Man is not merely an animal with a few additional attributes, but quite another thing."² "Although the Infusoria are linked to the monkey by a whole series of intermediate stages, the monkey is separated from man by a hiatus," insists Claparède,³ and, finally, a writer who is not a scholar expressed the following common-sense judgment on the

Translated by Elaine P. Halperin.

1. Ed. Le Roy, *Les Origines humaines et l'évolution de l'intelligence* (Paris: Boivin & Cie, 1931), p. 13.

2. E. Durkheim, *Les Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse* (2d ed.; Paris: F. Alcan, 1925), p. 92.

3. Ed. Claparède, "De l'intelligence animale à l'intelligence humaine," *Le Mystère animal* (Paris: Plon, 1939), p. 175.

subject: "We would know exactly what man is if we could accurately assess that insurmountable wall that separates the most 'intelligent' animal from the most primitive pygmy."⁴

"Hiatus," "insurmountable wall," "something exceptional and unique"—these terms convince us that the difference between man and animal is not merely one of degree; the two spiritual modes—beast and man—are not fixed on a same level, and the one is not simply the extension or the consummation of the other. At a given moment, rather, a break occurred in the continuity of psychic evolution, a radical and profound change—what might be called a "revolution."

Yet this break in the continuity which we acknowledge on the psychological level, we refuse to recognize in the framework of evolution. Whenever the question of the history of human origins arises, we claim we can discover all the intermediate stages between animal and man, as if the transition from one to the other had been accomplished progressively, by imperceptibly cumulative linear changes. Yet "progressive" alterations of this kind can only develop faculties already present—they cannot add new ones. The ultimate transformation which would result from this would be solely quantitative, not qualitative. And we have just seen that the difference between the human being and the animal is not merely one of degree because it has to do with the very nature of the psychic structure. However far in our thinking we push a continuous evolution, we will never end up with a revolution.

A revolution, which, in biology as well as in history, is a rapid and complete change of structure, necessarily has a date; the advent of man has a date, although, so far, we have not been able to fix it precisely.⁵ In any case, we can say that it occurred between the end of the Tertiary and the beginning of the Quaternary, or, very approximately, a million years before our time. But monkeys go back to the Oligocene; they made their appearance on earth some twenty million years before man and have evolved psychologically very little during this enormous period. Given the circumstances, is it possible to believe that the natural evolution of animal intelligence led to man? Why that enormous interval, during which animal intelligence remained almost stationary, and the brusque, sudden transformation which followed: the advent of man?

4. Preface of *Mystère animal*, a study that appeared in the collection, "Presences," under the direction of Daniel-Rops (Paris: Plon, 1939).

5. Le Roy, *op. cit.*, p. 209: "At the very least, during the transition from beast to man is not the existence of a threshold doubtful—a decisive threshold, that up to the present remains inaccessible, imperceptible?"

Moreover, a very simple observation suffices to destroy the notion of a progressive evolution of the intelligence: the precariousness of man's psychic equilibrium which insanity—practically unknown in animals—so easily destroys. A mental edifice that has been erected little by little, wisely and slowly, should have a more solid basis and should not be so easily shattered. But man's psychic life is essentially unstable, whether we view it on an individual or on a social level; and this proves that time, which, it is said, has no respect for what is accomplished without it, did not consolidate the foundations.

Fish—those veterans of life on our planet—are blessed with extraordinary vitality, as long as they remain in their own element. In particular, the heart is able to resist most dangers, in certain species continuing to beat even after undergoing “a large, zigzag incision.” Pike, carp, and eel, poisoned by oxides of carbon to the point where their red globules are “entirely incapable of carrying oxygen,” nevertheless do not perish, because the oxygen dissolved in the plasma is enough to maintain life. “A fish in an apparent state of death can regain its respiration, then its equilibrium, and finally survive when placed in a caffeinic bath.”⁶ Of course these observations touch upon the vitality of the physical organism; but the biological laws remain the same everywhere: stability goes hand in glove with antiquity.

Man's situation is different; because his advent (as a psychic being) is recent and occurred rapidly, he is not blessed with the stability granted to other species which have been skilfully molded for a long time by nature. Instability in man manifests itself precisely in those elements that distinguish him from the animal, in what he has within him that is new and not yet definitively integrated: thought and moral sentiments. It is there and nowhere else that insanity strikes.

The characteristic of man, as we have stated, is not to be “more intelligent” than animals but to be different. His psychic structure diverges radically from that of even those animals that are zoölogically closest to him. The function of the higher nervous centers has been profoundly modified in him. How and why this is so we have attempted to show elsewhere.⁷ For the moment we will confine ourselves to indicating that, according to most writers, this change consists in a certain detachment toward the external world; for animals things exist merely in relation to

6. We have taken these observations on fish from an article by Léon Binet of the Académie des Sciences.

7. In *La Révolution originelle*, shortly to be published by Vrin.

themselves, to their instincts, and their needs of the moment. In its perception of things, no animal is capable of ignoring the present or its own immediate demands. For the animal, a stone is this stone, tied up with this immediate impulse of its being. Yet it is precisely because man can remove himself when confronting the world that he is able to think and elaborate abstract concepts. A stone perceived as existing "in itself," that is to say, without any link to the "me" and the contingent necessity of the present, ceases thereby to be a subjective perception; it becomes instead an object of "disinterested" knowledge—an object of thought.

