

—英汉双语版—

# 乌合之众

大众心理研究

[法] 古斯塔夫·勒庞 著 戴光年 译

THE CROWD  
Study of the Popular Mind  
Gustave Le Bon

勒庞的《大众心理研究》是一部当之无愧的名著，  
他极为精致地描述了集体心态。

——西格蒙德·弗洛伊德



武汉出版社  
WUHAN PUBLISHING HOUSE



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书名：乌合之众：大众心理研究（英汉双语修订版）

作者：[法] 古斯塔夫·勒庞

出版方：武汉出版社

出版时间：2012年5月

ISBN：9787573068650

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# 乌合之众： 大众心理学研究 中文版

## 序言

1879年，冯特建立心理实验室，标志着心理学作为一门科学，脱离思辨性哲学成为一门独立的学科；1908年，英国心理学家麦独孤和美国社会学家罗斯分别出版了社会心理学专著，标志着社会心理学已成为一门独立的学科。首版于1895年的《乌合之众》，属于社会心理学从哲学思辨往科学过度的重要著作，是古斯塔夫·勒庞对19世纪后三分之一欧洲动荡的社会发展时期的哲学思考，其中揭示了人类群体中兽性的一面，是对亚里斯多德以来，把人视为“理性的动物”的一种颠覆，也是对启蒙运动中，有关理性人的假设的挑战；法国大革命、中世纪等历史时期中，群体中的人们表现出的盲从、冲动的一面使古斯塔夫·勒庞对人类的历史抱着深深的悲观情绪，怀疑论、虚无主义在《乌合之众》中俯拾即是，他甚至认为“衰弱和死亡似乎是所有民族的最终归宿”。历史总是在不断重复，所以基于对历史的深刻反思后的真知灼见具有永恒的价值，在中国大地上发生的很多事情，不论是文化大革命还是现在的网络暴力，都与《乌合之众》中对人类群体的预言严丝合缝，让人叹为观止。

看《乌合之众》，字里行间会让人感受到古斯塔夫·勒庞那种愤世嫉俗的宣泄，激情与绝望的矛盾厮杀，还有一种扒下人类最后一缕遮羞布的严苛，这应该与他的人生经历和所处的历史时代有关。

古斯塔夫·勒庞出生于1841年，卒于1931年，法国社会心理学家、社会学家、群体心理学的创始人，有“群体社会的马基雅维里”之称。他出生于法国诺晋特-勒-卢特鲁，逝于法国马恩-拉-科盖特。他所处的年代，法国社会动荡不安，各种激进的思想你方唱罢我登场，各领风骚仅数年。他出生时，曾被人们认为具有革命精神的国王路易·菲利普成了保守派，这激起

了激进主义和空想社会主义的传播；1848年2月，二月革命爆发，法兰西第二共和国建立；1851年，第二共和国总统路易·波拿巴发动政变；1852年12月，路易·波拿巴建立法兰西第二帝国；1871年9月，因为普法战争失败，法兰西第二帝国倒台，成立第三共和国，直至1940年。

其实这些你方唱罢我登场的政治游戏，只是17、18世纪欧洲发生的两件最重要事件的余波而已，也正是对这两件事的反思，才让古斯塔夫·勒庞清醒地看到曾经被捧上神坛的群众，其实只是容易被蒙蔽的群氓而已，于是有了《乌合之众》。法国历史上的这两件大事，一件是思想上产生了启蒙运动，另一件是发生了资产阶级革命即法国大革命，这两场思想和政治上的革命对法国、欧洲，乃至全世界都影响深远。启蒙运动是一场思想文化解放运动，它是继文艺复兴后，自然科学、哲学、伦理学、政治学、经济学、历史学、文学、教育学等领域，新思维不断涌现，与理性主义等一起构成的一个较长的思想文化运动；代表人物有伏尔泰、卢梭、狄德罗等，启蒙思想家们对封建专制制度及其精神支柱天主教会进行了猛烈批判，描绘了未来“理性王国”的资本主义社会蓝图，开启了民智，为资产阶级取得统治地位提供了思想和理论上的准备，成为推动民族解放运动的强大社会思潮。法国大革命是一场推翻封建主义，发展资本主义的革命，一般认为，它爆发的标志是攻占巴士底狱，结束的标志是热月政变。此后，革命不断，政局动荡，当权者多次更迭，其中最有名的是拿破仑，法国共和国的资产阶级政体，直到1870年才最终确立。法国大革命给古斯塔夫·勒庞留下深刻印象，他在《乌合之众》中引述并加以解构的50多个具体历史事件中，大约有20个发生在大革命时期，很多在后世被广泛传颂的群众英雄事迹，在古斯塔夫·勒庞犀利笔触的分析下，内在都是群体被蛊惑、煽动而犯下的暴行而已；这其中在中学历史教科书上颇为推崇的革命行动——攻占巴士底狱，在《乌合之众》的分析中，不过是一个充满偶然、怂恿、轻信、极端的群体犯罪；一个只有1名监狱长、4个假证

件贩子、2个精神病人、1个性变态者的监狱，被攻陷时，监狱长正给一个精神病人擦口水，没有政治犯，也没有残暴的看守，这显然与“法国专制王朝的象征”差距不小。古斯塔夫·勒庞透过历史的迷雾，扒开政治的面纱，洞悉群体愚昧真相，为此扼腕叹息。正如他分析的那样，经过形象化后的历史，也许面目全非，很多英雄事迹背后，都是个别人在群体压力下的冲动、冒险的不理智行为，因此古斯塔夫·勒庞对群体不抱任何幻想，而且有一种恨铁不成钢的悲悯情绪，因为很多群体行为，不管长远结果如何，首先是带来的是伤害、破坏和动荡。

古斯塔夫·勒庞是法国的才子式人物，能查到的资料表明，他在巴黎学习医学，1866年获得医学博士学位，此后游历欧洲、北非和亚洲，撰写了人类学和考古学的著作，但大学和科学院的大门都不肯为他敞开，把他排斥在正式圈子外，以至于他的科研愿望和计划几乎从未实现过，但他孜孜不倦，靠自己对历史和现实的深刻体察，用生动的语言，发表了几十部关于综合生物学、人类学和心理学的著作。1870年起在巴黎行医，1884年开始发表有关群众心理学的著作，在他的著作中，强调民族特点和种族优越性。从他的经历来看，身处思想混乱、歧见纷呈的世纪末，使他亲身感受群体盲从、冲动的行为给社会带来的危害，群体在他心目中没有什么好印象，因此在《乌合之众》中，他毫不犹豫地揭示群体兽性的一面；医学训练的背景，使他用透视人体的眼光去解剖群体，鞭辟入里，对群体中的问题，进行毫不留情的批判，戳破人们对群体的幻想；被主流的排斥，更使他在愤懑之余，不受拘束，毫不讳言地表达自己对群体劣根性的洞见。

古斯塔夫·勒庞的思想倾向属于“亲英派”的边缘人，对重要问题极为敏感，能在历史和现实的迷雾中，不断发现有研究价值的事件，并把看似孤立的事件联接起来，找到规律，形成有价值的研究。古斯塔夫·勒庞的研究基于两个起点，一是传统的宗教、政治及社会信仰的毁灭和技术发明给生产带来的巨



变，这两个互为表里的基本因素，是引发社会转型，走向现代化的主要原因；二是所谓的种族特性，他认为“遗传赋予每个种族中的每个人以某些共同特征，这些特征加在一起，便构成了这个种族的气质”。

古斯塔夫·勒庞在《乌合之众》中表现出了尖锐的洞察力和惊人的预见性，使其理论不但被后代的各种理论进一步论证，很多在中国和现代社会也都能找到准确的论据。

“真正社会变革的唯一重要特征：应该是根植于文明、思想、观念和信仰的革故鼎新过程中。”佛教进入中国后，引起传统社会的极大不安，最后以儒释道合流的形式，诞生了禅宗，完成了佛教的中国化；马克思主义传入中国，也被充分中国化，最后农村包围城市的中国式革命路线获得最后成功；今天，曾经被批判的儒家思想，也融入当前社会主义建设的中国梦中，社会主义和中国传统文化进一步结合，从儒家文化和中国传统中汲取营养，在解决现实问题中，焕发新的生命力。

“现代心理学认定的客观事实，即无意识心理活动在生活、理智思考中的作用都是压倒性的。”佛洛伊德对古斯塔夫·勒庞极为推崇，他评价其《乌合之众》“是一本当之无愧的名著，他极为精致地描述了集体心态”，由此可见弗洛伊德的潜意识理论，显然受其重大启发；“人类作为一个物种，它最稳定的因素就是可以通过遗传来承袭思想。”这一点在后来荣格的集体潜意识理论中，得到了更加充分的阐释。

古斯塔夫·勒庞对教育制度的反思对当前中国的教学改革具有很大的启发意义。他认为，那种通过死记硬背教科书来发展智力的“应试教育”，没有调动他们的判断力或个人主动性，背书和服从成了教育的全部，他们信奉老师绝对正确的同时，不断贬低自己；教育制造出拥有文凭的人，但只能利用其中的少数，其他人则只能失业，国家不得不养活前者，而让后者成

为自己的敌人。另外古斯塔夫·勒庞提炼出的很多群体发展和干预、控制的规律、技巧，也对组织管理工作很有借鉴意义。比如他归纳的领袖说服群体的断言、重复和感染，对政府官员如何做群众工作，管理者如何说服员工都具有教科书般的意义。

古斯塔夫·勒庞曾预言：“我们要进入的时代，千真万确将是一个群体的时代”，那么当这个时代来临时，我们是把群体高举在神坛，还是正视群体的愚昧，将是这个时代能否顺利推动人类发展的关键，从这个意义上说，古斯塔夫·勒庞揭示群体兽性的《乌合之众》，是开启这个时代文明发展的钥匙。

# 第一卷 群体心理

## 第一章 群体的一般特征

### 1. 群体是个活的生物

许多人凑在一起，就叫群体。

不管他们是谁，不管他们是干什么的，也不管他们因为什么凑在一起，只要他们凑在一起，就是一个群体。

或许我们会认为，这些人虽然组成了一个群体，但他们中的每个人仍然是独立的，和他单独一个人的时候没有什么区别。

但是现代心理学可不这么认为。

在现代心理学看来，群体一旦形成，就立即有了群体的特点，这种特点与其中任何一个人的特点都不同，却和每一个群体的特点没什么区别。

所有的群体都是一样的，群体就像一个活的生物，它有自己的感情，有自己的思想，这种群体中共同的感情和思想，就是所谓的“群体心理”。

“群体心理”是不可靠的，是暂时的，一旦构成群体的人各自离散，每个人就又立刻恢复到了自己以前的状态。但在群体之中，他的个性却消失了，不见了，这时候他的思想、感情所表达的与群体的思想感情完全一致。

有关群体共同的心理状态没有明确的术语可以表述，我们只能称之为组织化的群体，或者叫心理群体。

这个组织化的群体是一种极为特殊的存在，他的行为体现为精神的统一律。

## 2. 构成群体的条件

但是，一些人偶然出现在同一个场合，这还不足以构成组织化群体的特点。大街上往来穿梭的人虽然同时出现在同一个地点，但是这些人的目标各不相同，就构不成心理学意义上的群体概念。

真正意义上的群体，是有其前提条件的，缺少了这个条件，一群人就称不上是群体。

群体中的人有两个共同的特点：首先是每一个人个性消失，其次是他们的感情与思想都在关注同一件事。

有时候，即使这些人不在同一个场合，但如果符合这个条件，也可以称之为一个群体。

较为典型的是一种激烈感情的促动，比如大家共同关心的国家大事，一旦太多的人同时考虑这个问题，那么这些原本独立的个人就立即形成一个群体。

一个偶然的契机，可以让这些原本分布在四面八方的人同时聚集在某一个场所，这时候，这群人就立即表现为同一种心理特征，他们的行为再也没什么区别了。

所以，有时候三五个人会形成一个群体，而成千上万的人凑在一起却未必会发生这种心理现象。

任何时候，一个民族都不可能同时出现在一个共同的场合——人数太多了——但不管他们在哪里、他们彼此之间的距离有多远，他们是同一个群体，他们的行为表征没有任何区别。

### 3. 群体的相同与不同

心理群体形成之后，就会表现为一种共同的、暂时的，然而又十分鲜明的普遍特性。除此之外，群体还会表现出一些附带的特性。

组成群体的人员不同，那么除了普遍特性相同，不同的群体的附带特性也不一样，而且，群体的精神结构也会有所不同。

这样，我们就可以对群体进行分类。

所有群体都有一些共同的特点，不管群体是由什么人组成的，所有的群体都有着一致性。

除此之外，不同的群体还有不同的附带特点。构成群体的人员不同，其附带的特征也就有所不同。

所以，我们可以根据群体的普遍特性来辨认群体，同时又可以根据群体的不同附带特性将他们区别开来。

### 4. 群体共性的研究方法

现在，我们先来看看群体的共同特性。

我们就像自然科学家一样，先将人类分成一个大的族系，找到并描述出所有族系共同的特点，然后再区分出不同族系的个性特点。

但是族系研究相对来说简单很多，而群体的心理却几乎无从着手。

构成群体的种族不同，群体心理就有所不同。

同一种族的构成方式或比例不同，群体心理同样也有所不同。

刺激群体心理的要素不同，群体心理就有所不同。

即使群体承受同种类型的刺激，但刺激的强度不同，群体的心理表现仍然会有所不同。

以上诸多因素的变化构成了群体心理研究的困难，当然，个体心理学的研究也同样会遭遇这些困难。

比如说，只有在小说中，一个人的性格才会一生不变。

再比如说，只有环境的完全一致性，才能造成族群性格明显的单一性。

诸多权威资料都告诉我们：任何一种精神结构都包含着各种性格的可能性，而环境的突变，却会让这种可能性表现得更为突出。

这样，我们就会明白，为什么法国国民公会中那些最残暴的成员竟然都是些平常表现最温和的人。当环境正常的时候，他们是一些合法的公民或是善良的官员；而当环境突变的时候，他们表现出来的那种邪恶、残暴，就连他们自己也无法相信。等到暴虐过后，他们又都恢复了此前的善良与谨小慎微，成为最老实最温顺的民众，拿破仑就是在他们中间找到最恭谨的臣民的。

但是我们没办法对群体强弱程度不同的组织做出全面的研究，我们能够做到的，最多只是研究那些成熟的群体——也可以称之为完全组织化阶段的群体。

也只有这样，我们才能够看清楚群体可以演化成什么模样——不管它最终变成什么模样，肯定不会是你想象的那样一成不变——也只有在这种发达的组织化阶段，种族那些看起来似乎永远不会发生变化的特征才会体现出一种新的特点。

在这种情况下，群体的全部感情和思想就会表现出明确的指向，我们甚至能够看到这期间所有变化的细节。

同样是在这种特殊条件下，我们前面所提到的“群体精神统一性”的心理学现象才会体现出其规律性的变化。

在群体的心理特征变化中，有一些可能与独立的个人没有任何不同，而另外一些特性却完全是群体所特有的，这些特性从未在一个人身上具体体现出来，可是当这个人成为群体中的一员的时候，他的举止表现却不可思议地体现出了这一特性。

这种奇异的特性只有在群体中才有，而这正是我们关注的目标。

## 5. 群体共同的心理特征

所有的群体，都具有这样一个共同特征：

构成这个群体的人，不管他是谁，不管他们的生活方式有多大区别，不管他的职业是什么，不管他是男是女，也不管他的智商是高是低，只要他们是一个群体，那么他们就拥有一个共同的心理——集体心理。

当他们成为群体中一员的时候，他们的感情、思维和行为

与他们单独一个人的时候迥然不同。

他们在群体中的思维观念或者感情，在他们单独一个人的时候是绝无可能出现的，即使出现，也绝不会形成具体的行动。

这就是心理学研究中的一个重要特点，心理群体是一个由异质成分组成的暂时现象。当足够数量的不同个体聚集在一起的时候，就像是诸多的有机质集聚在一起形成的细胞一样，当这些类别成分完全不同的细胞组成一个新的生命个体的时候，这个新的生命个体的表现与构成它的细胞组织完全不同。

完全不同的个体会组成一种全新的存在，这个全新的存在与构成这种存在的每一个个体没有任何共同之处。

哲学家赫伯特·斯宾塞认为：在形成一个群体的人群中，其属性表现为其构成要素的总和或是它们的平均值——但这个观点完全是错误的，是缺乏统计学依据与相关例证的。实际情况是，正像两种化学元素——如酸和碱——产生了化学反应之后形成了一种新物质一样，这种新物质的属性完全不同于使它得以形成的那些元素的基本属性。

而群体的表现也正与构成群体的每一个人完全不同，没有任何或丝毫的相近之处。

## 6. 群体质变的症因

群体中的个人完全不同于独立的个人，这一点是很容易得到证明的。

但是，如果我们想找出造成这种不同的原因，也不是那么容易的。



如果我们确有探究其中症因必要性的话，那么就不能忽视现代心理学为我们提供的绝对正确的思维分析——无意识主宰着有机体的生活，而且在有机体的智力活动中，这种力量也起着决定性的作用。

意识因素是我们最熟知的，但这种力量在我们的精神生活中所起到的作用完全是被动的、不值一提的。

所以我们对于人类的观察总是无一例外地陷入困惑之中，只有最细心的分析家与最敏锐的观察家，才有可能洞穿潜意识的黑洞，窥探到一点点主导着我们行为的无意识动机。

如果说，我们的意识是浮在海面上可见的冰山的话，那么，潜意识才是沉陷于暗黑海洋之中的巨大冰体。

所有有意识的行为，都只不过是遗传基因控制下的无意识深渊中的隐秘心理活动的产物，或许永远也不会有人能够在他的有生之年一窥潜意识的暗黑世界的真相——积淤在这个深层次结构之中的是生物无数个世代传承相递的不计其数的共同特征，正是这些永远也不为我们所知的共同特征构成了一个种族的先天秉性。