A certain "disinterestedness" in regard to the present and its imperatives thus appears to be the fundamental characteristic of the human mind, the keystone of that strange and perplexing edifice which is man's consciousness.

If we remember that psychic animal life is based upon "the reflex arc," in other words, the instantaneous and direct response of the being to an external stimulus, and, moreover, if we consider that the concentration of psychic forces upon the present moment responds to a profound biological necessity, then we can measure the extent of the revolution effected by the human consciousness' detachment. The animal does not see itself in the process of living because its psychic nature is entirely absorbed by its reaction—active or passive—to external demands. This is true of the whole hierarchy of living things, from the amoeba to the Primates. Detachment is a biological heresy, and from nature's viewpoint man is the supreme arch-heretic.

It is quite evident that the natural development of animal intelligence could not lead directly to such a heresy; in order to bring about this revolution that runs counter to the universal order of earthly life, in order to cause this reversal, something had to occur which suddenly interrupted the normal course of evolution.

This profound alteration was not merely the culmination of an increase in intelligence—which would have been a natural concomitant of evolution. Instead, we can even affirm, as Claparède seems to have done,⁸ that it must have preceded the extraordinary growth of the human mind, for detachment, as we have seen, lies at the origin of objective thought. There-

8. "Indeed, so far as it was able to break the chains that bound it to a concrete foundation, the spirit took flight. . . . This is the great revolution that occurred in man and that has progressed so prodigiously, endowing him with fresh powers, the mind's field of action. And in the end the individual had to free himself from this universe, from this surrounding world of which he is an integral part. . . . And by thus detaching himself, by dissociating himself from the world and removing himself a sufficient distance from it, he rendered himself competent to judge it instead of merely submitting to it" (Claparède, *loc. cit.*, pp. 177-78).

for the psychic transformation had to take place before man's intelligence could soar. And, actually, the difference in cranial capacity between the first Hominidae and the anthropoids from whom they became separated is not extraordinary. Nor is the disproportion between the cephalic index of modern man and that of the higher animals exceptional in the zoölogical series. Whereas the relationship between the "cephalic coefficient"⁹ of man and that of anthropomorphous monkeys is 2.74:0.75, for the crow and the mouse it is 0.25:0.08.¹⁰ In both instances the relationship goes from the singular to the tripartite. However, the difference in intelligence between the mouse and the crow—if any exists—is solely of a quantitative order. Cephalic disproportion did not create new faculties or engender a new form of consciousness, and so a disproportion between the cephalic coefficients would not suffice to explain man and that which distinguishes him radically from all animals. The genesis of so complete a change cannot be sought here. At the time this change occurred, the difference between the intelligence of the species—our own—and that of the most highly developed of the Primates who had remained animal did not play a determining role; at the most it could only have promoted the transformation.¹¹ This change came about under critical circumstances thanks to an affective power that deeply upset, disorganized, and reorganized the natural order of psychic life.

II. THE AGONY OF THE ANCESTORS

As long as an animal species is enjoying favorable external conditions, there is no reason for it to evolve. "The best is enemy of the good." That wise proverb is merely the human expression of a profound rule of life, which

9. The "cephalic coefficient," established by Eugène Dubois (discoverer of the Pithecanthropus), makes it possible to assess the relative importance of the brain in the animal series by eliminating the differences due to the size of the species.

10. Cf. Claparède, *loc. cit.*, p. 165.

11. Primitive man was still quite close to the monkey in terms of the capacity of his brain. On the subject of the Neanderthal man, who already fashioned tools, possessed the rudiments of language, and belonged to the human species from a psychological point of view, see C. Arambourg, *La Genèse de l'humanité* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1948), who makes the following statement: "Moreover, the mouldings of the endocranial cavity reveal, in the general morphology of the Neanderthal man's encephalon, a mixture of human and simian structures, the latter being more numerous. Thus, the general simplicity and the crude aspects of the circumvolutions . . . are so many indications of intellectual inferiority" (p. 43). Quite as interesting in this regard, we believe, is the case of the Australopithecus which was ranked among the Hominidae for a while, and about which Marcellin Boule, *Les Hommes fossiles* (3d ed.; Paris: Masson & Co., 1946), made the following remark: "It is still only a large monkey according to its *weak cerebral capacity*, but in the *morphology of its cranium*, and above all in its dentition, it seems to have more human than simian tendencies" (p. 87). (Italics mine.)

itself never takes useless risks; and every innovation entails some danger.

But change is permanent in nature—happiness, calm, certainty, or a state of security have but the ephemeral duration of the instant that separates two anxieties. The need to be constantly ready to adapt one's self to the modifications of the milieu nurtures a pliability in living beings which expresses itself among other things by everyday mutations, even when no other external cause arises to increase the rhythm of these.

However, from time to time it happens that the transformation of the environment quickens or that a new factor suddenly modifies the living conditions of a species. In either case the species is forced to evolve or perish. Quite frequently in the past the change was a slow one, and the animal disappeared before it had to face the peril. How many zoölogical variants have disappeared forever! The fossil remains of just a few of these have been discovered; the great majority of unadapted species have vanished in the night without leaving a trace.