文学家使用一种更易于为公众所接受的方式来描述这一潜隐的共同特性——宿命！

我们经常会为我们的行动做出解释——但在这个旨在让人们信服的理性解释背后，潜藏的是我们根本没有说出来的真正原因。

即便是“真正原因”也是靠不住的，在它后面是许多连我们自己都一无所知的神秘原因。

我们以为自己是理性的，我们以为自己的一举一动都是有

其道理的，但事实上，我们绝大多数的日常行为，都是一些我们自己根本无法了解的隐蔽动机的结果。

无意识的欲念构成了每一个种族的先天秉性，尤其是在这种秉性上，属于同一个种族的个人之间并没有多大的差别。很多时候，这种微小的差别更多地体现在意识的层面上——比如说，后天教育的结果。

教育固然能够让不同的人表现出不同的特质，但真正起决定作用的，却仍然是这种固结在基因链条上的独特遗传信息。

人与人之间差异最大的，或许就是智力了。

但是，同一种族的所有人却有着非常相似的本能与情感。

大凡事情一旦涉及情感领域，人与人之间的差距就消失了。

尤其是在涉及信仰、政治观点、道德评价、个人爱憎这些近乎于纯粹感性表达的领域中，最杰出的才智之士也不见得就比一个凡夫俗子更高明。

智力上的差别天高地远，一个补鞋匠在一个伟大的数学家面前或许连大气都不敢喘，可如果这个鞋匠一旦发现这位伟大的数学家在性格的表现上和他没有丝毫差别的话，他心里多半会感到说不出的惊讶。

人们凭借一种毫无理由的思维惯性，会认为智力超凡的人在其他方面的表现也会是出类拔萃的。然而事实却完全不是这么回事。

同一种族的所有人，都有一个普遍的性格特征，这是智力上的悬殊差异或后天教育的效果都无法弥补的。

而支配这种普遍性格特征的，正是我们的无意识，同一种族中的大多数普通人在同种程度上都具备这种普遍特性。

## 7. 被抹平的才智差别

正是这种普遍特性，构成了群体的共同属性。

在群体心理中，原本突出的才智被削弱了，导致了群体中每一个人的个性也被削弱了。表现出差别的异质化被同质化吞没了，最终是无意识品质决定了群体的智慧。

群体只有很普通的品质。

群体只有很普通的智慧。

群体也只有最基本的智能。

群体同时也只具有最低甚至更低层次的智力。

这个结论就为我们提供了一个答案，它至少能够替我们解释：群体何以无法完成对智力要求较高的工作？

群体只能从事最低级的劳动，而涉及普遍利益的决定，只能由杰出人士组成的决策中心来做出。

但让我们感到沮丧的是，即使是各行各业中最优秀的专家，当他们表现为一个群体的时候，也会经常性地做出极度愚蠢的决定。

实际情况是，即使再高明的专家，一旦他们受困于这种群体意识，那么他们至多只能用普通人的智力与能力，用最为平庸而拙劣的方法来处理那些干系重大的事情。

群体的叠加只是愚蠢的叠加，而真正的智慧被愚蠢的洪流

淹没了。

通常情况下我们说“人民群众”，以强调我们在智力上所占的优势，但实际的情况却是，“人民群众”绝不比任何一个人更聪明，反倒是他们的愚蠢是有目共睹的。

任何一个人都比“人民群众”聪明，所以“人民群众”是靠不住的，除非你想获得一个最愚蠢的结果，那就另当别论了。

这个结论的正确性是毋庸置疑的——但糟糕的是，这个正确的结论却与得出这个结论的原始论据产生了直接的冲突。

如果说，群体中的每一个人只是把他们共同分享的普通品质集中在一起，并最终表现出智力低下与平庸的话，那么，我们最初提到的群体会创造出一种全新的存在又从何说起呢？

这正是我们这本书所致力于解答的问题。

## 8. 第一个原因：本能

只有在群体中才会表现出来，为群体所特有，而作为单独的个人却不具备的这些特点的形成，是因为一些不同的原因所导致的。

第一个原因：本能的力量，而激发一个人最原始本能的决定性因素是数量。

数量在人类社会中会经常性地产生一种充足的理由。处于群体中的个人会感受到一种强烈的“正义”力量，对他们来说群体就是正义，数量就是道理；即便不然，群体中的人也会有种“法不责众”的想法，因而他们在行动时就表现得理直气壮。

但是当群体中的每一个人都处于孤零零的单独个体的时

候，后天的教育与内心的良知都对他起着约束作用，他知道自己必须要对自己的这种本能行为加以控制。

但是群体的力量却让人们解脱了这些约束与羁绊——无论是后天教育养成的，还是先天的良所知意识到的——他没有什么理由再约束自己，更无法控制内心的放纵与不羁。

单独一个人必须要为他的行为承担责任——法律上的和道德上的。

但是，群体则不然，群体不需要承担任何责任，群体就是法律，群体就是道德，群体的行为自然是合理的。

这是因为单独的一个人是有名有姓的，而群体的本身就是它的名字。

群体是无名氏！

无名氏不需要为他所做的任何事情承担责任。

因为无名，所以无由指控。

于是，曾经牢固地约束一个人的责任感就会荡然无存，而群体得到的，是最原始本能的表达与宣泄。

## 9. 第二个原因：传染

传染——群体情绪的相互传染——对群体的特点形成起着决定性的作用，决定着群体行为选择的倾向。

传染——一个人的情绪迅速地感染了另外一些人。有的人很容易让其他人受到感染，有的人则不然。有的情绪特别容易在群体中传染开来，而另外一些情绪却没有什麼效果。

传染——感性的、本能的情绪特别容易传染，而理智的、冷静的情绪在群体中不起丝毫作用。

传染——站在群体之外的任何一个人都能够看清楚这种现象的发生，哪怕他智力低下，也会轻而易举地做出判断。但是，即使是一个智力非凡的专家，在这方面也说不出个子丑寅卯来。

我们最多能把传染视为一种催眠的力量——群体性催眠！

在1523年6月上旬的伦敦城中，有算命者和占星家预言：泰晤士河将在1524年2月1日猛涨，整座伦敦城将会被淹没，成千上万户居民的房屋将会被冲毁。在预言发布后的几个月里，所有的盲从者都开始喋喋不休地重复着这个预言，这让更多的人相信了它。

民众纷纷打点行装，移居到伦敦城外的地区。而这样的迁徙行为又加快了预言的传播速度。随着时间离灾难预定的日期越来越近，移民的数量也在不断增加。到了1524年1月的时候，下层民众携妻带子，成群结队地步行到遥远的村庄去躲避灾难，中上层的人则乘坐马车赶到那里。

到了1月中旬，至少有两万人离开了伦敦，许多地方只剩下空荡荡的房子。在人们的心目中，伦敦是一个注定要毁灭的地方，有钱人特意在其他城市的高地上安家。即使是富有学识的神职人员也不例外。

比如说，一位教堂的院长异常惊恐，他用极高的代价在高山上修建了一座城堡，贮存了两个月的生活必需品。在那个可怕日子到来的前一星期，他带着教堂的全体职员和家属搬了进去。许多人都要求住进去，但这位院长在慎重考虑之后，只接受了与他私交甚好的朋友和带有大量食物的人。

泰晤士河并没有在预期的日子暴涨，当人们准备将预言家投入河中的时候，预言家却想出了平息众怒的办法：他们宣称自己计算错了一个小数字，所以洪水的日期被弄错了，提前了整整一个世纪。

正是这样的荒谬言论，却能够在群体之中得到信任与传播。这证明了，那种来自本能恐惧的情绪力量，的确具备传染病一样的威力。

除了令人陷入狂乱之外，这种催眠还会摧毁一个人心理的防御机制，让人的表现突破他人格上的界限。

在群体中，任何一种感情和行动——只要这种感情与行动不合常理——都会很容易传染开来。其程度之强，足以让一个人随时准备为另一个与他毫不相干的人做出牺牲。

传染——就意味着群体将获得一种与个体的天性截然对立的两极倾向。如果他不处于群体之中，是根本不可能具有这种意识或能力的。

一个被群体情绪传染的人会感觉到自己前所未有的强大，他的行动完全听凭另一种陌生的力量主宰。这时候他的心中笼罩着的是一种悲怆的感情，这种感情会让他表现得完全像另外一个人。

并不是每个人都必然被群体情绪所传染——但如果他没有感受到这种情绪的话，他就会变成群体感情的敌对方。

被传染了的群体以他们完全非理性的力量主宰着这个世界。他们尽可以为所欲为，直到他们在行动中的群体不断分化、消散，这种极端情绪才会消失。

## 10. 第三个原因：暗示

人是一种理性的存在——他们都知道是非善恶，也知道趋利避害。

但这种现象只限于个体或非群体的时候才会发挥作用。

人一旦进入群体，上述的行为能力与制约作用也就消失了，这时候他的表现与独立个体时候的表现会截然相反。

暗示！

没错！正是这种心理力量导致了这种奇异的现象，它实际上正是我们在上面提到的相互感染的结果。

只有心理学能够为我们揭开这千古的心理魔盒。我们的潜意识就像是潘多拉的盒子，一旦被打开，就会释放出太多本能性的冲动力量，而最终，却不明原因地被永久地封印于我们心灵的深处。

我们现在都清楚了，人并不是自己的主宰。在你的意识之上，存在着另外一种更为强势的力量。

所以——一个人的人格是如此的脆弱，他随时都会被带入到一种完全失去任何意识的状态之中。

在这个过程中，他的自我人格消失了，而他的行动能力还在。

于是他就会对导致自己丧失人格意识的暗示力量唯命是从，会做出一些与他的性格习惯极为矛盾的举动。

暗示的力量以一种缺乏解剖学依据的神秘方式，替代了群体的个体自我人格——又或者，只是将这之中的某种蛰伏力量唤醒而已；一旦这种力量被唤醒，群体自我人格的原有部分就



会迅速地被这种不羁的力量所淹没，所消解，再也不会起到任何作用。

心理学家为我们提供了更为细致的心理观察——他们指出，长时间融入群体行动的个人，尽管他看起来并没什么根本性的变化，但随着时间的推移，他不久就会表现为——或者是在群体发挥催眠力量的有效影响之下，或者是由于另外一些我们也许永远也无法弄清楚的原因——他让自己进入了一种特殊的存在状态。

就像催眠师在患者面前晃动水晶球，群体中的个人从此陷入了一种极度兴奋的无意识状态。

大脑的知性活动被抑制、正常的思维活动被麻痹——这时候的人完全听命于他的脊椎神经所接收到的外部信号。

他沦为受催眠师随意支配的一切无意识活动的奴隶！

这时候的他，有意识的自我人格已经消失得无影无踪，原本是明晰的意识力与判别力也荡然无存，他的一切感情与思想，全部听命于催眠师的外界指令。

连同他的情感，也沦为外界力量操纵的机械本能。

如果催眠师告诉他应该悲伤，那么他就会号啕大哭。

如果催眠师告诉他应该喜悦，那么他就会笑逐颜开。

处于催眠状态下的个体成为一台完全听命于脊椎神秘外部刺激信号的电子细胞装置，此时他的全部价值与意义已不复存在。

而群体中的人，也正是处于这种机械状态之下。

这是一种接近于迷信的状态，事实上，人类历史上出现的所有迷信者，莫不处于一种缺乏认知的无意识状态。

在人类揭示未来奥秘的手段中，象征和征兆占据着极为重要的位置。许多事物都被预言家们看作或凶或吉的预兆，但只要我们稍具理性，就会知道这种方法是极度荒唐的。

然而，迷信征兆者不仅仅是社会底层的民众，许多有学问的人、政客和军人也都相信这些东西。

比如，对于那些软弱而又轻信的人来说，他们如果打个冷战，就会以为此时一个仇人正准备向他复仇；如果在清晨遇到了一头母猪或者黑猫，这一天就会相当不吉利；遇见一头驴，就意味着不幸。如果13个人坐在同一张餐桌上进餐，那么其中一人肯定会在当年毙命，而其他的人也会跟着走霉运。在迷信者看来，这几乎是所有征兆中最可怕的了。

我们知道，只有在一种情况下，13个人同桌进餐确实会带来不幸，这种情况就是，饭只够12个人吃。可惜的是，大多数人并不会这样想。几乎所有的欧洲国家都相信这样的传闻，许多人甚至把“13”这个数字看作是一切不祥之兆的象征，如果一个人有13枚硬币的话，他就会直接丢掉一枚。

个体中的人丧失了对自己行为辨别的能力，无论他正在做什么或是准备做什么，他自己根本没有能力控制，也缺乏认知的意识。

正如受到催眠的患者，群体中的人理智的力量与自控的能力遭到了毁灭性的破坏，而另外一些能力却得到了不可思议的强化。

群体中的个人会采取他所无法想象的任何行动，抗拒这种行为冲动的意识及能力在这种状况下已经彻底丧失作用。

如果说有什么力量比催眠者的冲动更为强大的话，那就是这种群体的冲动了。

群体有着自动放大非理性冲动的能力——暗示的作用对于群体中的每一个人都会起到相同的作用。这种作用随着群体的情绪链条的传递，会越来越强大，直到突破人的想象，仍然不会停下来。

除非——除非有谁能够熟谙这种群体的特性与暗示的技巧，否则想平息群体的冲动是完全不可能的。

在群体中，仍然维持着他的强大个性、不为群体的激情所感染、足以抵制群体行为暗示的人，屈指可数，因此，这些人的力量在群体中起不到任何作用。

群体只接受暗示力量的影响。

如果有谁想让群体冷静下来，或是改弦易辙，那只有使用不同的暗示。

除了暗示，群体对一切明确的告诫置若罔闻。

所以，当群体行动起来的时候，哪怕是最严厉的警告，都不会起作用。

相反，或者只需要一句悦耳的言辞——它必须具有影响性的暗示效果，又或者是一个足以唤醒群体的形象，就能够影响到群体的行为，让他们表现得完全是另外一个样子。

## 11. 野蛮的玩偶

一旦当人的自我意识消失，无意识人格大行其道的时候，这时的思想与情感都任由暗示的力量和相互传染的作用将这种

集成的无意识转向一个共同的方向——于是，暗示的观念就会在霎时之间转化为行动，或是至少表现出来这种倾向，这就构成了群体的个人所表现出来的最主要特点。

重复一遍，群体中的个人行为表现具有如下四个特点：

第一，是自我人格消失；

第二，是无意识人格起到决定性的作用；

第三，是情感与思想在暗示与传染的作用下转向一个方向；

第四，是暗示的观念具有即刻转化为行动的冲动。

在这种情况下，一个有着明确身份、性格的个人已经消失了，他融入到群体中，成为了一个再也不受自己意志控制与支配的玩偶。

群体中的人做事时有明确的目标，但是他们却不知道自己在做什么。

这就像活动的生物知道自己在做什么，但构成这些行为本身的生物细胞却不知道自己在做些什么。

对于一个完全不知道自己正在做什么的人来说，他这时候的智力显然是靠不住的，多半已经下降到界限的阈值之下。

——这就意味着，群体中的个人，单单他成为一个有机群体的成员这个事实，就已经显示他在文明阶梯上的倒退。

在他独立意志存在的时候——或者说在他拥有正常的智力商数的情况下，他无疑是一个温和的、有教养的，至少也是对

自己性格缺点有着基本认识的，能够在时时事事上对自己的语言行为有所约束的文明人。而当他一旦沦为群体中的一个有机组成，他就立即退化回到了原始人时期。

因为他成了一个行为靠本能，而不是依靠理智来决定的动物。

这就将群体中的人从文明人的名单中划了出去。

在南方省曾有过这样一桩案件。原告是一位未婚的淑女，那天，她应邀到被告家看马戏表演。当她坐在被告给她的椅子上时，被告的仆人牵着一匹马穿过大厅，来到她的面前表演马术。

这匹马的屁股对着原告，突然，它把马粪拉在了她的大腿上。在场的所有人都看到了这一幕，然而这些人却都把绅士风度丢得一干二净，非但没有一个人去帮助小姑娘，反而一起哈哈大笑，以最整齐的声调去嘲笑她。

原告因此羞愤欲绝，恨不得找个地洞钻进去，她受到了极大的精神刺激。出于这个原因，她将这些入一股脑儿告上了法庭，起诉书列举了各种起诉缘由，排在最前面的一条，就是这些人忘记了自己的责任，表现出一种残虐的幽默感。

法庭在这件事上表现了公正，完全支持原告的看法，将有问题都公布出来，得出了原告受害的结论，判被告赔偿5000法郎作为精神损失费。

由此可见，群体中的人完全不知道自己在干些什么。他们身不由己，他们残暴而狂热，他们的行为近乎癫狂，他们的举止表现是那么的怪异——他们永远也不会承认这时候的自己。

决定群体中的人行为的相关要素是原始人的热情和英雄主

义，这些东西在一个理性的人的身上必然是缺乏的。

因为理性的人所抱有的是持续性的怀疑精神与思想的独立意识。

但是任何一个群体更像是一群原始人组成的乌合之众！

群体中的人甘心被各种激烈的言辞和虚假的形象所打动，他们信奉在理智尚存的情况下绝不会相信的一切。

如果他们不是处于这个群体之中，他们会十分惊讶于这些激烈言辞的偏激极端、形象的绝对性虚假，而在群体之中，他们却失去了这项最基本的思考能力。

群体中的人会违背自身的利益，拂逆个人的习惯，他的一切表现都与他本人截然相反。

群体中的人与他们之中的任何一个人没有丝毫的区别，这就在客观上降低了他们的存在价值。

群体中的人不过是尘沙中的一粒微粒，他们只能任凭无意识的浪潮吹拂席卷，把他们带到任何一个地方。

无论在哪里，对他们来说都没有任何区别。

## 12. 群体的行为

群体是如此遥远地背离了他们存在的依据，以至于让我们对这个世界上所发生的事情再也无法坚持自己的判断力。

在法庭上，构成群体的陪审员会做出他们作为个人的情况下绝不会通过的判决。

在议会中，构成群体的议员们会执行他们之中任何一个人

都会反对的法律和措施。

在法国——在法国的国民公会中，每一个委员都是知书达理、行为温和的开明人士，但这些宽和的人一旦构成一个群体，情形就立即截然相反了。

在法国大革命时期，正是这些心肠慈软、悲天悯人，哪怕是看到一只受伤的鸟儿都会落泪的善良人，却毫不犹豫地听命于最野蛮最残暴的提议，把完全清白无辜的人送上断头台。

正是这样由最具智慧的人所构成的群体，他们甚至连自己的利益都违反，连他们自己神圣不可侵犯的权利也全都放弃。

他们在自己人中间滥杀无辜，他们投票杀死他们之中的每一个人。

他们也杀死更多无辜的人。

为了提高杀人效率，他们甚至将炮口降低，对准对面的老人和小孩，一次性地将数以万计的无辜百姓碎为齑粉，让之尸骨无存。

然后他们说：他们的一切行为是神圣的，是为了给这些被他们以最残暴的手段屠杀的人们谋取福祉，不得已而为之。

群体中的人不仅在行动上与他本人有着完全相反的表现，其思想感情也与平时完全不同。

在中世纪时期的十三世纪和十四世纪，鼠疫肆虐欧洲大陆，夺去了整个欧洲约三分之一甚至一半的生命。鼠疫非常可怕，于是人们开始相信它在本质上只能是一种超自然的力量，是上帝在惩罚罪人的罪行。

就这样，大规模的鞭笞开始流行。受鞭笞者认为通过抽打自己和承受其他人身体上的惩罚，上帝可能就会认为他们已经受够了惩罚，从而不再让他们染上鼠疫。这种狂热蔓延至全欧洲，最初教会也认为这是一个不错的主意，但是当鞭笞行为渐渐变得失控，教皇颁布了禁止的法令。不愿停止的人被绞死、斩首或是烧死。说来古怪的是，教会竟然命令一些受鞭刑者在罗马城的圣彼得大教堂的圣坛前由主教亲自鞭打。

在鼠疫横行时期，人们需要找到一些替罪羊，任何长相丑陋或行为古怪的人都会受到怀疑。富人、残疾人和犹太人极易受到攻击，迫害会接踵而至。在弗莱堡和巴塞尔城，犹太人被成群赶入巨大的木制建筑中活活烧死。许多犹太人流亡到德国东部和波兰，只有在那里，他们才能够得到宽宥。

你也许会问：在这么多人中，难道就找不到几个睿智而理性的人出来向民众说明一切吗？

不错，在群体之中，绝对不存在理性的人。因为正如我们前面所说，群体能够消灭个人的独立意识，独立的思考能力。事实上，早在他们的独立意识丧失之前，他们的思想与感情就已经被群体所同化。

群体中的个人思想与感情的变化是如此彻底而深刻，带给人一种无法相信的绝对性效果：

拥有独立意识时的守财奴，在群体中会表现得挥霍无度。

拥有独立意识的怀疑论者，在群体中会成为最虔诚的信徒，甚至容不得一丝一毫的怀疑。

拥有独立意识时的老实人，在群体中会表现得蔑视法律、我行我素。



拥有独立意识时的胆小鬼，在群体中会变成一个胆大包天、肆意妄为的人。

印证这一奇异心理现象的，有着数之不尽的例证——但最值得我们纪念的是1789年8月4日的法国。

在那天夜里，法国的贵族们激情澎湃、热情洋溢，为他们心中充斥的神圣观念与理想主义情怀所感染，所打动，他们毅然决然地集体投票，放弃了他们的特权，从而让他们自己沦为了此后断头台时代的猎物。

但如果，他们每个人都是在单独状态下思考这件事，那么，绝不会会有一个人赞成这项提案。

### 13. 奇迹的创造者

现在我们可以得出结论了。

第一，在智力上，群体的表现远不如构成这一群体之中的个人，所以在涉及智慧这方面，我们是绝不能依赖群体的。

第二，群体比个人更有力量，但是群体的表现是极不稳定的；而个人无论是智力还是能力方面，总是维持在一个平均的水平线上。

第三，群体的行动是受感情激起并主导的，这种感情的强弱程度，直接决定着群体的行为能力。

第四，群体的表现有可能比个体更好，或者更差。究竟群体会表现得更好还是更差，这完全取决于周边的环境如何。

第五，群体能够干出什么来，取决于影响群体的暗示是何种性质。如果这种性质是积极的、进步的、有意义的，那么群

体的表现就会是相应的积极进步且有益。反之，如果主宰群体行为的暗示是负面的心理能量，那么群体的表现就会非常可怕——如果把群体比作是一个人，那么这种主宰群体行为的暗示力量就好比人的思想，如果这个人的思想是善良的，那么这个人必然是善良的，反之亦然。

第六，群体往往会构成骚乱的因由，但群体却更多的表现为一个英雄主义的群体。

关于这种英雄主义精神——我们经常会见到的那种令人无限景仰的利他主义行为，赴汤蹈火，慨然就义，为一种教义或观念而将个人的生死置之度外，或是愿意以自己的生命为代价追求它的纯洁性。这种情况最为常见地发生于一个群体之中，一个孤零零的个人愿意为了某一教义付出一切的事情，在现实中是很难见到的。

除非是群体，才会体现出这种大义无畏、一往无前的凛然气概。

除非是群体，才会在慨然赴死的进程中带给人一种激昂的情绪与荣誉感。

除非是群体，他们才会做到——正如十字军东征时代的悲情旧事。欧洲的骑士们漂洋过海，远赴伊比利亚，在全无粮草和装备，更看不到救兵的情形下，向穆斯林人讨还基督的墓地。

除非是群体，他们才会像这样——1793年法国在反法同盟的强大攻势之下，国民既没有粮食，又没有武器，却奇迹般地挫败了反法同盟的进攻，以一种大无畏的革命英雄主义拯救了法兰西共和国。

这种英雄主义，毫无疑问是建立在无意识心理层次上的。

也只有无意识的心理特性，才会催生出这种伟大的英雄主义。

而且，正是这种无意识的心理背景下的英雄主义创造了历史。假使群体总是表现得像个体那样冷静而功利，那么，世界历史将会乏味得多。

#### 14. 你不会接受的观念

某些观念一旦与我们的思维习惯相抵触，我们就很难接受。

奥地利心理学大师弗洛伊德的“俄狄浦斯情结”之说，断言在每个男人的潜意识中都有一种弑父代之的深层欲望。这就必然激起整个世界对弗氏的愤怒，直到他的理论已经在临床应用过程中取得了实效，对他的声讨仍然方兴未艾。

当弗氏的理论成为了现代心理学的宏基大厦，针对弗氏的声讨才渐告平息。

但如果我们把构筑在弗氏理论基础之上的现代群体心理学的基本观念表述出来，或许现代心理学仍将面临着与弗洛伊德同样尴尬的处境。

现在我们将说出这些观点——无论你是否能接受它。

这一观点认为——群体是靠不住的！

这一观点还认为——群体最主要的特点表现为冲动、急躁、缺乏理性、没有判断力和批判精神，以及夸大情感等等。

如果你认为这一观点属于你还能够忍受的范畴的话，那么接下来的观点多半会让你勃然大怒：

现代心理学认为——群体的特点与表现，只有在低级进化形态的生命中才可能看到。

你愤怒了吗？

没有？那好，现在是你应该愤怒的时候了。

现代心理学认为：类同于群体表现的低级进化形态的生命，主要是以女性、野蛮的原始人以及儿童为主。

你终于愤怒了，是不是？

然而本书将不会理睬你的愤怒——也就是说，本书将拒绝为这一观点做出解释或辩护。如果你需要知道究竟，不妨去翻看一些更为专业的心理学论述。

更何况，本书认为，阐释这一观点对于那些掌握现代心理学的人来说纯粹是浪费时间，而对于那些对现代心理学一无所知的人来说，你说什么他也不会相信——这正是野蛮人原始思维的表现形式之一。所以我们还是专注于本书的主要课题：

——回到对群体心理的研究与认知上来，让我们按部就班地分析一下在多数群体中所体现出来的不同特点。

## 15. 群体特性之一：冲动、易变和急躁

我们曾经得出了这样的结论：群体的基本特点，它与理性或智慧无关，而是几乎完全受无意识动机的支配。

群体中的人，大脑功能是处于停滞状态的，最活跃的是脊椎神经——群体行为完全是脊椎神经刺激之下的本能性反应。

从这个意义上来说，我们完全可以将群体视为一个对文明

一无所知却充满了破坏欲望的野蛮人——事实上，群体的思维或行为与原始人非常相似。

但这并不意味着群体就一无所取，事实上，群体的行为有着惊人的一致性——他们往往表现得异乎寻常的完美。只不过，这种完美的表现与群体中的每个人的大脑没有任何关系。群体行为是不受大脑支配的，他们之中每个人的协同一致的行为只不过是其所受到的刺激因素作用于脊椎神经的结果，就像刺激青蛙裸露在外边的神经，所有的青蛙都会“惊人一致”地表现同一个动作。

而对于群体而言，任何一种刺激因素都会对他们产生控制作用。因此群体的反应会随着这种刺激因素的变化及强度的变化不停地发生变化。

所谓群体，不过是外界刺激因素的奴隶而已。

所有施加于群体的刺激因素，也同样作用于独立的个人，而且孤立的个人也同样会对这些刺激因素产生感觉或反应。

但是，与群体中的个人不同的是，独立的个人意志和意识却仍然是清晰的，仍然在发挥作用，他的大脑会警告他：受冲动的摆布是不可取的。因此独立的个人就会约束自己的行为，不受这种无意识动机的摆布。

对于群体中的个人与独立的个人在外界刺激因素之下的不同反应，现代心理学这样表述：

孤立的个人具有主宰自己反应行为的能力，群体则缺乏这种能力。

## 16. 群体极端表现（上）

随着外界刺激因素的变化，群体的兴奋方式和兴奋程度不断发生着变化，它们会服从种种原始的冲动，诸如豪爽的、残忍的、勇猛的或是懦弱的。

所有的这些冲动总是趋向一个极端，表现得极为强烈。

不要说个人利益，即使是生死安危，这些在独立的个人看来再重大不过的事情，也难以与群体的原始冲动情绪相提并论。

群体是如此的摇摆不定，莫衷一是——这是因为刺激群体的因素多种多样，群体总是屈服于这些低层次的刺激，因此它们也就表现得冲动易变。

在十字军的第一次东征中，波斯的苏丹带领一支大军包围了安条克城。十字军被团团围困，士兵们心灰意冷，他们无心战斗，躺在房子里拒绝出来，惩罚与利诱都不起作用。将领们甚至放火烧屋，然而士兵们宁愿葬身火海，也不肯上阵杀敌。

统帅们并不懂得群体的真正性格，因此束手无策。这时，一位年长的牧师出现了，他提出了一个计划，重新树立了十字军的信心，燃起了他们的斗志，让这些灰心丧气的士兵重新行动起来，击败了六倍于己、精力充沛的波斯人。

这位牧师编造了一个离奇的故事：他自称在攻占安条克城几星期之前，他曾经遇到了危险。当他高声向上帝呼救的时候，两个头带光环的神灵出现在他面前，授予了他一根长矛，并声称是当年拯救世界的长矛。随后神灵又将长矛埋进了土里，告诫牧师，等到安条克城从异教徒的魔掌中解脱之后，十字军才可以挑选12个人来此挖出长矛。

十字军的统帅们同意了这个计划，他们挑选了12个虔诚的人，一起去寻找那支神圣的长矛。他们从天蒙蒙亮就开始挖

掘，直到日落西山仍然一无所获。正担心无功而返的时候，牧师跳进了一个坑里，念念有词地向上帝祈祷，祈求上帝把手里的长矛展现在大家面前，增强人们的力量，让他们夺取最后的胜利。

刚刚祷告完毕，统帅们就看到了土中的长矛尖，他们合力将长矛拉出，热泪长流。这一切都被聚集在周围的群众看在眼里，他们为此而感动。事实上，这一切都是事先安排好的。

这支长矛被当成了圣物，用一块紫红色的布包裹好，在十字军中传看。十字军的士气一下子就恢复了，每个士兵都摩拳擦掌、跃跃欲试。虽然他们饥肠辘辘，但是浑身充满了力量，急着上阵抗击敌军。

看了这个例子，我们就会明白，对于一个群体来说，它从一个极端到另一个极端，是轻而易举的事情，其间的过渡如行云流水般自然。

## 17. 群体极端表现（下）

群体从一个极端走到另一个极端，往往用不了多少时间，下面这个故事可以证明这一点。

在1879年捷克的比尔森地区，曾经有一个叫扬纳切克的吉普赛人。当他因为宣传叛乱的罪过被人用绞索套上了脖子，他却毫不在乎地说：情况会转危为安的！结果真被他说中了，在最后一刻，他被从绞刑架上领了下来。因为恰逢皇帝生日，在这一天不能对犯人处以绞刑。

第二天，刚要把他吊到绞刑架上绞死，他又遇到了更大的福气——暴乱者突然占领了刑场。原来宫廷发生了政变，皇帝被推下了宝座。这位煽动叛乱的家伙成了当地的重要人物，被极度尊崇。但是仅仅过了一个星期，他就又被重新拉上了绞刑

架，因为叛乱被镇压，这一次才把他绞死。

第三天，死去的吉普赛人得到了宽恕，因为所有事实表明，这件案子原来是另外一个扬纳切克干的。于是只好把他从犯人的墓地中挖出来，给他恢复名誉，改葬到天主教徒的墓地。但是后来发现这个吉普赛人不是天主教徒，而是个新教徒，于是只好把他从墓地里再挖出来，改葬到福音派教徒墓地里。

群体不仅在好恶情绪之间莫衷一是，它甚至可以眨眼之间就从最野蛮、最血腥的狂热过渡到最为极端的宽宏大量和英雄主义。

群体很容易做出即使刽子手也会心中不忍的残忍行为，但很可能就在一瞬间，他们又会轻易地为某种当他们是独立个体的时候压根儿不信奉的教义而流血牺牲，慷慨就义。

正是群体，他们会为任何一种信仰——哪怕这种信仰他们从未听闻——不惜血流成河。

如果你想知道群体的冲动性，了解他们都会干出些什么，我们甚至不必回顾英雄主义时代，随时随地，群体都在向我们展示他们惊人的浮躁与急切。

人类历史上的任何一次起义中，都不乏群体慷慨悲歌、从容就义的场面。

群体，处于冲动状态之时，从不吝惜自己的生命。

就在不久前（指1799年法国的雾月政变），一位突然声名鹊起的将军（指拿破仑皇帝本人），他可以在法国轻易地找到成千上万的人，只要他一声令下，这些人就会为了他的个人事业而牺牲。



## 18. 群体没有任何长远打算

群体根本不会做任何事先的策划。

群体的情绪是极端情绪化的，他们易于被最为矛盾的情感所激发；但与此同时，他们又总是如同牵线的木偶一样，受到当前刺激因素的影响。

群体一如狂风中席卷的落叶，随风飘零，任意西东，随着飘忽不定的气流向着任何一个方向飞舞，但它们最终要落回到地面上——解散后的群体中的每一个人终归要回到他们初始的生活状态中去。

此后的章节中将会就法国大革命时代的多变群体进行专门性的论述，我们将会看到构成群体的法国人当时的感情是多么容易发生极端的变化。

群体的多变性让它们变得难以驾驭。

但最极端的，还是当权力落到他们手中的时候，情况就更无法控制。

群体就意味着约束的解除——因为数量就是正义——群体对此看法是没有任何疑义的。

所以，一旦日常生活中各种必要的事情不再对群体构成隐性的约束，群体所追求的目标便无法持久。

无法持久——这是群体最为明显的特征。

群体有着太多的理想或愿望，那些愿望与目标纵然凌乱但总是指向同一个方向。然而，这些目标注定很快就会被群体所丢弃，任何一点儿意外的刺激都会很容易让群体陷入迷失。

群体！注定要处于一种无法也无能力做任何长远打算或思考的状态之中。

## 19. 群体不承认障碍

我们说群体与野蛮人有相似之处——实际上我们在理论上已经做了足够的保守性让步。实事求是地说，群体与野蛮人在本质上很难找到明显的差别——冲动、易变、急躁，此外还有一个更为相近的特点：

他们都不承认障碍！

无论是原始人，抑或是群体，他们共同的特点是不承认障碍。

他们不承认，在他们的愿望与现实之间——或者确切地说，他们不承认自己的愿望与达成这种愿望的现实之间存在着种种障碍。他们根本不承认、不相信这种障碍的存在，任何试图想向他们说明一点的人都会遭到他们最冷酷的惩罚！

在宗教裁判所盛行于欧洲大陆的年代，那些神职人员随意用火刑来对付所有他们不喜欢的人，给那些可怜的人们套上铁皮靴子，然后在审讯的过程中往铁靴之中灌满滚烫的铅水，同时命人将铁皮靴子砸扁。

在我们今天看来，这个过程几乎难以置信。然而这样毛骨悚然的事情，在罗马教皇时代却是数见不鲜的，它甚至发生于天文学家布鲁诺身上，因为他竟然公开追随教会完全无法容忍的日心学说。