Yet such species must have existed in great number. A few bones have been unearthed, and they provide evidence of beings that lived and struggled before they succumbed. But, at the moment when the change occurs, the species has ceased to be at the highest stage of its development. Threatened in its existence, it is in the process of disappearing, and its numbers have already been considerably reduced. This explains one of the riddles of paleontology: the difficulty of finding remains that are in a state of transition. These relics are generally rare because the creatures they represent, having ceased to adapt themselves, had dwindled to the point of being as rare as, for example, the okapi of our day.¹² "It seems that we ought to encounter a mass of fossil fragments of the intermediate organisms, that is to say, of the architects of evolution. In fact, Darwin had already observed with some surprise the extreme rarity of these transitional forms."¹³

This is particularly true of man's immediate ancestor, the "missing link," that could fill the void that separates the more highly developed monkeys from the first known men. Furthermore, the remains of the

12. If the okapi should become entirely extinct, how many bones would we find a hundred thousand years from now? And even today the animal is almost not to be seen.

13. Guyénot. R. Broom also notes the rapid disappearance of direct ancestors: "The first amphibian quadruped sprang from fish with lobated fins that belong to the Devonian period, and it seems that the ancestor disappeared at once. . . . Later, during the Carboniferous period, an amphibian of a higher order gave birth to the first reptile; and after the Carboniferous period no amphibian remained that could have had a reptile as a descendant.' In this connection we should cite the remark made by Père Teilhard du Chardin: "Man . . . does not lend his exact form to anything that we know about prior to him" (quoted from Le Roy, *loc. cit.*, p. 176).

latter are extremely rare; members of a species that was about to disappear, although endowed with a more adaptable form, these ancient Hominidae waged a hard battle for survival. Their fate remained uncertain. At least some of their direct descendants, who are designated by the term "Neanderthal," finally vanished. Under such circumstances these first men could scarcely have been numerous.

Crude utensils are almost the only evidence today of the presence on earth of the most ancient representatives of the *Homo faber*. Boule, in his classical work on fossil man, makes the following observation: "As for the men who made these tools, we know as yet nothing or almost nothing about their bodies. This long period is one of the greatest lacunae in human paleontology."¹⁴

Here we touch upon the tragic roots of man's destiny: his physical weakness, the almost total absence of any means of defense, and his incapacity for speed compared to the great wild beasts that pursued him. This inevitably led to his disappearance. Of all the earthly creatures, man seems the most handicapped physically. Some creatures have hooks and claws; others, in one leap, can outdistance their pursuers; still others have an actual acoustical sound-box in the guise of ears, which can signal the approach of danger from a great distance. The giraffe is protected by two observation posts, its eyes, perched on top of a supple watchtower. Its cousin, the okapi, that lives in forests where, in any case, the view is blocked by trees, does not have a long neck. However, he does have ears that would make *Maître Aliboron* jealous. As for the asinine species—note its compensatory attributes: in the case of the horse, legs that carry him far; and, for the less speedy jackass, remarkable receivers of sound waves that enable him to get away in time.

But man! Poorly equipped for attack, the royal road of flight was in addition closed to him because of his erect position. Where is the large four-legged animal that cannot outrun him? It was a dramatic situation in prehistoric times when even animals that were better armed than our distant ancestors often owed their safety to flight when confronted by formidable enemies. Man lived among large carnivorous beasts whose habitat he shared. At the beginning of the Quaternary—this is the date generally fixed for the advent of our species (in other words, the crucial change from beast to a being endowed with reason)—a particularly dangerous tiger,

14. Boule, *op. cit.*, p. 550. The same author observes a little further on that "we know nothing or almost nothing about the men of that epoch; the sole remains that have come down to us are those of the Heidelberg man" (*ibid.*, p. 552).

with teeth shaped like saber blades, terrorized the plains and forests. We know that felines readily attacked large monkeys. Even today there are "man-eating" wild animals; all the hunters agree that these are almost always old or sick animals, no longer agile enough to prey upon their customary game. They seize upon man because he cannot escape from them by running. What today is the exception—thanks to the weapons man has provided himself with—must have been the rule in earlier times.

The man-animal, as then constituted, was destined to disappear.¹⁵ It seems, moreover, that certain Primates, contemporary to the human ancestor, superior to the present-day monkey, and closely akin to primitive man, were, like him, poorly equipped: they could not survive.¹⁶ Only those Primates who became or remained arboricole were able to overcome the peril; indeed, trees offered a safe shelter from wild animals; even today certain primitive tribes of Australia find them a permanent refuge. The monkeys that have not disappeared are arboricole and quadrumanous (an anatomical structure superbly adapted to this habitat).¹⁷

It is significant that among the first human races the short-legged Neanderthaler¹⁸ did not survive. These still hardly formed primitive men,

15. Arambourg, *op. cit.*, pp. 119–20, observes on this topic: "Actually, of all the large animals, he is physically the weakest and the most devoid of means of defense. His contemporaries, the large anthropoids, preserved a sturdy weapon in their powerful musculature which enables them to defend themselves effectively against wild beasts. With the aid of his physical resources alone, man would have been quite incapable of this; he would not even have been able to compete with his primitive cousins in the forest to which he thus confined his nakedness and weakness."