正如一位主教曾说：“讨论地球的性质和位置，绝不能帮助我们实现对来世的希望。”因此，一切不符合教义的主张均被视为教会的障碍。

正是因为这样，才使得那个时期的欧洲如同一池污水，疾病与灾荒更迭，无数生命被夺走。然而人们还是认为，疾病与死亡是由于对上帝不虔诚才受到的惩罚。

我们可以看到，群体根本没有能力理解这种障碍的存在，对于他们来说，群体就是优势，数量上的强大让他们感受到自己的势不可当，任何障碍性的存在根本不可能出现在他们的群体意识之中；即使有，那也是对他们这一群体充满敌意的挑衅。

希帕蒂娅的遭遇很好地说明了这一点。她是一位古希腊的数学家和哲学家，有着出众的美貌和学识。然而在当时的亚历山大城，对于一位受过教育的女性而言，并不是一件好事。因为早期的基督徒认为哲学和科学研究都是异教徒的活动，应该被禁止。希帕蒂娅则成了基督徒与非基督徒之间血腥骚动的牺牲品。

一天晚上，在回家的途中，她乘坐的马车遭到一群基督教暴徒的袭击。她被从马车里拖出来，剥光了衣服，被石块殴打至死。临死之前，她的眼睛被挖了出来，尸体也被肢解，残缺的遗体则被扔进亚历山大图书馆的火堆上焚烧。

很显然，在这些暴徒看来，希帕蒂娅的博学，已经构成了他们信仰的障碍，粉碎这个障碍，就成了群体的当务之急。

除此之外，群体中的成员不存在“不可能”的概念。他们认为自己能够干成任何事——如果不是这种狂躁的情绪在起作用，他们的表现也不会那样极端和不可理喻。

对于独立的个人显而易见的世事常理，对于群体来说却是无法接受的敌对行为。

所以群体的表现往往充满了暴戾的成分。

独立的个人是绝没有勇气去洗劫一家商店的，也不会纵火焚烧宫殿，因为他知道这种做法毫无意义。所以，即使他偶有这种想法，也会很容易地抵制住诱惑。所以一个人纵有激烈的反社会行为出现，可是他在做这些事情的时候也很清楚地感受到了负罪意识。

但是群体则不然。

群体没有负罪意识，群体天然合理，他们无论做任何事情都是合乎正义的，他们的数量决定了这一点。

数量就是真理——当群体中的任何一个人融入其中的时候，他就会感到自己的天然正确与合法，并意识到这种群体的绝对数量赋予他的力量。这种力量足以让他生出杀人劫掠的念头，并且立即会将这种想法付诸实施——数量同时还赋予他一种正义的错觉，在杀人劫掠的时候，他并不认为自己是邪恶的，心中反而为一种悲怆的情绪所笼罩。

任何障碍都会被群体推倒！

他们会推倒心理上的障碍，这就意味着他们将脱离道德的羁绊。事实上，他们认为自己就是道德。

他们会推倒现实中的障碍，这就意味着他们会干出种种无法想象的可怕事情。

他们不会接受一个与他们的意愿不一致的现实。如果现实不符合他们的意愿，那么他们就会采取过激手段向现实的秩序发起挑战。

人类的激情或许超出你的想象——事实上，人类的机体所能产生的大量狂热的激情足以摧毁一切。这个问题也可以用更为规范的心理学术语来表达——就是说，愿望受阻的群体所形

成的正常状态，正是这种激愤状态的表露。

## 20. 引发冲动的导火索

我们始终有一种错觉，以为我们的感情源自我们的内心。

实际情况却不是这样。

情感不会无缘无故地发生。对待同一件事，不同的人会产生不同的感觉，但同一种族在情感指向上是一致的，而不同的种族则显出他们之间的明显差异。

所以说，种族的基本特点是我们一切情感产生的根本来源。

正因为这样，种族的基本特点才会决定性地影响着群体的无意识。

这就意味着，这一情感的初始起因必然影响着群体的急躁，影响着群体的冲动和多变。

除此之外，种族的基本特点还影响着 we 研究的一切大众感情。

这就导致了这样一个社会学现象：所有的群体都是盲动的、急躁的、冲动易变的。但是，不同群体的情绪冲动程度却有着明显的差异。

比如说，英国人不论是群体还是个体，表现得总是那么冷静。他们的冲动情绪在其他种族群体看来近乎“冷漠”。而法国人的情绪表达却毫无遮掩，这种差别直接决定了两个民族不同的性格与命运。

法兰西民族的冲动已经构成了这一民族最大的特点——25年前，仅仅是一份据说是某位大师受到侮辱的电报被公之于众，就立即在法国引起了轩然大波，激起了整个民族的狂热情绪，结果很快引发了一场可怕的战争。

法国人在没有任何准备的情况下公然对普鲁士宣战，不论是他人民还是政府都陷入了癫狂的状态。这种情绪是如此地难以控制，以至于拿破仑三世愤而放弃了指挥权——没有人能够驾驭一个如此缺乏理性的民族，而麦克马洪——这位被逼上绝路的法国将军则完全是被一群疯子强迫着向沙隆进发。拿破仑三世与他同行，一同去营救被困在沙隆的马赞将军——后者很快就会因为这场战争的失利而被投入监狱——在这期间，法国的报纸将法军的兵力数量及全部的进军路线进行了详尽的披露。这样一来，结果不言而喻，近半数的法国野战军被消灭，普鲁士大军兵临巴黎城下。

在这次战争之后，又因为谅山一次无足轻重的战争失利的电文，法国人民被再一次勾起了熊熊怒火。这次愤怒，直接导致了法国政府垮台。

这次事件仍然是由于法国军队毫无理性的扩张引起的，法国军队与中国军队展开了旨在决定越南归属的系列战争。法国军队以绝对的优势占领了中国的基隆，然后攻克了谅山。但是六个星期之后，中国一位上了年纪的老将军冯子材突然拿着大刀在镇南关对法军发起了强攻，法国人在毫无防备之下仓惶撤离，丢弃了大量的装备。虽然这场战争无论对法国还是中国来说，都那么无足轻重，但法国却仍然付出了内阁倒台的代价。

与此同时，英国人在远征喀土穆时遭受到了一次毁灭性的重创，或者至少称得上是一次非常严重的失败。但这件事，只在英国引起了轻微的情绪，甚至连国防大臣都未被解职。

法国人与英国人群体意识的差异，由此可窥见一斑。

群体——不管任何一个种族的群体，都不可避免地流露出过多的女性化气质。尤其在拉丁族裔的群体中，女性化的倾向流露最为严重。他们的爱憎是非标准是那样扑朔迷离、变幻不定，凡是能够赢得他们好感的人，命运就会为之大变。

但如果把一个民族的命运全部维系在过分本能的情绪表达上的话，那无异于在悬崖漫步，说不定哪天就会跌入深渊。

毕竟，这种事已经发生得太多了。

## 21. 群体特性之二：易受暗示与轻信

群体相信一切不可能的事情，相信一切不合逻辑的事情，相信一切不合情理的事情，相信一切不存在的事情，唯独不相信现实生活的日常逻辑。

群体会相信子虚乌有的一切，诸如刀枪不入，诸如神怪显灵，诸如预言谶语，诸如一切与精神力量相关的事情。但凡这类不合逻辑的事情，总是能够获得他们近乎疯狂的虔信。

但这似乎并不能归结于群体的责任——这个问题更多取决于，我们如何界定对群体所下的定义。

我们在定义群体的时候说过，它的一个普遍性的主要特征就是极易受人暗示。

我们还强调了在一切人类集体中暗示的传染性与所能达到的程度，这个事实及对事实的定义本身就界定了群体情感向某一个方向迅速转变的必然性限制。

不管人们怎样努力地让自己对这一切视若无睹，有一个事

实是显而易见的，因为群体通常总是处于一种期待被注意的状态下，所以他们非常容易被影响与暗示。

群体易于接受暗示，是因为他们期待着任何形式的暗示。

群体期待暗示，是因为他们需要暗示。

因为群体一旦形成，他们就会在急切之中期待着什么，无论是什么，只要能够让他们立即行动起来，他们就会欣然接纳。如果没有明确的指示，他们就在自己的群体无意识中创造。

在这方面，我们有一个故事来证明这种机制存在于群体中间，并且是可以利用的。

半个世纪之前，有一位精明的投资商德尚。当他走进巴黎最有名的绅士俱乐部——圣堂俱乐部时，他玩弄了一个典型的诡计。他装出好像在找人的样子，表情看起来似乎很生气，他无数次从口袋里掏出大手帕来擦汗。

这时，一张纸片从他掏手帕的口袋中掉了来，而他并没有察觉。他离开俱乐部后，在场的其他经纪人马上捡起了那张纸片，上面写着：“不论在什么价位，你能买到多少马赛轮船股票就买多少。”

马赛轮船公司是一家航运公司，在当时被认为严重高估，股价将会马上下跌。但是这些经纪商根据纸条推测，德尚肯定知道一些他们不知道的关于马赛轮船公司的内幕消息，因此他们联合起来购买了3万股该公司的股票。

他们小心谨慎地从那些德尚从没有用过的经纪人手里购买这些股票——但是，他们不知道的是，此刻，经纪人们正在为德尚工作。于是，股票价格以每天12个点的速度狂跌。



群体的暗示机理一旦形成，暗示行为的产生也就顺理成章了。从一个最初的提示开始，再通过群体相互传染的过程，暗示性的讯息很快就进入了群体中所有人的头脑，就如同接到了一道期待已久的命令，群体感情的一致性倾向立即在第一时间里成为一个事实。

于是他们会马上行动起来，去做他们自己完全未曾料到的任何极端事情。

## 22. 群体在等待，永远在等待

无论是独立的个体还是群体，一旦他们处于暗示影响的状态之下，他们的思考功能就会彻底丧失。从一个念头进入大脑到付诸行动，其间没有任何的时间间隙，几乎是立刻就变成了行动。

群体的行动的整齐而迅速，无论是纵火焚烧宫殿还是大义凛然地自我牺牲，群体都不会有丝毫的犹豫，都会在所不辞。

一切取决于刺激因素的性质！

这就让我们看到了群体与冷静的个体之间的区别。

独立的个体——即使是处于被暗示的状态下，他的行动也是需要有一个强有力的理由的。

这就是说，独立的个人即使是受到暗示，他也必须在暗示的内容与行动的结果之间找到直接性的关系，然后才有可能付诸行动。

而群体是不需要任何理由的。

群体所采取的行动与其思维逻辑产生直接性的对立！

事实上，群体是极端排斥理性与逻辑的。

事情就是这样，群体永远迷走于无意识的暗黑地带，如同一只被解除了封印的低智商魔灵，随时听命于一切暗示，而对于理性的影响却无动于衷。客观来说，这只不过是一种低级生物特有的激情表达方式，并无任何不妥之处。

但是，群体却终究失去了他们一切的批判能力。

除了极端的盲目与更为极端的轻信，群体没有别的选择。

在群体之中，与无意识无关的任何理性、思维或逻辑统统都是不存在的。

如果你想给群体一个信服的理由，就必须记住这一点。

而事实上，群体所能接受的更多只是子虚乌有的神话与毫无逻辑的故事。除此之外，他们对一切都无法理解。

一些在只要稍具辨别能力的人听起来荒诞无稽的神话与故事，却非常容易在群体之中产生并迅速流传。

群体之中极易流传神话的原因，不仅是因为群体的极度轻信，也是事件的本身在人群中的想象经过了极为奇妙的曲解后的效果。

此外，当群体过于长久地沉浸于这种虚幻的氛围的时候，他们已经彻底丧失了对群体无意识的创造物的质疑能力。

## 第二章 群体的情感和道德观

## 群体的情感和道德观

### 1. 群体是用形象来思维的

群体是一面奇妙的哈哈镜。

在群体中，众目睽睽之下发生的最简单的事情，不久就会变得面目全非，并在迅速的传说之中呈现多种怪异的版本。

这是因为——群体是用形象来思维的。

形象思维与独立的个人的理性思维存在着本质的差异，并最终会导致不同的结果。

形象思维具有的特点是——仅仅是形象本身就会立即引发与它毫无关系的一系列联想形象。

而且，这种被引发的联想性形象往往并不存在。

也就是说，群体之中最易于引发幻觉现象。

这种现象的发生，极其近似于我们作为独立的个体的时候在头脑中想到任何事物时产生的一连串幻觉的情形。

幻觉中的各个形象之间未必有什么直接性的联系，当我们作为理性思考个体的时候，会很清楚地意识到这一点。

但是群体却无法理解这么一个简单的事实。

或者说，群体对于这样一个事实视若无睹，他们永远只看到他们认为应该看到或者他们希望看到的东西。这就意味着，群体惯于把歪曲性的想象力与因为这种想象所引发的幻觉、事实混为一谈。

群体无法辨别真实与幻觉，只是因为群体根本没有能力去区别主观与客观。

无论头脑中产生的景象与观察到的事实之间是否存在着直接的关系，群体都会丝毫不加质疑地接受这种联系存在的概念。

但如果让群体把自己看到的事件用歪曲的方式进行一个分类的话，是非常困难的。因为这种歪曲的方式及因素既多且杂，取决于极细微的思维末节，而且各个因素之间不尽相同。更主要的原因是：组成群体的个人有着非常不同的倾向。

尽管存在如此之多的不同，但作为相互传染的结果，事件在群体之中受到的歪曲是一样的，甚至连程度都没有差别。

这就导致了群体中的所有个人终将表现出同样的状态。

群体中的某一个人对真相的第一次歪曲，构成传染性暗示的起点。

暗示的信息经由群体无意识轻信哈哈镜的放大，呈弥散效应迅速地传递开来。正像在耶路撒冷发生的事件一样，当十字军官兵云集于此的时候，总会有一个人最先产生幻觉，认为他在墙壁上看到了圣·乔治出现。

于是，在暗示与相互传染的推动下——起主导作用的仍然是群体的期待意识，他们期待着发生点什么，无论是什么——一个人编造的奇迹，或者是一个人的幻觉，都立刻会被所有的人接受。

就这样，十字军的官兵们全都看到了圣·乔治显灵，又因为这一说法是不允许质疑的，于是，类似的幻觉现象就更加多了起来。

## 2. 群体观察能力的缺失

在上一章中，我们了解了群众思维的特点，即群体是利用形象来思维的。事实上，这种集体观察往往是错误的，原因就在于群体观察能力的缺失。历史上曾经有过相应的例子，可以佐证这一点的正确性。

在18世纪早期的时候，全欧洲的注意力几乎都被一种人的疯狂行为所吸引。他们来自欧洲各地，从事着各不相同的职业，但是都拥有一个共同的名字——“圣梅达尔的痉挛者”。

这群人通常会聚集在他们最敬爱的圣·帕里斯神父的墓前，相互交流着如何进入一种奇妙的癫狂状态，以便带来身体上的某种奇迹。

在这群人中流传着这样一种信念，他们深信圣·帕里斯神父能够治愈所有的疾病。于是通往墓地的大路每天都会被大批蜂拥而至的患者堵塞。一些人在墓前下跪，虔诚祈祷；另外一些人则尖声号叫。而一旦墓地的一边有二十个女人进入了痉挛状态，墓地另一边就会有更多的人这样。

在圣梅达尔痉挛者这个事例中，存在着典型的观察力丧失现象。哪怕这种观察力还残存着一点点，那么他们就会意识到，所谓身体上的奇迹其实是癫痫之类的癔症，在心理暗示的作用下被诱发。但是当个体融入群体之后，由于期待意识的作用，当第一个人进入了痉挛状态，这种相互的暗示就会迅速传染，从而引起群体性的狂乱。

在历史上经常出现的此类集体幻觉中，诱发机制莫不如此。而这种幻觉又似乎具备一切公认的真实性特点，因为它是被成千上万人观察到的现象。

## 3. 群体中的智力泯灭（上）

也许会有人对上一小节的结论提出质疑，认为“圣梅达尔痉挛者”的例子并不具备全面的说服力。

他们的理由是：这些人的文化程度普遍较低，基本上来自比较落后的地区，并且以体弱多病的妇女为主。像这一类型的主体，智力品质相当低，自然也就无法对自身的行为有较好的控制。

但是，在此我们需要指出的是，即使在那些身强体壮的男人之中，或者是在知识渊博的学者里，也同样会发生这样的事。这种令群体成为牺牲品的集体幻觉，向来是不挑剔人群的。

海军上尉朱利安·费利克斯在他的《海流》一书中提到过这样一个例子，在一个晴朗的日子，护航舰“贝勒·波拉号”受命搜寻在风暴中失散的巡洋舰“波索号”。当值勤兵突然发现一艘遇难船的信号时，所有船员的目光都被吸引过去。他们清楚地看到，一只载满了人的木筏被发出遇难信号的船拖着。

几乎所有人都确信不疑，这正是遇难的“波索号”。于是指挥官德斯弗斯上将放下一条船去营救遇难者。即使已经逐渐接近目标，救生船上的官兵仍然清楚地看到一大群活着的人，他们甚至还在挥手，用凄惨的声音哀号着。

然而，这一切却是假象。当到达目标时，船上的人发现他们不过是找到了几根长满树叶的树枝，它们是从附近海岸漂过来的，幻觉到这时才消失。

在这里，我们需要指出的是，事件的参与者并非是易受影响的妇女，相反，“贝勒·波拉号”上的船员都是身体健壮、意志坚强的男子（船员在这一方面尤其显著）。由此可见，集体幻觉现象与生理并无实质性的联系。

在这个事例中，我们可以清楚地看到集体幻觉的作用机制。一方面，船员们构成了一个在期望中观察的群体，而值勤者发现海上有遇难船只的信号则提供了一个暗示。在一整套互相传染的过程中，这样的暗示终于被全体船员接受。

#### 4. 群体中的智力泯灭（中）

我们知道，一个阅历丰富的船员，在出海航行的过程中都有着非凡的观察力，因为他们长期与海洋搏斗，积累了丰富的经验。然而，在“贝勒·波拉号”船员身上所发生的这一切，却恰恰与我们的认知完全相悖。

事实上，即便是那些公认智力卓越者，只要几个人聚合在一起，形成一个群体之后，在他们的专长之外同样会表现出群体的所有特点。他们看到的事情往往会遭到严重的歪曲，真相也会被与它无关的幻觉所取代。

根据《心理学年鉴》记载，著名的心理学家达维先生曾经进行过这样一项试验：他将一群杰出的观察家召集在一起，在这群人中，甚至还包括英国最著名的科学家华莱士先生。在让这些人审查了物体，并按照自己的意愿做上标记之后，达维先生当面演示了一场灵魂现形的过程，并让他们记录下来。

试验的结果令人吃惊，参与试验的杰出报告家们的报告一致表示：他们所观察到的现象，是以超自然的手段获得的。而真实的情况却是，所谓的灵魂现形，只不过是达维先生运用了简单的骗术的结果。

从这项试验中我们可以看到，最神奇的部分并非骗术本身，而是这些目击者提交的报告竟然极端虚假。达维先生的方法十分简单，但是却起到了支配群体大脑的效果，甚至于让更多的目击者看到了并不存在的事情，从而列举出一些完全错误的条件关系。

正如我们前文提到的，这是一种类似于催眠师影响被催眠者的能力。即使对那些头脑非常严谨，事先就要求其抱着怀疑甚至批评态度的人，这种能力都可以发挥作用。它能轻易地让普通群体上当受骗，也就不足为怪了。

## 5. 群体中的智力泯灭（下）

一旦人的智力品质泯灭，独立思考能力被严重消耗的时候，此时的判断力和逻辑都任由暗示与传染的作用引导，转向一个共同的趋势。这样一来，暗示的方向就会立即成为判断的结果，它又反过来进一步吞噬残存的智力品质，这就构成了群体智力泯灭的惊人机制。

如果我们对上述几个案例进一步分析，就可以发现群体中个人智力泯灭存在着以下四个阶段：

第一个阶段是自我意识模糊；

第二个阶段是独立思考能力下降；

第三个阶段是判断力与逻辑在暗示与传染的作用下趋同一致；

第四个阶段是残存的智力品质被彻底吞噬。

在这样的情况下，原本一个头脑非常严谨的个人不复存在，他成为了群体中的一分子，成为了一个不具备逻辑能力与判断力的智力泯灭者。

尽管这样的个体能够提供判断结果，但是他们却不了解这种结果完全是错误的。



当群体中的个体智力品质被彻底吞噬后，相对于个人的变化它是绝对令人瞠目结舌的：

在密西西比股票风靡法兰西的狂潮中，有两位德高望重的学者，拉莫特先生和泰拉松神父。他们向来老成持重，富于理性，他们不约而同地祝贺对方没有被卷入这场狂潮。

然而，仅仅过去几天，泰拉松神父也开始顶不住周围的巨大冲击力，于是前往股票交易所购买股票。当他出来的时候，正好碰上前来购买股票的拉莫特先生。神父惊讶地问道：“哈！是你吗？”

“是啊！”拉莫特快步从他身边走了过去，回答说：“怎么可能是你呢？”

后来，当两位学者再聚在一起时，他们高谈哲学、科学和宗教，却再也没有谈论过股票的话题。当他们不得不提起这件事的时候，他们一致认为，任何人都不要发誓永远不会受到别人的影响，即使是聪明人也不例外。

可以说，一位博览群书的学者，在群体中会表现得极度无知，甚至会迷乱于简单的常识。

一位最富理性的长者，在群体中会变得盲目、轻信而容易狂乱。

一位富于经验的专家，在群体中会丧失其在独有领域的判断力与处理能力，他甚至比不上一位独立的新手。

一位善于独辟蹊径的智者，在群体中会变得盲从、混乱，成为一个人云亦云、不知因果的平庸之辈。

在1678年的英国，在理性彻底屈服于疯狂之后，许多报告

被送到了当时的首相那里。有的报告称：在与议院相邻的某些地下室里，听到了“巨大的敲击声和刨地声”。这使得伦敦人即使出国也留心着国内可能发生的事情。

而在多赛特地区，许多人甚至向上帝宣誓，称法国军队已经登录，军队队列整齐，军官还走在队列的最前面。于是，一位伯爵带着一名陆军中尉策马奔向海德公园，他们手握短剑，要求每个人都拿起武器，因为法国人就要来了。

到了第二天，事情才真相大白，然而真相却并不像传说的那么刺激。显然，发誓说法国人已经登陆的人不是喝醉了就是疯了。所谓的法军队列，其实是一排排的树篱笆，而那些所谓的军官，也只不过是些正在吃草的马。

在这方面，我们有着数不清的例子，毋庸赘言。然而我们必须再认识到一点，那就是这种集体性的智力品质泯灭，会带来怎样的后果。

## 6. 群体的谎言（上）

集体撒谎的例证在历史上并不鲜见，最荒唐的事情要算中世纪欧洲的圣物崇拜。这一风潮的起源，大概开始于十字军东征前不久。当时，第一批前往耶路撒冷朝圣的信徒把种类繁多的圣物带回了欧洲，从而引发了一场大范围的群体性谎言。

在这些圣物中，最为人们称道的是“真正的十字架”上的木头，之所以被如此重视，是因为耶稣曾经在上面慷慨赴死。这样的木头在全欧洲随时随地会涌现，其数量无止境，似乎永远不会减少，最为荣耀的那块甚至出现在了罗马教廷。

在当时的整个欧洲，无论教堂宏大与否，皆以拥有一块这样的圣物为至尊荣耀。于是这种碎木片如野草般在各大教堂铺陈开来，持有者皆声称其来源于“真正的十字架”。这种“圣

物”数量之多，如果集中到一处，几乎可以承担建造一座教堂的木料了。

尽管这样的事听上去荒谬至极，却毫无疑问地赢得了绝大多数人的信任。不仅神职人员如此，普通民众都对它们顶礼膜拜，认为这些木头可以辟邪，而且能够治愈多年的顽症。每年都有络绎不绝的人前往各大教堂去朝拜这些碎木片。

事实上，只要稍微具备理性与常识的人，都会判断出这件事情本身的荒谬。然而几乎没有人对此保持诚实与警醒，究其原因，并非所有人都要故意撒谎，而是当个体集结到一起之后，群体的谎言就成为了自然而然的事情。关于它的形成机制，我们将会通过另外一个典型的例子进一步揭示。

## 7. 群体的谎言（下）

就在此书写作期间，巴黎正在被女童的溺水事件搅得沸反盈天。事情的起因是两个女童从家里走失，不久后在巴黎的塞纳河中发现了尸体。五六个目击证人言之凿凿地证明了一点——这两具尸体毫无疑问就是那两个可怜的孩子。

所有的证词如出一辙，即使是严谨的预审法官也没办法不相信，于是他签署了死亡证明。但就在大家为这两个孩子举行葬礼时，惊人的事情发生了，两个孩子完好无损地出现在大家面前。

事实上，一些细节要比事件本身更能引起我们的兴趣。那就是这两个孩子与溺水而死的人没有多少相似之处，这一点是显而易见的，即便是最缺乏观察力的人也能够看出来，但是它却实实在在地蒙骗了大多数人。

假如我们对整个事件进行还原，就会发现谎言的传播会经历如下一套机制。

第一个阶段是谎言的制造阶段。

它产生于第一个目击者，这个人被心理暗示所影响，成为了幻觉的牺牲品。他相信自己的眼睛，也相信自己已经辨认出的尸体。一些微不足道的相似处——譬如一块伤疤、或是一些让其他人产生同感的装束上的细节，逐渐地演变成一个肯定过程的核心。

个人的错误是可以理解的，但当他开始把这种暗示传播给其他人的时候，就必然会引起群体内部的大范围传染。证词便开始对其他目击者产生影响，从而产生不可原谅的后果。关于这一后果，我们还会在后面的分析中继续讨论。

第二个阶段是谎言的被肯定阶段。

在这一阶段，说谎者的数量会更多。我们会发现，总有那么少数几个人会当即附和谎言，有的人和第一个人一样，臣服于自己的心理暗示，但更多的是完全没有主见的糊涂虫。

第三个阶段是全面的谎言扩散，这时整个群体都将成为说谎者。

当第一个目击者依靠模糊记忆产生的幻觉得到了肯定后，大多数人的理解力就在一瞬间被征服了，所有的判断力都被扼杀。观察者这时看到的不再是客体本身，而是他头脑中产生的幻象。

于是，消息以讹传讹地扩散开来，越来越多的证人加入了说谎的行列。说谎者终于被成批量地制造出来，所有人都无比坚信第一份证词，更坚信自己的观察力。这两种观察结果相互作用，最终演变成了一套彻头彻尾的群体谎言。

8. 妇孺言论不可轻信

这样的例子绝不是偶然，几乎完全相同的事件也曾见诸报端。与女童溺水事件相比，它带给我们的分析更具典型意义，同时也为我们提供了一个新的结论。

这个结论就是，妇女和儿童是群体谎言的坚定支持者，他们的话往往不可轻信。

曾经在法国的拉弗莱特发现过一具男童的尸体，一个孩子凭借着模糊的记忆，认出了他是自己的同学。于是一场缺乏根据的辨认过程开始了。

在这个孩子辨认后的第二天，一个姓夏凡德雷的妇女出现在尸体所在地，情绪激动地认定这是她的儿子。她走近尸体，观察他的衣服，又查看了他额头上的伤疤后，对这个结论她坚信不疑。这个住在福尔街、以看门为业的女人最终信誓旦旦地声称这个男孩于去年的七月失踪，并认定男孩死于拐卖后的他杀。

这场荒谬的辨认并没有就此结束，孩子的表舅也应召前来，再一次确认了这个男童是他的外甥小费利贝·夏凡德雷。接下来，又是几个邻居凭借他们若有若无的印象，一位同学则凭借男童身上的一枚徽章进行了辨认。

所有的人证、物证齐备，每个人的证词都那样有说服力，但是真实的结果呢？恐怕并不像人们说的那样，不仅仅是邻居，就连表舅、同学，甚至是当妈的都全搞错了。

在这件弃尸案案发六周后，孩子的身份重新得到了确认。他的籍贯是波尔多，在那里被人杀害，再被一伙人运到巴黎后弃尸。

这样的例子不胜枚举，由此我们可以证实自己的结论：产生这种误认的经常是妇女和儿童，因为她们最缺乏主见。

像这样的目击者，在法庭上又有何价值可言呢？尤其是那些儿童，他们的证词绝对不可当真。

常言道，童言无忌。但是只要我们具备一些基本的心理学素养，只要对于前文的分析能稍微记住一星半点，都会知道事情是完全相反的。

儿童只会撒谎，而且从始至终都只会撒谎。

尽管他们的谎言是那样无辜、无目的，却仍然是谎言，绝对不能被相信的谎言。如果真的要用一个孩子的证词来决定被告的命运，或是决定事态该朝哪个方向发展，那么还不如掷硬币来得可靠一些。

## 9. 群体只会撒谎

在群体观察力这个问题上，我们已经有了相当多的例证证明它极不可靠，这种集体观察力在绝大多数时候会出错。如果说它能够表达什么含义，那么也只是在传染过程中影响着同伴的个人幻觉。

各种事实都证明，应当明智地认为群体的证词极不可靠，它甚至达到了无以复加的程度。事实上，即使是经受过严格训练的军人，在这方面也会犯下严重的错误。

发生在拿破仑三世时代的色当战役，有数千人参与了那场著名的骑兵进攻。但是如果我们向他们质询答案，向他们询问究竟是谁指挥了那场战役时，答案的数量可能会和人数一样多。这些答案彼此矛盾，让人无从分清哪一个是正确的。时间相距更远的滑铁卢战役也是一样，那场关键性战役中的重要细节，至今答案不一，一直有人在犯最严重的错误。

普鲁士人声称在法军的后方曾经出现过一支强大的增援部

队，携带着为数众多的大炮。但事实又是如何呢？从后来的历史研究看，假如有这么一支军队，拿破仑也不至于输得如此之快。所谓的增援部队，不过是一队惊慌失措的溃兵，误打误撞地又折回了前线；所谓的大炮，则是他们的行李车而已。

又如1806年的英国利兹地区，当一只老母鸡不停下出印有“末日将至”字样的怪蛋后，许多人专程来参观老母鸡。这些惊涛骇浪般恐惧的信徒来到这里，就是为了得出世界末日将至的结论。关于世界末日的谣言由此播散开来。

尽管这些谣言的核心思想只有一个，但是关于怪蛋的描述却花样百出，有一千个前来参观的人，就有一千种各式外形的怪蛋。而真实的情况其实是，这蛋只是普通的鸡蛋，上面用腐蚀墨水涂写了“末日将至”的字迹而已。

这些铁一样的事实只向我们证明了一点：群体的证词毫无意义，他们只会撒谎。

于是，根据我们的结论，被越多的人证明的事件，往往就错得最荒谬。那些受到最严重质疑的事情，往往就是观察者人数最多的事件；反过来，如果一件事情同时被数千个目击者证实，这通常也就是说，真相与公认的记述相去甚远。

## 10. 群众杜撰的历史（上）

群体的证词以如此的程度背叛事实的真相，以至于我们无法再对这个世界上发生过的事情做出准确的判断。

这样看来，无论发生过怎样的历史事件，总会因为群体的以讹传讹而变得众说纷纭。当时间推移，当历史传承到需要记载下来的那一刻时，它就早已丧失了它的本来面貌。像这样的历史被记载下来，恐怕也只是一种纯粹想象的产物。

这样的历史书籍，只是对观察有误的事实做的无根据的记述，其间还混杂着一些对思考结果的解释。

于是，我们又得到一个全新的结论：那些被载进史书，业已成为史实的历史事件，其未必是有价值的产物。而那些皓首穷经的所谓智者，也远非他们自己说的那样秉笔直书。

记录这样的虚假历史，几乎是在虚度光阴。假如没有文学作品保留下来，假如没有音乐、绘画一脉相承，假如没有那些流传千年的不朽作品，我们可能对过去时代的真相一无所知。

我们不了解赫拉克利特，不清楚释迦牟尼或穆罕默德的生平，关于他们，我们不曾拥有过一句真实的记录。所有能够打动群众的，能够在群众中流传并保留下来的，只是这些伟人被神话了的形象。

他们的生平对于群众来说无关紧要，群体想要的只是满足他们需要的、打动他们心灵的伟人。

于是，关于他们的谎言被一再编造，直到和我们今天所知的形象毫无出入为止。

## 11. 群众杜撰的历史（中）

历史书是那样的不可信赖，事实上，即使是这些已经被记载在书上的虚假历史，也很难保证它们会持续长久稳定。

我们知道，群体通常是以形象来思维的，这就使得群体的想象力超乎寻常。

想象力对于艺术创作来说是必需的，但是无边且狂妄的想象力则会越界发挥作用，它会歪曲事实的真相，甚至是已经载入史书的虚假历史。



这些神话虽然被清楚地记录在书中，它们本身却无稳定性可言。许多原因会促使群体的想象力造成这种改变。

比如说时间，在圣经的《旧约全书》中，耶和华是一个嗜血好杀的形象，而随着时间推移，在《新约全书》中出现的上帝，则演变成了博爱仁慈的化身。

又比如说种族，正如我们在前面所说的，种族的基本特点会决定性地影响着群体的无意识。

佛教诞生于印度，昌盛于中国，但是假如我们将印度人所尊奉的佛祖与中国人信奉的佛祖做一比较，就会发现这两者并无太多的共同之处，甚至根本就是两种完全不同的宗教偶像。

所以说，群体的想象力会改变一切，不论这件事是真实的还是虚构的。

正因为这样，历史才会最大限度地背离它的本原，呈现光怪陆离的面貌。

群体依靠想象和杜撰来创造英雄，也就是说，群体也能够凭借这种本领来毁灭英雄，或是让英雄离人们而去。这种事情不需要几百年的时间，转变甚至只要几年、几个月，甚至同一天之内。

## 12. 群众杜撰的历史（下）

在十九世纪的前五十年里，这样的事情就发生了多次。拿破仑是历史上最了不起的伟人之一，当法国人身处波旁王朝的统治之下时，这位年龄尚轻的军人，成了田园派和自由主义的慈善家，一个卑贱者的朋友。在那些幻想民主的游吟诗人眼中，拿破仑注定会在社会底层民众的心目中永存。

然而时间仅仅过了三十年，这位步态安详的英雄又变成了一个嗜血成性的暴君，他在篡夺权力并毁灭了自由之后，仅仅为了满足自己的野心，便让300万人命丧黄泉。

事态的发展并未停止，当法国经历了一次又一次的战败，法国人便开始尝试着回忆往昔的辉煌，怀念拿破仑曾经的赫赫军功，于是这个神话再次发生变化。也许再过几年，结论又会有所不同。

更极端的例子发生在十六世纪的那不勒斯。一个名叫马萨尼罗的渔夫被暴乱者推上了皇帝的宝座，胡作非为，残暴无比。后来被像疯狗一样打死在路上，被割去头的尸体则扔在泥塘里沤泡了几个小时，最后被抛进了护城河。