16. Cf. Boule, *op. cit.*, p. 537: "The fossil monkeys of Siwalik and South Africa decreased to a certain point the morphological interval separating today's monkeys from today's men. . . . It is altogether possible that, among the numerous tertiary types of anthropomorphous monkeys, about which we have only fragmentary information, there might be . . . which, together with prehuman dentitions, exhibited cranial measurements superior to those of present-day Anthropomorpha" (*ibid.*, p. 128). "Many of these creatures might have transcended the stage in which the present-day anthropoids seem fixed. . . . This interpretation leads us to recognize that there once had been Anthropomorpha superior to those of today" (*ibid.*, pp. 108–9).

17. E.g., the Australopithecus have disappeared; their limbs "were not adapted to the exclusively arboricolous life of the large monkeys" (Boule, *ibid.*, p. 90). Man's animal ancestor was so inferior that Le Roy suggests—rather gratuitously, we believe—that it could have survived only if it were quadrumanous and therefore able to seek refuge in trees. Le Roy remarks: "Man had neither the strength, size nor speed; no hooks, horns, claws, armor or venom: *homo nudus et inermis*. . . . Too weak to stand and fight, too large to hide, too slow to flee; if originally he had lived on the ground, he would either have disappeared or become industrious at an earlier date" (*op. cit.*, p. 188). But the evolution of the limbs of Primates began with the foot and culminated with the hand; it seems impossible that this tendency was reversed if only because of the mortal dangers that this hypothetical Primate would have encountered by renouncing the shelter of high branches.

18. Cf. Arambourg, *op. cit.*, p. 71: "The limbs [of the Neanderthaloids] are of entirely human proportions, but the buttocks are relatively short."

semierect in posture, were incapable of taking long strides because of their foreshortened lower limbs; and, although they knew how to make crude weapons, they could not escape danger through flight. They sank into oblivion. The races that succeeded them—Cro-Magnon, Chancelade, or Grimaldi—all had long limbs.¹⁹

In the face of constant danger, the possibility of flight did indeed constitute an essential condition of survival. Besides, in order to escape the wild beasts, it was necessary to “leave in time.” It is therefore not surprising that hearing—that informing agent which, as distinguished from sight, senses what is happening in back of one as well as ahead, and which no obstacle can shut out—was very highly developed among certain fossil men. Consequently, an “unexpected predominance of the auditive area”²⁰ was found in the cranium of Broken Hill, even more primitive than that of the Neanderthaler.

On the whole, however, flight was decidedly inadequate as protection for primitive man; later on caves were to serve him as a refuge. At best, the development of his legs and hearing could only postpone the extinction of his species, which would have vanished in any case; and today there would be no one here on earth to take an interest in the relics of the past. The fact that man nonetheless survived and triumphantly mastered hostile beasts and adverse elements is due to the profound psychic transformation that he then experienced under the reign of terror and danger.

The discontinuity of psychic evolution, marked by the human revolution, was not, however, accidental. While the reign of terror profoundly altered the structure of the animal psyche at a given moment—giving rise to man’s consciousness—this ultimate fruition of fear is quite naturally inscribed in the ranks of the general evolution of living beings and of Primates in particular. This general evolution did, in fact, lead to a progressive pre-eminence of intellectual faculties, which is to say, of the brain; but, as many biologists have observed, all functional specialization—and intelligence belongs to this category—is achieved at the expense of other elements in the organism. “The man of today represents the culmination of a specialized orthogenetic evolution in the sense of a progressive cerebral

19. *Ibid.*, p. 53: “The limbs [of the Cro-Magnon] are long and sturdy, the lower ones being extremely long compared to the upper.” Cf. also Boule, *op. cit.*, p. 301, where the author observes, in regard to the men of the Grimaldi race, that “their lower limbs were very much longer than their upper.” As for the Chancelade race, which is considered similar to the Cro-Magnon, Boule notes (*ibid.*, p. 322) the development “of all the rear muscles of the leg, those used the most in the erect position as well as when walking.”

20. Boule, *op. cit.*, p. 478.

development, correlative with a reduction of all his other physical powers; the man of today is . . . the least well equipped of all the large animals, and has the weakest muscles.”²¹

Consequently, in fostering the progressive development of intellectual faculties, evolution was finally to eventuate in the apparition of a being completely defenseless physically—the orphan of Creation, man.²²

It follows that the one-sided development of the intelligence, although it led to his final triumph, at first delivered him, defenseless, over to all his enemies in the animal kingdom. Of this, the ineluctable consequence was the extension of fear. Fear was man’s first teacher, the beginning of his wisdom. By preventing man’s animal ancestor from yielding to his first impulses and by inhibiting these, fear forced him to substitute thoughtful and conscious behavior for the spontaneous reflexes of his primitive nature. The permanent inhibition engendered by continuous fear finally brought about the psychic transformation that marked the separation of the human universe from the animal world: the advent of consciousness, man’s second nature.