事态在第二天出现了剧变，不知道什么原因，群众对他的情感似乎完全颠倒了过来。无数人举着火炬寻找他的尸体，找到后给他重新披上皇袍，隆重地葬于教堂。上万名武装军人和更多悲痛的民众参加了葬礼。就连他穿过的衣服，也被众人撕成了碎片，当成圣物珍藏起来，他住处的门板也被拆成碎块，制成了种种纪念品；破旧的家具陡然身价百倍；甚至他走过的泥土也变成了护身符的原料，需要用黄金来计价。

以投毒为手段，杀死过七个人的杀人犯布瑞薇莉尔夫人被判处死刑。这个甚至连骨灰也无权保留的罪行昭彰者，在服刑当天凭借她的美貌征服了所有围观的人，人们的情感在一瞬间发生了转变，他们开始切齿痛骂她要承受的酷刑。

这样的惋惜仅仅在几个小时内就演变成了崇拜，当天晚上，她就成为了圣人。不但那些被扬散的骨灰被重新收集起来，就连烧焦的木头也被哄抢一空，人们甚至坚信，这些遗物能够帮助他们抵御巫术。

这样的例子还有许多，但以上这些已经足够帮助我们了解

群体的历史观是何等地善变而混乱。它从来就不具备一个明确的标准，只凭借想象力和群体的好恶来臧否人物，而这样的评判结果又被当成真实的历史，被所谓的史学家们载诸史册。

数千年后，未来的饱学之士面对这些互相矛盾、众说纷纭的记载时，恐怕能够得出的唯一结论就是——这些所谓的英雄或暴君，从来就没有真实地存在过，他们只是人们为了满足心理需要而杜撰出来的产物。

正如现在有些人质疑释迦牟尼的存在一样，因为从他的身上，我们能读到的只是一部光彩照人的神话，或是一部赫拉克利特式传奇哲学家的思辨过程。

对于这样缺乏确定性的情况，史学家们无疑很容易心安理得，因为在那个未来的时代，他们将更明白群体的心理、群体的特点。

他们知道，除了神话之外，历史并没有多少保存其他记忆的能力。

### 13. 群体的极端感情（上）

冲动、易变和急躁是群体的一大特性，关于这一点，我们已经有了足够的了解。

这样的恶劣情绪作用在群体之中，使得他们表现出来的感情不管是好是坏，其突出的特点就是极为简单而夸张。

在这方面，群体中的个人和原始人绝没有分别。

他们无从分辨事情内部的、事情与事情之间的细微区别，而是把它们视为一个整体，无法看到其中的过渡状态。

另一方面，群体情绪的夸张也会受到另一个事实的强化，那就是不论什么样的感情，一旦它表现出来，就会通过心理暗示和传染过程加速传播。无论这种感情是赞扬还是诋毁，它所造成的效果都会成倍加强。

这种简单而夸张的情绪造成的直接后果就是：群众全然不知怀疑和不确定性为何物。就如同极度幼稚的女人，一下子就会陷入情感的极端。只要她将自己的情绪表达出来，立刻就会坚定地认为它是不容辩驳的。

假如这种厌恶情绪或是反对意见发生在孤立的个人身上，其产生的力量微乎其微，但是当这个人处于群体之中的时候，却能立刻变得勃然大怒。

当教皇乌尔班二世站在克列芒教堂前，于紫红色丝绒铺就的高台上激情洋溢地演讲时，无数耳闻异教徒暴行的人们开始踊跃地加入十字军。他们来自欧洲的各个地方，甚至包括最偏僻、最遥远的角落。然而这成千上万的人却并不都是战士，他们中的绝大多数人是忠诚的信徒、冒险者、穷人、酒徒、浪荡子、瘸子、哑巴、老人，甚至还有妇女和儿童。

这些人之所以会如此忘我地投身到那场战争中去，并不全是因为对财富的渴求，与宗教信仰的联系也不多。

唯一的原因是他们渴望融入群体。

只有身处群体之中，这些傻瓜、低能儿和心怀妒忌的人才能摆脱自己卑微无能的感觉。

只有身处群体之中，他们才能够感觉到一种残忍、短暂但又巨大的力量。

#### 14. 群体的极端感情（下）

我们常常会谈到“法不责众”，和它字面意义不同的是，这个词说的不是法律的管辖权，而是指群体的自我心理暗示。

这是一种非常卑微的心理安全感。首先，他们认为自己不可能受到惩罚，而且人越多，这种信念就越坚强。

然后，他们会因为人多势众而产生一种强烈的力量感，这会让群体表现出一些孤立的个人不可能有的情绪和行动。

不幸的是，群体的这种夸张倾向，常常作用于一些恶劣的感情。它们是原始人的本能隔代遗传的残留。

孤立而负责的个人因为担心受罚，不得不对它们有所约束。而当个人进入群体之后，尤其是和许多不同的人在一起时，感情的狂暴往往会因为责任感的消失而强化。

在1527年5月6日的夜晚，罗马被雇佣军占领，8000名百姓被杀，但这只是开始。第二天早晨，罗马被猛烈地洗劫。夜晚狂欢过后，极度激动的雇佣兵开始洗劫教堂，甚至闯进女修道院强奸修女。人们看到西班牙的士兵对他们不幸的受害者实施恶毒的酷刑，甚至切断他的四肢。

据说，贫穷的南意大利军队甚至洗劫了船夫简陋的小屋，夺走了茶壶、钉子，每一件他们看到的東西。其他报告表明，一些圣物被当作靶子，成堆的古代手稿被用作马的褥草。拉斐尔的壁画被用长矛破坏，用很大的字母刻上马丁·路德的名字。

这些暴徒闯进并洗劫红衣主教和要人的宫殿，强奸妇女，脱光主人的衣服，使他们遭受严重侮辱，然后索取巨额赎金。对于那些拿不出一笔赎金的人来说，死是幸运的。根据一位同时代的目击者说：“地狱简直无法与罗马现在的情形相比。”

从这里我们可以看到，群体能够利用这种强化的感情，推倒一切负罪感！

群体能够利用这种强烈的力量感，摧毁一切道德的障碍！正像古老谚语中说的那样：最卑劣的行为总是像有毒的杂草一样生长在群体中。

正因为如此，群体注定要干出最恶劣的极端勾当！

每个时代总会有某种疯狂的情绪，有的来自于政治，有的来自于宗教，或者两者兼而有之。而整部十字军的东征史，毫无疑问是历史上最严重的集体狂热。它所引发的群体极端感情，程度之高史无前例，而这种极端感情所造成的破坏性结果更令人毛骨悚然。

当第一支十字军开进到君士坦丁堡的时候，国王慷慨地设宴款待了他们。按照常情，这些人在路上遭受了数不清的挫折，理应保持谨慎。然而他们根本无法控制凶暴与贪婪，尽管当地居民把他们当作朋友，向他们敞开供应饮食，但是他们还是感觉到巨大的邪恶力量无处发泄，他们无法控制冲动。

卑贱的士兵们仅仅出于恶作剧，就纵火焚烧了几座公共建筑；他们从教堂房顶抽下来铅条，当成废旧的金属拿到城郊卖掉。甚至于公开抢劫，强暴妇女。

类似这样的暴行仅仅是冰山一角，当群体的极端感情积累到一定程度，其带来的后果往往是灾难性的。

不过，这并不意味着群体没有能力在巧妙的影响之下，表现出英雄主义、献身精神或最崇高的美德。他们甚至比孤立的个人更能表现出这些品质。当我们研究群体的道德时，还有机会回到这个话题上来。

## 15. 打动群体的东西

作为个体存在的人无疑是理性的，因此我们才得以用善恶来打动他的情感，以是非来规范他的观念，以利害来约束他的行为。

但是这种制约只限于在个体或是非群体身上发生作用。

一旦人们集结起来形成群体，这种制约和影响就会丧失效力，而群体也会有一种全新的驱动机制。

究竟是什么东西才能打动群体？

关于这个问题，我们其实已经有了答案。因为群体最热衷于夸大自己的感情，因此，它只会被极端的感情所打动。

可以肯定地说，夸大其词、言之凿凿、不断重复、绝对不说理的方式证明任何事情——这些都是公众集会上的演说家惯用的论说技巧，也是最直接、最有效的打动群体的手段。

历史上著名的“克列芒鼓动”来自于教皇乌尔班二世。正是这场演讲掀起了首次十字军东征的狂潮，当时他激情洋溢，口若悬河。先是描述了圣城耶路撒冷基督徒所受的苦难，又讲述了巴勒斯坦平原是如何被残暴的野蛮人变成了不毛之地。当叙述完这些后，他便开始了大声疾呼。

“听我讲话的人，都是真正信奉上帝的人！我召唤你们！清除覆盖尘世的污垢，把教友从苦难的深渊中拯救出来！那些为了救世主而抛弃田产、父母、兄弟、姐妹、妻子、儿女的人，必将会受到百倍的回报，将会得到永生！”

可以看出，乌尔班二世所运用的手段，完全蕴含了我们在前文中所说的技巧。对于这一点，我们可以简单地查看一下历

史，不论是古希腊学园中的雄辩者，还是巴黎公社的街垒演说家，抑或是在裁判法庭上慷慨激昂的辩护者，无一不出言不逊又信誓旦旦。

群体易于爆发狂暴而极端的感情，也最容易为狂暴而极端的感情所打动。当他们被打动之后，就会像我们前文中说的，汇成一道毁灭性的洪流，摧毁一切阻挡他们的障碍！

## 16. 群体的夸张妨碍智力（上）

我们常常认为人群总是要比个人聪明，事实上，这一点是绝无可能的。

当个人汇集成群体的时候，绝不会有集思广益这样的事情发生；相反，群体的叠加只能增加他们的愚蠢，智力会大幅度下降。

相比于个人，群体不存在丝毫的智力优势！

当群体开始将感情提升到极高或极低的境界时，就已宣告了这一点。

群体摒弃了温和、教养；

群体丧失了对自己性格缺点的基本认识；

群体不愿再对自己的语言行为有所约束；

群体乐于以原始人的心态生存。

于是，尽管群体的力量远远大于个人，但是他们的智力商数却是彻底地倒退了。

在1630年的米兰，当瘟疫蔓延开来的时候，人们也变得越



来越疯狂，越来越轻信。许多异想天开的荒唐故事，居然都被信以为真。

比如说，有个名叫巴萨尼的人，站在米兰市场的附近给人们讲故事。他声称自己在一个黑夜之中，站在一个大教堂门口，忽然，一辆由六匹白马拉着的黑马车停在他身边，马车后面跟着无数个身穿黑袍的仆人。

从马车上走下来一个高大威武的陌生人，他态度和蔼又不失威严地邀请巴萨尼上车，带他来到一个几乎倒塌了一半的巨大宫殿。巴萨尼在里面看到了许多骷髅，骷髅们互相笑骂，相继追逐着跳到对方背上。在一块荒地的中央有一块岩石，石头下面流淌着毒水，毒水流过田地，渗透到米兰城所有的泉水当中。

看完这一切，陌生人许诺说，如果巴萨尼答应将米兰所有的门上都抹上毒药，就可以得到无尽的金子和宝石。至此，巴萨尼终于明白这个人是魔鬼，他便立即向上帝祷告。瞬间，电闪雷鸣，他又一个人孤零零地站在教堂的走廊上了。

就是这样的疯话，却得到了所有听众的信任。甚至还有所谓的目击者为他帮腔，发誓说他们也曾见过那陌生人，听过那些白马拉车的声音。他们逢人就讲，那架马车实在是大，当它夜半时分穿过街道的时候，发出的声音要比雷声都大。

## 17. 群体的夸张妨碍智力（下）

除了上面我们提到的之外，群体常常也会对意识形态进行夸张的处理，让某种意见以异常极端的形式表现出来，即使到了荒唐至极的地步，也毫不在意。

巴黎公社的暴乱成功之后，被广泛鼓吹的妇女权利运动得到了空前的发展。许多妇女开始公然抛头露面，她们在各个方

面都要求取得与男人相同的权利，除了穿男装、佩带枪支、骑马之外，一些女人甚至认为，蹲着小便也是妇女地位低下的象征。

为此，有人专门发明了一种为女子站立小便用的排尿器。这种排尿器的外貌与我们日常所用的漏斗十分相似。

巴黎圣日耳曼南区有一位叫拉格非尔德的先生，他开了一家容器店，在公社建立起来后，由于限制公民饮酒，因此他的漏斗销量一直不佳。正当他为了这个发愁的时候，他的老婆给他出了个主意，把漏斗的价格提升一倍，然后全部当作排尿器出售。拉格非尔德先生半信半疑地按照他妻子的说法去做，结果一天之内就销售掉了七十套，第二天购买的人群在店门口排满了长队。

然而退货的女人很快又蜂拥而至，因为排尿器下端的导嘴是倾斜的，可以让尿流到较远的地方，而漏斗的导嘴是直的，用这种“排尿器”的妇女往往会将小便弄到自己的裤裆里。

这样的例子听起来十分滑稽，但它却是群体善于夸大的典型表现。

真实的情况还不止如此，群体往往还会夸大他们在某方面的感情。这使得他们开始信奉原始人的热情，信奉英雄主义，而这些东西在一个理性个体身上是绝对没有的。

群体埋葬了所有的怀疑精神与独立意识，他们只臣服于激烈的言辞、虚假的形象！

正因为如此，群体才会为自己创立偶像，塑造英雄。

即使对于他们自己的英雄的感情，群体也会做出同样夸张的表现，几乎在所有的传说中，英雄所表现出来的品质和美

德，总是被群体无限地夸大，最终演变为一部史诗一样的神话。

这种夸大甚至还被带进了生活中。早就有人指出过一个现象——观众会要求舞台上的英雄具有现实生活中不可能存在的勇气、道德和美好品质。

## 18. 群体的偏执与专横（上）

由于智力商数的下降，使得群体只能接受简单而极端的東西，即使在感情方面也不例外。

关于这一点，我们可以从大航海时代的西班牙找出示例。遍布伊比利亚半岛的宗教裁判法庭正是这样的东西，一场关于宗教教义的争论，最终被这种简单粗暴的方式所遏止。

当持有不同见解的教徒被实施火刑时，群体的一大极端表现就已经被揭示出来：

只要群体出现，那它就必然是偏执的。

群体只知道简单而极端的感情，对于别人提供给他们各种意见、想法和信念，他们或者全盘接受，或者一概拒绝，将其视为绝对真理或绝对谬论。

群体绝不允许旁人对他们的真理有所质疑，也绝不允许旁人持有他们所认为的谬论。这种偏执的情绪根深蒂固，除非用另外一种极端的感情来取代，否则根本难以动摇。

当群体意识到自己的强大时，它的偏执就发生了变化。

当群体感受到自身的力量感与破坏性，并把这种力量与偏执结合起来时，群体就拥有了专横的性质。

理性的个人可以接受不同意见，可以接受矛盾，进行平和的讨论，但是群体绝不会允许此类现象发生。

根据我们已知的事实，在公众集会上，演说者哪怕做出最轻微的反驳，立刻就会招来怒吼和粗野的叫骂。在一片嘘声和驱逐声中，演说者很快就会败下阵来。

这还不是最严重的，如果现场的局面失控，又没有一位所谓的英雄人物或当权者来进行约束的话，反驳者甚至会被当场打死。

遍布欧洲大地，时间长达两个半世纪的猎巫风潮足以很好地说明这一点。不仅数以万计的人成为了猎巫队伍的牺牲品，甚至那些敢于站出来替人辩白的无辜者，也会惨遭不测。

在1704年的苏格兰地区，一个患有癫痫病的流浪汉指控两名妇女对他实施巫术，其中一个在被抓进监狱后逃了出来，但是第二天就被抓到了。在押回监狱的途中，对巫师切齿痛恨的人们知道了这件事，都想要亲手淹死她。他们把她带到海边，在她身上捆上绳子，将绳子的另一端拴在附近一艘渔船的桅杆上。然后把她投进水中再拉上来，然后再投下去。

当这名妇女被折磨得半死不活的时候，人们又把她拖上海滩。一个暴徒专门回家把门板卸下来，压在这个可怜女人的身上，然后再在上面堆上大石，把人活活压死。

在整个过程中，没有一个地方官出来干涉；那些押送的士兵也玩忽职守，对此幸灾乐祸，出来阻止这类行为的人无一不遭到恫吓和殴打。

## 19. 群体的偏执与专横（下）

尽管专横和偏执是一切类型的群体的共性，但是其强度还

是有所不同的。在这个方面，种族因素会再次起作用。

我们常说，一个民族会有自己的民族性格，却很少有人真正理解民族性格的含义，它其实是指支配人们感情和思想的基本的种族观念。

一个富于理性的民族，往往能够保持较强的个人独立意识。他们知道趋利避害，懂得一切人类的是非观念、善恶标准，冷静而沉稳，较难受到鼓动而变得狂热。

在这方面，英伦三岛的盎格鲁撒克逊民族最为典型。

一个富于感性的民族，其性格具有易于冲动、易变和急躁的特征，而这也决定了这样的民族势必容易陷入极端的情感不能自拔。

在这方面，具有拉丁血统的民族最为典型。

事实上，在拉丁民族的群体中，专横和偏执能够发展到无以复加的地步。即使是愚昧的行为，他们也会义无反顾地坚持到底。

在法国18世纪初期的密西西比股票狂潮中，金坎普瓦大街成了股票经纪人的聚散地。本来这条大街两边房子的租金只有1000里弗赫，但在这场风潮的推动下，上涨到了10000有余。有一个在街边摆摊的鞋匠把自己的摊位租了出去，每天的收入翻了一百倍。更离奇的是，有个驼背站在街头，把自己的后背租给奔忙的投机商当书桌，竟然也赚到了一大笔钱。