This fateful phenomenon—the simultaneous increase in fear and in intelligence—enables us, incidentally, to understand better what man possesses that is both unique and universal: by producing the human, psychic revolution, fear made man a unique being; there is nothing else like him in all creation. But this intervention of fear, with its preindicated role in the development of living beings, particularly that of Primates, must have occurred on every continent as soon as evolution culminated in cerebral specialization. This transformation was inevitable as well as revolutionary. Human consciousness must have made its debut independently as well as simultaneously on different parts of the globe, and on each occasion, as a result of fear released by cerebral specialization, asserting itself at the expense of the physical means of defense. Seen in this light, the polygenetic hypothesis is more convincing than the monogenetic one.

It is erroneous to believe in the continuity of intellectual development from the stage of the monkey to that of man. We shall attempt to demonstrate that, on the contrary, the ultimate psychic transformation was revolutionary in character and that therefore there was discontinuity in the end.

The same illusion of continuity is encountered in sociology, and this

21. Arambourg, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

22. As we have seen (n. 16 above), the Anthropomorpha from which man came were more specialized in the cerebral sense and consequently better adapted physically than are today’s monkeys; those Anthropomorpha that did not undergo the hominoid transformation did not survive.

leads to the presumption that man's social condition is a natural one. Yet nothing is less true. Man is bound to the carnivorous world, if we take into account the important place that meat has occupied in his diet from the very beginning. While the principle of social life resides in the subordination of the individual to the group, a diet of meat is based on a contrary principle: the sacrifice of others to one's own vital needs.²³ Thus there is a basic antagonism between the carnivorous and the social instinct. It is easy to demonstrate that social life in animals developed in inverse ratio to their adoption of a meat diet; the advent of the family among certain carnivorous animals was a means of compensating for the absence of company; herbivorous animals live by preference in a community rather than as a family. The unstable nature of human societies and their slowness in making the transition from the tribal to the national stage—and from the national to the international—attest a lack of natural social tendencies in the human animal. And, in fact, the farther we go back in history and in pre-history, the more rarely do we encounter human society, until finally it vanishes into the night of the past.

III. THE SOCIOLOGICAL PARADOX AND THE NEW ALLIANCE

If man is not a social animal, and if, because of his carnivorous nature, he is even imbued with profoundly antisocial tendencies, how do we explain the growth of human civilization? Is not this affirmation—the essentially antisocial nature of early man—explicitly gainsaid by the facts and in flagrant contradiction with history?

Here we touch upon what must be considered the *fundamental paradox of sociology*, which we will formulate as follows:

It is precisely because man is not by nature social that he succeeded in developing social life to such an extent that society has become as indispensable to him as the air he breathes.

We have demonstrated elsewhere²⁴ that human consciousness developed from the inhibition and repression of man's animal nature. Thereafter it became a condemned cell in the mansion of his soul. Conscience forces one to shun all manifestations of animality. It is only to the extent that man divorces himself from these manifestations that he can achieve—and this,

23. The "will to power" which, according to the psychologist Jung, is the key to the human subconscious (at least as much, if not more than Eros, according to the author), attests the individual's carnivorous tendency to enslave others.

24. *La Révolution originelle*.

too, we have seen—internal peace and moral equilibrium; any return to animal life would reactivate the atavistic sources of his anxiety.

And it so happens that social life, owing to the very fact that it was not part of the animal nature of man, offered the most appropriate framework for the development of his consciousness, or second nature, in contrast to his primary one.²⁵ Society had become in a sense the blessed crucible in which man, protected against his animality by a way of life strange to it, felt himself freed from anxiety and forced to make use of the resources of his conscious life; for social activity can only be non-natural, that is, governed by moral conscience. Thus a kind of symbiosis took place between society and man's moral conscience, both of which separated him from his primary nature. The confusion between the social and the moral, the consequence of this symbiosis, has weighed heavily upon the development of civilization.²⁶

Because society, in contrast to primary human nature, constitutes a protection against native animality, anything that draws man away from his social surroundings brings him, by the same token, closer to his ancestral animal life and consequently stirs up a vague anxiety. Hence the individual's attachment to fashion, clothes, traditions, instruction—all things that link him to his group and harness the "demon" in him, the beast that he was and still remains in those forbidden regions of his psyche. Hence the disquiet, the inexplicable fear, that any form of social exclusion engenders. The ancients considered exile the supreme penalty, more terrible than capital punishment.²⁷

25. "We cannot see why a deeply rooted human instinct would need to be reinforced by a law. There is no law commanding man to eat and drink, or forbidding him to put his hand in a fire" (Frazer, cited by R. Dalbiez, *La Méthode psychanalytique et la doctrine freudienne* [Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1949], I, 458).

26. We might add that the development of intellectual life went hand in glove with the growth of social life, by virtue of this same phenomenon of symbiosis.

27. Cf. Ch. Blondel ("La Personnalité," *Nouveau traité de psychologie*, ed. G. Dumas, VII, Book I, 124): "Whatever form it takes, excommunication remains for him [man] the most dreaded of all penalties." In this connection, we are familiar with Victor Hugo's stanza:

"Oh, let no one be exiled,
Oh, exile is impious."

In the child, still so close to nature, fear of solitude is characteristic. P. Guillaume, *Manuel de psychologie* (Paris: Alcan, 1931), observes: "Everyone is familiar with the precocious attitudes of the child in regard to other people. He is disturbed by solitude (cries) and demands company and fondling" (p. 52). And Freud, in his *Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, says: "The first situation phobias of children are darkness and solitude" (pp. 352 ff.). Some writers (Adler, Künkel) have even attributed in a general way the origin of a neurosis to a feeling of social exclusion. Cf. W. Bitter, "Die Angstneurose," *Revue Suisse de psychologie et de psychologie appliquée*, No. 16 (Berne: Huber, 1948): "Basing his ideas on Adler, Fritz Künkel sees the

It is society, therefore, that serves to reassure man about himself and rids him of an anxiety associated with the solitude of his ancestral life. During a period of revolution, destruction of the social structure produces a strange phenomenon of panic described by many historians. The extraordinary intensity of such an emotion is due not to the real but to the sporadic dangers of such troubled eras. The risks that a war engenders are far more serious and immediate, and yet the first military operations do not give rise to the kind of mysterious collective terror which the “great panic” of the French Revolution typifies.

Historians have studied that strange, collective psychosis that took possession of the masses after the capture of the Bastille and which assumed different forms depending upon the region. Fear spread not only among the peasants, workers and small bourgeois, but among all classes indiscriminately—in the Court as well as in the Assembly, among the masses as well as the nobility and clergy. . . . It was a general fear that multiplied the real dangers by all kinds of imaginary ones, a veritable delirium of terror that took possession of the people.²⁸

Closer to us in time, during the first Russian Revolution in 1905, an eminent witness wrote in a similar vein:

At Tchita people were crushed like nuts; wherever they were found they were felled without further ado. The rush to massacre was of a kind that exists only where there is great fear. This fear was to be seen on all faces, among soldiers as well as civilians.²⁹

The fear created by the destruction of a social order is an unconscious one, devoid of real motivations and determined solely by the structure of the human psyche; but, like neurotics who attempt to ascribe their irrational anxieties to the external elements in their lives, the masses who were a prey to this form of panic suddenly imagined that others had become a threat to them. “They’re coming, they’re coming,” the terrorized French peasants kept repeating, but with no idea who “they” were.³⁰

Robespierre imagined conspiracies everywhere, and the specter of the

principal cause of neurological fear in the discovery that one is outside the collectivity.” The explorer, R. Maufrais, identified his overwhelming fear of a virginal forest with fear of solitude. Under the dateline of November 20, 1949, he observed: “I feel that this apprehension is the fear of solitude to which I am constrained.”

28. G. Ferrero, *Les deux Révolutions françaises* (Neuchâtel: Éditions de la Baconnière, 1951), p. 35.

29. Maxime Gorki, *Un Évènement extraordinaire* (Paris: Éditions Rieder, 1933), p. 45.

30. Ferrero, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

"Dantonists" haunted him; if the Dantonists had not existed, he would have invented others. This is an example of a purely internal projection, the sort that was to subsist in France until the social structure had settled and the new order springing from the Revolution had become consolidated.³¹

While social exclusion creates anxiety, inversely, during certain situations or illnesses, the presence of others, even the mere reminder of collective ties, has a calming effect. For instance, people affected with agoraphobia can sometimes overcome their neurosis when they feel themselves supported by a collectivity, even if it is represented by only one person.³²

Society drives away anxiety by interposing itself like a protective screen between the individual and his latent animality; but it does not fulfil this role fully save as regards work. Idleness, on the contrary, brings man closer to his natural state and therefore engenders antisocial tendencies.³³ Hence it has been said that "love of work is man's virtue in society."³⁴ Now work, as a form of collective life, is oriented toward the future and entails ends that transcend the individual. "Faith," which is the primordial moving power of human effort, expresses exactly this orientation of action toward future ends, as distinguished from immediate interests. This impetus toward the future, this "futurism," which characterizes all human societies when they are in the process of growing, helps us to discover another force

31. As distinguished from purely political revolutions, which bring a new party to power or modify the form of government but fail to affect the basic social order, the French Revolution, which was primarily social, destroyed the social foundations; hence the vague state of panic which it engendered. The relative brevity of the Terror in France can be explained by the swift consolidation of the new social order. This new order leaned heavily upon social strata that had become fully developed as early as the end of the eighteenth century and were therefore able to take the place of the ancient regime. Things would have gone differently, as in other countries, if it had been necessary to begin by creating the social elements required by the new regime. In such an eventuality, the Terror (along with the political anxieties which reflected it) would doubtless have persisted for a whole generation.

32. Bitter (*op. cit.*, p. 55) cites the case of an Italian with agoraphobia who fell prey to his panic just as he happened to be looking at a Fascist exposition; he began to imagine that he had rendered important services to the cause and that the Duce was patting him on the back in a friendly way; his anxiety immediately disappeared, and he was able to continue on his way. Alfred Adler (cited by Bitter, *op. cit.*, p. 59) observes that "human anxiety can be eliminated solely by an awareness of the tie that binds the individual to the collectivity. A man will live his life fearlessly only if he is aware of belonging to the community of other men." Similarly, a child frightened by the dark is reassured when he hears a human voice (cf. Freud, *op. cit.*: "I once heard a child, who was afraid of the dark, call into an adjoining room, 'Auntie, talk to me, I am afraid.'")

'What good will that do? You can't see me.'

Whereupon the child answered, 'If someone speaks, it is brighter'" (p. 352).