当交易地点搬迁之后，新交易所的花园里马上支起了五六百个小帐篷和摊位，四处挂满了色彩鲜亮的彩带和旗帜。繁忙的人们进进出出，发出无休止的叫嚷声和噪音，甚至还夹杂着音乐。人们的表情随着股票的跌涨而瞬息万变，现场气氛狂

热。

对于这种群众性的癫狂行为，正直的陆军元帅维拉尔感到苦恼，他无法容忍同胞们沉浸于这种蠢行之中无法自拔。于是他走上街头向人群大声呼喊了半个钟头，要求停止这种荒唐的行为，但是没有人愿意听从理性的劝告。回答元帅的是嘘声与嘲弄，甚至有人向他的头上扔鸡蛋和西红柿，使他不得不仓皇离去。

像这样的偏执与专横，在很大程度上已经破坏了盎格鲁撒克逊人所具有的那种强烈的个人独立情感，拉丁民族群体所具备的特性，让他们变得不容反对，一旦有人对他们的信念和感情表示异议，便会遭受最猛烈的攻击。

一个民族固然可以拥有感性气质，这在一定程度上可以促进艺术与文学的发展。但是这种情绪化的民族性格却万万不能过于严重，否则一切善恶标准、是非观念都将会被轻易地抹杀。

假如一个民族过分地严谨而理性，最严重的后果无非是精神领域的空虚；但如果一个民族只按照情绪的指令来行事，那么简直无异于灾难性的后果。

## 20. 群体渴望强权

我们已经知道，群体很容易产生出偏执与专横的情绪，只要有人在他们中间煽动起这种情绪，他们随时都会将其付诸实践。

由革命党人所掀起的法国大革命，已经证明了这一点。并且，在这场典型的群体狂热事件中，群体的另外一项重要特性也得到了验证。

这项特性就是——群体渴望强权！

群体总是对强权俯首帖耳，却很少为仁慈心肠所动！

因为在他们看来，仁慈心肠只不过是软弱可欺的代名词。

在非洲的垦荒过程中，两名工会活动分子被从英国派来协助土著工人。他们的动作十分迅速，在到达几天后，当地的农业工人就为了声援码头工人而举行罢工。另外，农业工人还提出了增加工资、改善伙食的要求。他们甚至还让营地的一些建筑物起火，并且自行武装，设立路障来阻止欧洲人接近海岸。

这些人绝没有想到，苏格兰工人中有一位令人敬畏、声如洪钟的家伙，当他发现道路被罢工者切断，就从车上一跃而下，用盖尔语大声谩骂这些非洲人。土著人被这个突如其来的陌生人极其野蛮的语言攻击吓呆了，他们立即丢下武器逃掉了。

这只是一个小小的例子，然而从这里我们可以看到，群体从来都不会听命于温和的人，而只向严厉欺压他们的暴君低头。

这个道理，早在1795年的10月，就被拿破仑·波拿巴看得清清楚楚。

正是在这个月里，奉命镇压骚乱的他，破天荒地发明了大炮的平射技术，将大炮的炮口对准了自己的同胞。那天清晨，一声令下之后，已经上膛的大炮就开始向“黑压压的畜群”轰击。

这段射程很近，足可以一击致命，然而当第一排炮打出之后，并没有将所有的人都炸死。有的只是被炸掉一只胳膊或是一条腿；有的被炸开了腹腔，还有一息存在；有几个命好的人

甚至没有受伤。

然而正当河水般的血流流向早已挖好的壕沟时，又是一声令下，骑兵手持军刀和手枪冲向了幸存者。刀劈枪击之后，那些刚刚还在大声怒骂的群众，顿时停止了最后一声喑哑的呼叫。

几年后，当拿破仑进入议院，尝试着以演讲的方式来与议员们沟通时，又遭到了议员们的激烈反抗。

于是拿破仑的弟弟吕西安调集了一队掷弹兵冲进议院，将那些议员们逮捕，剩下的议员们一致同意选举拿破仑为法兰西第一执政。

群体永远都渴望强权。

他们喜欢的英雄，要永远像恺撒一样威严而残酷。他的权杖吸引着他们，他的权力威慑着他们，他的利剑让他们心怀敬畏。他们甚至总会为这种人塑起最壮观的雕像。

而当这样的专制者失去权力时，群体又会在转眼之间面目大变。他们并非有所醒悟，只是因为群体喜欢践踏被他们剥夺了权力的专制者。

那是因为，在失势之后，这个专制者也变成了一介平民，他受到蔑视是因为他不再让人害怕。

群体随时会反抗软弱可欺者，而对强权低声下气！

如果强权时断时续，而群体又总是被极端情绪所左右，他们就会表现得反复无常，时而无法无天，时而又卑躬屈膝。正像在大革命中所表现的那样。



## 21. 群体的保守本能

群体常常呼唤变革，但那只是表面现象而已。

在这件事情上，令我们上当的，不过是群体那超乎寻常的暴力倾向和破坏力，而这种反叛、破坏以及杀戮的行为总是十分短暂的。

因为群体在做出这种行为之前，根本不会有什么策划。而他们极端情绪化的感情来得快，去得也快，这就是他们在刺激因素的影响下如狂飙席卷，但最终仍要回归安宁，回归到初始的生活状态中的原因。

当群体步入这种无头苍蝇一样的状态之后，它们很快就会陷入迷失。

因此，只要对它们撒手不管，它们很快就会对混乱感到厌倦，本能地变成奴才。

拿破仑·波拿巴再一次为我们很好地证明了这一点。在他上台之后，他压制了一切自由，当每个人都对他的铁腕有切肤之感时，那些向他发出欢呼的，却是那些原本最激进、最桀骜不驯的雅各宾派革命党人。

事实上，如果我们知道群体最终会回归保守，就能够对历史和民众革命有全新的认识。

群体可能会渴望着改朝换代，为这样的变革，他们甚至不惜发动暴力革命，然而革命并非为了改变深层的东西，只是群体发泄情绪的手段而已。

因此，群体的多变与极端，只能对一些表面的事情产生影响。其实它们就像原始人一样，有着坚不可摧的保守本能。

群体对一切传统事物、传统制度，都有着绝对的迷恋与崇敬；它们对一切有可能改变自身生活基本状态的新事物，有着根深蒂固无意识的恐惧。

假如在发明蒸汽机和铁路的时代，民主派能够握有今天这样的权力，那么这些发明便永远也不可能出现，或者至少要付出血的代价，通过不断杀戮和革命来完成。

这一点在法国大革命中表现得尤为突出。由于科学被看成是贵族政治，发现了氧气的天才化学家拉瓦锡因此被送上断头台，永久地丧失了呼吸氧气的权利。

当雅各宾派的血腥统治被终结后，热月党人意味深长地做出了这样的评价：“雅各宾派认为知识是自由的敌人，而科学则是贵族政治。如果他们的统治足够长而且放开胆子去干的话，他们就会烧毁图书馆，杀掉所有的学者，把世界投入黑暗之中！”

正因为如此，对于文明的进步而言，最值得庆幸的一点就是，只是在伟大的科学发明和工业出现之后，群体才开始掌握权力。

## 22. 群体的道德（上）

如果我们把道德定义为持久地尊重一定的社会习俗，不断抑制私心的冲动，那么很明显，群体不具备任何道德。

之所以这么说，是因为群体既多变，又容易冲动，因此他们很难遵守我们对道德的定义。

假如我们改变一下道德的定义，把它定义成某些一时之间表现出来的品质，比如舍己为人、自我牺牲、不计名利、勇于献身和对平等的渴望等等，那么我们就可以说，群体常常会表

现出很高的道德境界。

当心理学家对群体进行研究的时候，往往只着眼于他们的犯罪行为，当他们发现群体的犯罪行为频繁发生之后，往往就会得出结论：群体的道德水平十分低劣。

事实上，他们只看到了事情的一部分，这样的情况之所以存在，是因为我们从原始时代就继承了野蛮和破坏性的本能，它蛰伏在我们每个人的身上。

孤立的个人在生活中满足这种本能是很危险的，但是当他加入一个不负责任的群体时，因为很清楚不会受到惩罚，他便彻底放纵这种本能。

在生活中，我们不能向自己的同胞发泄这种破坏性本能，便把它发泄在动物身上。群体捕猎的热情与凶残，和这种破坏性本能有着同样的根源。

因为群体慢慢杀死没有反抗能力的牺牲者，正是一种十分懦弱的残忍表现。

在17世纪初的伍尔兹堡，有个小男孩随口表示，如果把灵魂卖给魔鬼就能每天都有好饭吃，并且有小马骑的话，那么他十分愿意这么做。于是这个贪图享受的小家伙立刻被抓了起来，在上百位成年人的围观下被绞死后烧成灰烬。

更残忍的事情发生在17世纪末的北美洲殖民地。一位名叫高利的男子被指控为男巫，尽管他勇敢地拒绝了这种指控，但还是遭到了处决，他被活活挤压致死。据说在处决的时候，由于感到异常痛苦，他把舌头伸到了外面，而负责监督行刑的是新英格兰司法长官，他竟然命人抓起一根棍子，把舌头硬生生地塞了回去。

这样的残忍，与几十个猎人聚集成群用猎犬追捕和杀死一只不幸的鹿时表现出的残忍，并没有什么实质上的分别。而这些例子也再一次验证了我们前面的研究，那就是在群体无意识的作用下，一个原本善良而正直的人，究竟会做出怎样违背良知与道德的事情来。

## 23. 群体的道德（下）

群体标志着杀人放火，标志着无恶不作。

然而，他们也不总是这样，甚至在某些时候，群体也会表现出极崇高的献身、牺牲和不计名利的举动。

而这样的崇高行为，孤立的个人是绝难做到的。

当群体以名誉、光荣和爱国主义作为号召时，最有可能对群体中的个人产生影响，甚至达到让他慷慨赴死的地步。

当教皇以基督的名义发动民众东征时，所有人都显示了他们的热忱。他们为了购置刀剑，急于卖掉自己的财产，无论价钱多低也不在意，就像是被关押很久的囚徒急于缴纳赎金一样。强盗金盆洗手，封建领主停止了聚敛，下层民众也不再怨声载道。所有人的心中只有一个念头：“为上帝而战。”别的想法已经没有立足之地。

同样的事情还发生在1792年的法国，当普鲁士、奥地利、英国、荷兰、西班牙诸国集合联军，大举进攻法国的时候，雅各宾党人的振臂高呼，引来了无数民众自愿参军，一再击败联军。

当我们回顾历史，群体为了自己仅仅一知半解的信仰、观念和只言片语，便英勇地面对死亡。

不断举行示威的人群，更有可能是为了服从一道命令，而不是为了增加一点儿养家糊口的薪水。

因此，只有群体才能够表现出伟大的不计名利和献身的精神，理性的个人有着趋利避害的本能，这使得他们只会把个人利益当成行动的唯一动机，而这种动机却绝难成为群体的强大动力。

事实上，在群体的智力难以理解的一次次战争中，支配着群体的肯定不是私人利益，因为在这种战争中，民众宁愿自己被屠杀，也不愿意停止他们的行为，仿佛被猎人施了催眠术的小鸟一样。

## 24. 群体的道德净化作用

群体能够让好人变成恶棍，这一点我们已经知道了。

然而群体同样具备相反的能力。

我们在上一节中提到，当个人融入群体之后，往往会表现出崇高的道德水平，即使在一群罪大恶极的坏蛋中间，也经常出现这样的情况。

恶棍们仅仅因为是群体中的一员，便会暂时地表现出严格的道德纪律。

在1792年9月短短的一个月里，成千上万的人死在了雅各宾派的手中。他们将熔化的黄金灌进贪官的嘴里；当要杀的人太多时，由于断头台行刑的速度太慢，他们甚至变换了杀人方式，将那些“对革命不积极”的人以方阵的形式排在一起，用大炮进行轰击。

尽管被杀的人血流成河，那些执行屠杀的罪犯们，却并没

有把从牺牲者身上找到的钱包和钻石别针据为己有，而是将它们放在了会议桌上，本来他们是很容易那样做的。

同样的例子还发生在1848年的七月革命中，手执武器的民众，与奉命赶来弹压的军警站在了一起，攻占了查理十世居住的杜伊勒利宫。然而这些呼啸而过的群众，却并没有拿走王宫里任何一件东西，而那些让人兴奋不已的艺术品和珍宝，任何一件都意味着多日的面包。

因此我们可以断言，群体对于个人，存在绝对的道德净化作用，尽管这种个人的道德净化叠加起来，很可能意味着全社会灾难性的后果。

群体对个人的这种道德净化作用，可以说是一种经常可以看到的常态。甚至不在骚乱或战争那样严重的环境里，也能够看到这样的情况。

我们在前面说过，群体会要求他们的英雄具有夸张的美德，而同样地，群体中的成员也会彼此要求，督促对方将不道德的行为收敛起来。

一般可以看到，在一次群众性的集会当中，即使它的成员品质低劣，通常也能够表现得一本正经。

无论是放荡不羁的浪荡子，拉皮条的人或是粗鲁的屠夫，在某些危险的场合进行交谈时，也会经常一下子变得轻声慢语。

尽管群体经常会放纵自己的低劣本能，做出道德败坏的事情来，但是他们也会不时树立起崇高道德行为的典范。

假如我们把不计名利、绝对服从、勇于献身真实或虚假的理想算成美德，那么毫无疑问，群体必定是最具备这种美德的

人。在这一方面，群体中个人所达到的水平，即使是最聪明的哲学家也难以望其项背。

### 第三章 群体的观念、推理与想象力

#### 1. 群体只接受简单观念

简单地说，群体能够接受的观念有两类。

第一类是时髦的观念。这类观念因为环境影响而产生，非常容易让人着迷，然而来得快去得也快，因此很少有生命力，并很少能够发挥持久的影响。

第二类是基本观念，比如说过去的宗教观念，以及今天的社会主义和民主观念，都属于这一类的范畴。

相比起第一类观念，它们因为环境、遗传规律和公众意见而具有极大的稳定性。不过现在，那些曾经被我们的父辈视为人生支柱的伟大的基本观念，正在摇摇欲坠。它们的稳定性已丧失殆尽，同时，建立于其上的制度也遭遇了严重的动摇。

无论为群体提供上述观念中的哪一种，它们都必须是绝对的、毫不妥协的、不容置疑的。

最重要的一点是，它们必须是最简单明了的。

正如我们前面所说的，群体是用形象来思维的，并且容易夸张，容易陷入极端。正因为如此，想要某一种观念对群体产生有效的影响，它就必须披上形象化的外衣。

因为只有这种形式，才能为群众所接受。

在18世纪英国的南海股票风潮中，一位诈骗者的手段简单而大胆，他发布了一份募股说明书说：“本人有一个项目，需要50万英镑的资本，一共分为5000股，每股面值100英镑，定金两英镑，认购者只需要支付定金，每股每年就能得到100英镑的股息。”

第二天上午九点，当他打开康恩希尔街办公室的房门时，疯狂的人群蜂拥而入，几乎要把他挤倒。到了下午三点的时候，他已经卖出了1000股，并且都付了定金。这个大胆的骗子在五个小时里就赚了2000英镑。他见好就收，当晚就逃得无影无踪。

还有一个同样成功的骗局，行骗的手段是所谓的“环球许可证”。这些许可证只不过是一些扑克牌形状的纸片，上面贴着“环球饭店”的标志，刻着“帆布许可证”的字样。按照诈骗者的说法，持证人可以在将来的某个时间里，随意认购一家新建的帆布厂的股票，而这种许可证在交易市场上的售价高达60个金币。

类似这样的骗局还有许多，它们往往简单得令人咋舌，然而它的效果又是那样地好。这种盲目的轻信，毫无疑问是建立在群体的简单观念上的。

也只有靠形象思维得来的简单观念，才会让群体如此盲目而轻信。

而且，尽管以上的骗局一个又一个地被揭穿，民众却绝不会因此而停止受骗，相反，无论到什么时候，受骗者都大有其人。

## 2. 如何让群体接受新观念

只有简单而明了的观念，才能被群体所接受，然而并不是



所有的观念都是简单明了的。

想让它更容易被群体接受，就要对其来一番彻底的改造，使其更加通俗易懂。特别是那些高深莫测的哲学或科学观念，以群体低劣的智力水平是根本无法接受的，因此，对它的改造也就来得更加深刻。

尽管随着种族间理性程度和聪明才智的不同，这种改造有的时候大一些，有的时候小一些，但是无论如何，改造的方向都必须是低俗化和简单化。

之所以要这样，是因为从社会的角度看，观念从来不存在等级制度。我们从来没发现哪种观念会比另一种高明，这是因为不管观念刚出现时多么伟大或正确，只要它一进入群体的智力范围，它那些高深或伟大的成分，便会被立即剥夺殆尽。

17世纪俄国的变革，可以称得上是这方面的典型例子。当彼得大帝尝试着在俄罗斯展开一场全面的改革时，所有来自西方的科学思想、技术成果都无一例外地遭到了强烈的抵制，而且这种抵制不仅仅来自于万千民众，甚至皇太子都加入到了其中。