33. We are familiar with the old saying that idleness "is the mother of all vices."

34. Madame Roland.

at work in man. This force, which reinforces the fear of isolation and explains the development of society, is precisely the same that transcends individual ends and sacrifices the present to the future: the genesic instinct.

The fear of returning to a natural state constitutes a negative element which can explain the cohesion of the group but not the dynamism that animates it. The genesic instinct, on the other hand, provides a lively impetus to social life by directing individuals toward a communal end: posterity, in which society becomes the geometric means. Even in the animal kingdom, among social insects, for example, concern for their progeny is the great architect of beehives and anthills, the force which directs the daily acts of these animalcules.³⁵ Among Mammalia living in groups, social tendencies increase during puberty³⁶ and then decline with age, when the genesic powers decrease; for instance, we know that old chimpanzees become solitary.³⁷

However, the genesic instinct is linked with man's animal existence. In his original state he could not become social; rather, he tended to resist the collectivity. That is why social morality condemns, or at least limits and controls, the purely physical manifestations of the genesic instinct.³⁸ The sense of shame, in particular, expresses the individual's vague awareness of these antisocial characteristics.

But inhibition engenders a sublimation of man's instincts,³⁹ which are

35. Cf. H. Piéron, "Psychologie zoologique," *Nouveau traité de psychologie*, ed. G. Dumas, VIII, 206: "In their society insects devote almost all their activity to the maintenance and perpetuation of the collectivity."

36. Among all primitive peoples the period of puberty is also the time when the individual is formally brought into the social group; until then he belonged exclusively to his family. From the moment he reaches puberty his position changes to that of a member of the social group; the initiation ceremony merely expresses a profound biological reality, for the procreative instinct is basic to social life.

37. Urbain and Rode (*Les Singes anthropomorphes* [Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1946], p. 86) observe apropos of gorillas that "the old males live in solitude"; on the subject of chimpanzees they remark (*ibid.*, p. 78) that "the old males usually remain aloof." Also see F. Picard, *Les Phénomènes sociaux chez les animaux* (Paris: Colin, 1933): "Among many large Mammalia, sociability is apparent in the females but in the males it depends upon age and physiological condition. The males are part of the herd when they are young; but later they withdraw, become mean, chase their kin, and resume their social instincts only when they are in heat" (p. 4).

38. Marriage is one aspect of control. The genesic instinct, which developed during man's presocial stage, is suited to a solitary existence, not to collective life; for this reason, collective life can easily create serious or complex complications in the individual's sexual life. Freudianism has stressed this fact.

39. J. Delay, *La Psycho-physiologie humaine* (Paris: P.U.F., 1948), p. 52, observes that the sexual instinct, "like other instincts, is made up of a biological infrastructure and a social superstructure responding to an infinitely complex process in the socialization and spiritualization of tendencies."

not repressed at their roots but blossom at a higher level of the psychic being in a superb efflorescence of social sentiments. The genesic instinct, thus sublimated, creates faith in society, that is, the desire to labor for the future of the collectivity which the individual associates with his own posterity.⁴⁰ The same force, by virtue of a principle that life frequently exemplifies, can therefore be both destructive and creative, depending upon the form it takes.

The sublimated genesic instinct constitutes the living strength of human collectivities and compensates for the absence of natural social instincts. Through the agency of collective life, it has opened up an avenue of salvation for man whose solitary animal existence had led him to the very brink of the abyss. The outcast acquired a fresh right of citizenship in the universe; he concluded a "New Alliance" with Creation or, rather, with the Creator.⁴¹

It is here that religion intervenes. The sublimated genesic instinct is consciously perceived not as a material but rather as a spiritual, creative power—in other words, as the divine principle of Creation. Moreover, the kinship between Creation and procreation is so obvious that there is no need to show that the second appears as an extension of the first.⁴² This is why we find religion—produced by the sublimation of the genesic instinct which substitutes the notion of spiritual paternity for that of physical procreation—at the basis and origin of man's social edifice. It has played a primordial and decisive role in the creation of the first human collectivities; for it is an expression of the only source—with the exception of that negative element, fear of isolation—capable of consolidating and organizing, as

40. The direct relationship between man's social nature and the genesic instinct is particularly evident in this remark of Freud's (cited by Dalbiez, *op. cit.*, I, 163): "In my experience, whoever is considered abnormal in any domain from a moral or social point of view is always abnormal in his sexual life." Freud did not observe the opposite phenomenon. But the externally normal sociability of certain sexually abnormal people does not prove a thing because the essence of social life is affirmed in man's profound effort, in the secrets of the soul where the future is forged, not in superficial agitation, which alone is perceptible from the outside.

41. We know that according to the Bible, when the Lord concluded the New Alliance with Abraham, he promised him numerous descendants.

42. In religions that were crude, that had remained quite material, the direct, sexual symbols consequently occupied a considerable place. The tie between the genesic instinct and religious sentiment subsists, in a purified form, even in the most spiritualized religions. Cf., for example, C. G. Jung, *Psychologie de l'inconscient* (Geneva: Librairie Georg, 1952), pp. 201–2: "... The Church is a mother in the most complete sense of the word and from every point of view. We not only speak of the Church, 'our mother,' but also of its bosom. In the ceremony of the 'benedictio fontis,' the baptismal founts are spoken of as 'immaculatus divini fontis uterus.' ... Indeed, the Church represents the substitution of a higher and more spiritual order for the so-called 'carnal' ties that attach us to our parents."

well as enriching, the effort made by our carnivorous species to become social.⁴³ We know of no example in society that was not religious in the beginning; nor do we know of any that survived any length of time when religious ties were dissolved.⁴⁴

In primitive societies the sole affective ties were religious ones; a man was or was not a fellow citizen, depending upon whether he adored the same gods or worshiped the same totems.⁴⁵ Every social act was a religious one. The collectivity was identified with religion. And since religion, the voice of the power of life in us, is, in its physiological origin, essentially individual and individualist in man—that non-social animal—the first collectivities reflected this particularist trait of the instinct: they were limited to the family, an extensive one at first, and then to the tribe, that is, to individuals descended from a single ancestor.

The appeal of religion, that supernatural power, is all the more necessary in building a society because it was not part of man's primary nature; being, rather, in conflict with it. In order to create society, it was necessary to appeal to an "external power."⁴⁶ Since society is a deliberate creation, not a natural state, what was really involved was a pact of some sort. In any case, the pact in question was not concluded between men but between

43. Cf. E. Durkheim (*Les Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse*, p. 148, note 2): "Moreover, one cannot understand the primitive family organization unless one knows primitive, religious ideas; for the latter serve as the principle of the former."

44. The history of ancient Greece exemplifies in curious fashion the kind of dissensions that may cause modern Europe to founder. Just as the conflict between Sparta, a warlike state, and Athens, a cultured republic, was once the cause of the Peloponnesian Wars, so the spiritual incompatibility between a heavily militarized Germany and France, more Athenian than Spartan, constituted the crux of the two world wars of our era. In both cases, the two successive conflicts culminated in the hegemony of an outsider; in the first instance, of Thebes, oddly located in relation to the Athens-Sparta Axis and west of the latter, and in the second, of the Anglo-Saxon world. We won't push the analogy any further.

45. The Latin term *religere*, from which *religio* is derived, means precisely "to bind," in the particular sense of uniting men, whom no natural, social force binds.

46. People have reproached Freud all too frequently for the role he attributed to Eros in the human subconscious. Curiously enough these critics overlook an essential fact: Eros rules man only because it is 1) the basis of social life, and 2) the expression of the fundamental will to survive that animates all beings. In the struggle for life over death, which is the essential drama of Creation, the genic instinct appears as the breach in the wall of universal death: thanks to it, life escapes the trap of nothingness. Is it astonishing that this force should seem sovereign to the soul? The partisans as well as the enemies of the Freudian concept make the same mistake: they forget the meaning because of the symbol. The sovereign power of love, stronger than death, is expressed by symbols that shock some superficial minds. But, besides the fact that the ugliness of certain symbols is merely the interpretation which man, in his psychic poverty, places upon them—for in themselves they are neither ugly nor beautiful—the moral forces express themselves inevitably by material symbols and these must be adequate, that is to say, in harmony with what they represent. From this point of view, the portrayal of the psychic power of love by the symbols of Eros is adequate.

them and the spiritual power to which they submitted in order to help them build a collective life; this is the profound significance of the New Alliance alluded to in the Scriptures.

To conclude this study, we would like to formulate two essential sociological principles which derive from the nature of human society as we have described it.

1. In man, as in every carnivorous being, there exists a quiet, persistent resistance to collective life. This resistance, banished from conscious thought—which condemns antisocial tendencies because they throw man back upon his original animality—takes refuge in the subterranean regions of the soul, in the subconscious or unconscious depths of the Psyche; but it remains real and active. To fail to recognize the existence and power of this antagonistic force is to expose any social effort to failure. And all glorification of man's physical nature inevitably tends to reinforce, to nurture, these harmful, antisocial tendencies associated with his animal nature. That is why the most socially evolved religions, particularly spiritualist and monotheistic ones, are opposed to certain manifestations in art and literature⁴⁷ which extol the strictly physical aspects of life. In the light of these considerations, we perceive the soundness and profundity of ancient Judaism's hostile attitude toward Hellenism.

2. Man's social impulse is intimately linked with both the genic instinct and its sublimation. This instinct is, in its physical roots, the expression of a solitary, nonsocial animal. Hence the apparently paradoxical consequence which historical experience as well as its own intimate meaning have confirmed: *man's social impulse is a force that springs from the life of the individual*. The greatest social reformers have always been nonconformists. From deep within himself and from his personal life, man draws upon the creative inspiration that he brings to the collectivity. Throughout history collectivities have progressed exclusively as a result of the impact of strong personalities. It follows that, *in order to survive, society must respect the individual's freedom*. The imposition of any excessive constraint upon him may stifle his social impulse at its very source. Politics is above all the art of knowing how to avoid extremes; one cannot conceive of collective life without at least some subjection of the individual to it. If pushed too far, however, this subjection could do away with social inspiration and thus become harmful to society. There exists an optimum at which the contradictions that derive from the sociological paradox disappear.

47. We know the ideas that Leo Tolstoi professed about art during the second half of his life; what we don't know is that the word which denotes artist in the Russian language (*khoudojnik*) stems from the word "bad" (*khoudoi*).