这里面的原因很简单，以群体的智力水平，是无法接受一套复杂的变革观念的。

于是彼得大帝被迫做出了调整，将这套变革观念改造成了最低俗也最简单的形式，以便在民众之间传播。

改造后的新形式是——从男性臣民的脸部入手，剪掉他们的胡子。

当彼得大帝的欢迎宴会开始后，卫兵们就冲上前将来宾都按住，强行剃掉他们的胡子，震惊的来宾甚至还没回过神，就

已经成为了新观念的接受者。

### 3. 群体难于被动摇

我们始终认为，一种正确的观念很容易被接受。

然而事实并非如此。

旧观念很难被消除，对待同一个明显的道理，有理性的人或许会接受，但是换成缺乏理性的人，则很快会被他无意识的自我带回原来的观点，

人们将会看到，过不了几天他就故态复萌，用同样的语言重新提出他过去的证明。

所以说，群体很容易处在旧观念的影响之下。

因为它们已经变成了一种情感。这种观念，才是影响着我们的言行举止最隐秘的动机。

这就意味着，只要观念能够深入到群体的头脑中，并且产生一系列效果时，和它对抗就是徒劳的。

这就导致了一个社会学现象：所有的群体都很难被动摇。

在法国大革命爆发前的一个世纪里，所有人都信奉君权神圣，民主与自由的观念根本无法在法国保有一席之地，谁要是在大庭广众之下谈论这些，一定会被当成疯子。甚至哲学大师伏尔泰也因为公开宣扬天赋人权，两次被囚禁在巴士底狱，最终被赶出了法国。然而正是这些曾经被嗤之以鼻的观念，引发了欧洲历史上规模最大的革命。

随着时间的推移，当这些观念深入群众的心中后，就变得

根深蒂固，其不可抗拒的威力尽人皆知。

在它的引领之下，整个法兰西民族为了社会平等，为了实现抽象的权利和理想主义自由而做出的不懈追求，不仅让整个欧洲王室都摇摇欲坠，甚至让全世界都陷入了深刻的动荡之中。

在长达二十年的时间里，欧洲各国都为血海淹没，那种旨在毁灭一切的大屠杀，即使在成吉思汗和他的士兵看来，也是胆战心惊的。

这种灾难性的悲剧后果，正是因为观念的传播引起的。

群体的激情或许超乎你的想象，这是因为它们很难动摇，让观念在群众的头脑里扎根需要很长时间，而根除它们所需要的时间也短不了多少。

诸如中世纪的基督教观念，上个世纪的民主观念，或今天的社会主义观念，所有这些基本观念都包含了一些令人叹息的错误。

然而尽管所有的政治家都清楚，但是迫于这些观念的强大影响力，在未来很长的一段时间里，它们将是决定各国行动的最基本因素。

#### 4. 群体的伪推理能力

我们不能绝对地断言：群体没有推理能力。

然而，群体所能接受的论证过程，从逻辑上说，属于十分拙劣的那一类，因此把它们称为推理，只能算是一种比喻。

在此，我们姑且把它命名为：群众的伪推理能力。

这种伪推理能力究竟是怎样运作的呢？

他们的推理方式与爱斯基摩人非常相似，比如爱斯基摩人从经验中得知冰这种透明物质放在嘴里可以融化，于是认为同样属于透明物质的玻璃放在嘴里也会融化。

又比如在亚洲一些野蛮人的部落中流传着这样的风俗：当他们将骁勇善战的对手击败后，往往会吃下这个人的心脏，认为这样就可以得到他的全部力量和勇气。或是像一些受雇主剥削的苦力，他们认定天下所有雇主都在剥削他们工人。

再如澳洲的土著居民朱瓦西人，常常会把自已的箭赠与另一个猎人，然后他就有权分享这个猎人射杀的任何动物。猎物被认为“属于”杀死它的箭的主人，即使狩猎的时候他并不在现场。

从这里可以看出，群体推理的特点，是把彼此不同、只是表面相似的事物搅在一起，并且立刻把具体的事物普遍化。因此不妨这样说，他们并不推理或只会错误地推理，并且绝不会受到推理过程的影响。

这样看起来，只要能够为群体提供这样的论证，那么也就等于操纵了群体。

事实上，当我们重读一些演讲稿的时候，常常会为其中的漏洞和错误感到惊讶，然而正是这样的东西，竟然对听众产生了重大的影响。

在这个问题上，我们往往会忘记一点，那就是这些演讲稿并不是为哲学家准备的，而是用来说服民众的。凡是和群体有密切交往的演说家，无一不擅长激发群体，在它们中间创造一个有诱惑力的形象。

可以说，任何一个人，只要他能够成功地做到这一点，他就能达到自己的目的。在这方面，即使有二十本真知灼见的著作，也比不上几句能够号召起头脑风暴的话语。

而这就意味着，群体没有推理能力，因此它也无法表现出任何批判精神；也就是说，它不能辨别真伪或对任何事物形成正确的判断。群体所接受的判断，仅仅是强加给它们的判断，而绝不是经过讨论后得到采纳的判断。

在这方面，也有无数的个人比群体水平高明不了多少。有些意见轻而易举就得到了普遍赞同，更多是因为大多数人感到，他们不可能根据自己的推理形成自己独特的看法。

## 5. 群体的想象力（上）

有句谚语这样说——瞎子的听力比常人更敏锐。

正如这个此消彼长的道理一样，缺乏推理能力的人也一样，群体形象化的想象力不但强大而活跃，并且非常敏感。

对于群体来说，一个人、一件事或是一次事故，往往会在他们的脑海中唤起栩栩如生的形象，而这种超常想象力是一个理性的人所不具备的。

这样看起来，群体就像是一个睡着了的人，他的理性已经被搁置脑后，只凭形象思维得到结果，就像在做梦一样，他的头脑中能产生出极鲜明的形象。但是只要他能够开始思考，这种形象也会迅速消失。

无论是独立的个体还是群体，一旦他们丧失了思考和推理能力，那么他们对自己的认识就变得十分模糊，甚至不认为世界上还有什么办不到的事情。

群体的这种想法十分强烈，以至于让他们产生了一种目空一切的极端情绪。一般而言，它们也会认为，最不可能的事情便是最惊人的事情。

凭着这样的信念，群体只关注一个事件中最离奇、最不同寻常的、最传奇的一面，原因便在于此。

我们在原始人的思维方式中，常常可以看到这一现象。

比如说，在德属东非的土著居民看来，一艘军舰的强大与否，并不在于它拥有多少门火炮，多大的吨位，或者多厚的装甲。这些原始部落中的居民判断这个问题的标准究竟是什么呢？

答案足以让人大吃一惊，因为这些土著人不认别的，只认烟囱。

在他们看来，一艘军舰的烟囱越多，那么它的实力也就越强。于是，当英国人的一艘双烟囱军舰来到非洲海岸时，当地居民纷纷向他们表示友好，转而弃宗主国于不顾，因为当地的德国军舰是老式的驱逐舰，只有一根烟囱。

德国人发现了问题的关键，于是从国内调来了一艘有三个烟囱的巡洋舰，这在当地引起了巨大的震动，因为当地土人从未见过有如此多烟囱的军舰，纷纷前来观看，并给它起了个响亮的绰号——背着三根管子的海上武士。

这件事情并没有结束。几天后，“三根管子的海上武士”就不再是土著人的英雄了，因为英国人开来了一艘船，上面足足有四个烟囱，每一个都冒出滚滚浓烟。

德国总督对此大感困惑，难道英国人为了炫耀武力，竟然调来一艘战列舰？

答案很快揭晓了，这艘四个烟囱的船根本不是什么战列舰，而是拉煤炭的商船，因为锅炉老旧得厉害，所以要多加一个烟囱排烟。

这一下，德国人彻底无话可说了，一是他们无论如何也变不出一艘五根烟囱的船，二是他们怎么也想不通，这些土著人怎么会以这样奇怪的角度来分析事情。

然而，这正是原始思维的典型思考方式，只依靠鲜明的形象进行判断，并以此取代正常的推理能力。

事实上，假如我们尝试着对一种文明进行分析，就会发现，它得以存在的真正基础其实是那些神奇的、传奇般的内容。在历史上，表象总是比真相起着更重要的作用，而不现实的因素总是比现实的因素更重要。

群体无视现实，无论是亲眼所见，还是富有逻辑的劝告，群体都不会表现出一丝一毫的动摇，都会我行我素、

能够打动它们的因素，只有形象。只有形象能吸引或吓住群体，成为它们的行为动机。

因为群体只会形象思维。

## 6. 群体的想象力（下）

其实我们只需要想一下就知道，凡是那些最能活灵活现反映人物形象的戏剧表演，总是会对群体产生巨大的影响。这种情况从人类诞生那天起就已经存在了。

可以看到，今天的一些原始部落，仍然会在狩猎活动以及战争之前，举行规模宏大的祭祀仪式。当狂热的集体舞蹈进行到高潮的时候，巫师就会进入一种异常的意识状态，人们便相

信他们激活了一种超自然的力量，因而可以游走在宇宙的任何一个空间，执行各种各样的任务，并赋予部落民众额外的能力。

而在古罗马时代，任何政治决策都离不开一句著名的座右铭：“要面包也要娱乐。”在罗马民众的眼中，宏大壮观的表演构成了幸福的理想，除此之外，他们再无所求。

根据记载，当角斗士一出现在圆形剧场中央，每个观众都会瞪大眼睛，力图看清他们是何许人也。观众们不但有高涨的热情，参与的声浪也很高，倘若有角斗士仓促上阵，就会遭到观众的起哄，甚至有情绪激动者从座位上站起来，一面跺脚，一面手舞足蹈，威胁角斗士。

不仅如此，观众之间也会产生矛盾，有时候会因为对某个角斗士的评价出现差异而大打出手。刹时间，观众席就会变成拳脚表演场。

当实力较弱的角斗士不敌对手的时候，观众席上立即会响起嬉笑声；就连妇女在内，有时甚至供奉灶神的贞女也会站起来，不仅做出拇指朝下的蔑视动作，还严厉谴责打得不好的角斗士，并威胁要揍他们。

可以看出，这种因为形象的暗示而产生的感情十分强烈，因此，就像暗示通常所起的作用一样，它们倾向于变成行动。

即使到了现代，这样的故事我们也时有耳闻。

在某个大众剧院中，剧院经理仅仅因为上演了一出让人情绪低沉的戏，就不得不保护那扮演叛徒的演员离开剧院，以免他受到那些义愤填膺观众的粗暴攻击，尽管叛徒的罪恶不过是剧作家想象的产物。



可以说，这样的故事是对群体心理状态的最好揭示，尤其反映了鲜明形象对群体想象力的影响。

这也再次印证了我们的判断：群体没有理性的思维过程，虚构的因素对它们的影响，几乎比现实因素的影响还要大，他们对于这两者，有着不加区分的明显倾向。

## 7. 掌握群体的想象力（上）

想要领导群体，就要在他们的想象力上下大功夫。

因为在历史上，几乎所有侵略者的权力和国家的威力，都是建立在群体的想象力上的。

让我们来看一下那些重大的历史事件，诸如佛教、基督教和伊斯兰教的兴起，宗教改革、法国大革命，以及我们这个时代社会主义的崛起，都是因为对群体的想象力产生强烈影响而造成的直接或间接的后果。

除此之外，所有时代和所有国家的伟大政客，包括最专横的暴君，也都把群众的想象力视为他们权力的基础，他们从来没有设想过通过与它作对而进行统治。

拿破仑在这一方面表现得尤为突出，他在国会中演讲时曾经这样说过：“我通过改革天主教，终止了旺代战争；通过变成一个穆斯林教徒，在埃及站住了脚；通过成为一名信奉教皇至上的人，赢得了意大利神父的支持。如果我去统治一个犹太人的国家，我也会重修所罗门的神庙。”

自从亚历山大和恺撒以来，大概从来没有一个伟大的人物更好地了解怎样影响群众的想象力，而拿破仑恰恰很好地做到了这一点。

终其一生，拿破仑始终全神贯注的事情，就是淋漓尽致地运用这种想象力。在胜利时，在屠杀时，在演说时，在自己的所有行动中，他都把这一点牢记在心。直到他躺在床上就要咽气时，依然对此念念不忘。

正因为如此，拿破仑才在他那个时代建立了彪炳的功业，尽管成千上万的士兵因为他的野心而客死他乡，但民众仍然认为他是当之无愧的帝王与英雄，仍然有数不清的民众情愿为其赴汤蹈火。

那么，究竟应当如何影响群众的想象力呢？

想要掌握这种本领，实际上只需要注意一点，那就是万万不可以求助于智力和推理；也就是说，绝对不能够采用论证的方式。

当恺撒被布鲁图等人刺杀在元老院时，安东尼为了让民众反对谋杀恺撒的凶手，采用的办法不是机智的说理，而是让民众被鲜明的形象所感染，让民众看到他的意志，于是他用手指着连中23刀的恺撒尸体，做出慷慨激昂的悲愤之态。

这样的策略收到了成效，布鲁图与他的同谋喀西约很快便众叛亲离，民众都被安东尼的情绪所感染，自发地集合高呼恺撒的名字，要求严惩这两个人民公敌。

然后，安东尼又在葬礼上用标枪挑起了恺撒的血衣，当众宣布了恺撒的遗嘱。群众因此而心碎狂乱，举着火把追杀凶手们。不久，布鲁图和喀西约就在绝望中自杀。

## 8. 掌握群体的想象力（下）

从这里可以看出，不管刺激群众想象力的是什么，都必须遵循以下两点原则。

第一，采取的形式必须是令人吃惊的鲜明形象。

第二，一定不要做任何多余的解释，只要再列出几个不同寻常或神奇的事实就足够了。

这些事实可以是一场伟大的胜利，也可以是某个大奇迹，或是一桩惊人的罪恶，甚至是一条令人震惊的预言，一个恐怖的前景。无论是哪一类，都必须以整体的形式呈现在群体面前，关于它的来源，则丝毫没必要透露，以免引起麻烦。

如果用的是小罪行与小事件，那么即使有几百条甚至几千条，也丝毫不会触动群众的想象力。而一次大罪行或大事件却会给他们留下深刻的印象，即使其造成的危害与一百次小罪相比不知小了多少。

在法国曾经爆发过可怕的流行性感冒，仅在巴黎一地就夺走了5000人的生命，但是它没有在民众中造成很大的反响，原因在于，这种真实的大规模死亡没有以某个生动的形象表现出来，而是通过每周发布的统计信息让人们知道的。

假如一次事件造成的死亡只有500人而不是5000人，但它是在一天之内发生在公众面前，那么它就是一次极其引人注目的事件。譬如说埃菲尔铁塔轰然倒塌，就会对群众的想象力产生重大影响。

曾经有一次，人们因为与一艘横渡大西洋的汽船失去了联系，便以为它在大洋之中沉没了，这件事情对群众想象力的影响整整持续了一周。

然而，根据官方的统计，仅仅在1894年一年的时间里，就有850条船和203艘汽轮失事。以造成的生命和财产损失而论，它们比那次大西洋航线上的失事严重得多，而群众在任何时候都没有关心过这些接连不断的灾难。

从这件事上可以看出，影响民众想象力的并不是事实本身，而是它们发生和引起注意的方式。只有对它们进行浓缩加工，它们才会形成令人瞠目结舌的惊人形象。

从这个意义上说，只要掌握了影响群众想象力的艺术，也就掌握了统治他们的艺术。

## 第四章 群体信仰所采取的宗教形式

### 1. 群体的偶像崇拜（上）

我们已经知道，群体并不进行推理，它对观念只会全盘接受，或是完全拒绝。

我们还知道，对它产生影响的暗示，会彻底征服它的理解力，并且使它倾向于立刻变成行动。

我们看到了，对群体给予恰当的影响，它就会为自己信奉的理想慷慨赴死。

我们还看到，群体只会产生狂热而极端的情绪，同情心很快就会变成崇拜，而一旦他们心生厌恶，也几乎会立刻变为仇恨。

我们现在对群体已经知道得足够多了吗？

事实上，对于群体这样一只怪兽，我们只是摸到了它的一鳞半甲。我们上面提到的那些特点，也只不过是些表面的东西，它的下面还有着更深的机制等待我们去挖掘。

假如我们对群体的这些特点做更细致的研究，就会发现不

论是在有着狂热宗教信仰的时代，还是发生了政治大动荡的时代，都出现了同样的感情，它有着古怪的形式，并且蕴含着深厚的宗教情谊。

对于这样的一种感情，我们除了把它命名为偶像崇拜，再也没有更好的称呼了。

偶像崇拜有着非常简单的特点，有五大标志来供我们辨认。

第一，偶像总是凌驾于信徒之上，处于高高在上的地位，这一点有着决定性的作用。

第二，信徒总是盲目服从偶像的命令。

第三，信徒没有能力，也不愿意对偶像规定的信条进行讨论。

第四，信徒有着狂热的愿望，希望把偶像的信条广加传播。

第五，信徒倾向于把不接受它们的任何人视为仇敌。

当群体的感情符合第一项标志的时候，不论它的偶像是一个看不见的上帝，还是一具木雕、石像，或者是某个英雄或政治观念，这种形式就等同于宗教，而这种感情就变成了宗教信仰。

在路易十五统治的时代，出现了一位圣格美伯爵。此人声称自己发现了长生不老药和点金石，还夸耀自己活了两千多年，有数不清的人相信了他的鬼话。

当时他大约七十岁，但看起来只有四十多岁，气色非常之

好，他的镇定自若给人留下了深刻印象。他是个极其博学的人，当被问到他与古代圣贤交往的状况时，他能够对答如流，没有任何破绽。当时巴黎的社交明星是庞帕德夫人，而能够随意进出她化妆间的只有圣格美伯爵一人。夫人很喜欢和他聊天，伯爵在她面前谦虚了起来，但是让她相信了他至少活了300年。

一旦民众开始迷信一个人，常常会攀比谁更迷信。当时的巴黎，到处都在流传这位伯爵的传奇故事。几个喜欢恶作剧的年轻人进行了一项试验：他们雇佣了一位喜剧演员，让他扮成圣格美伯爵的模样，站到大街上去吹牛。

这位假伯爵站在大街上信口胡言，说自己曾经与救世主共进晚餐，而且把酒变成了水；他和耶稣是亲密好友，耶稣经常警告他不可太放荡，否则晚景凄凉。这位假伯爵惊讶地发现，民众简直什么都相信，甚至连如此亵渎神灵的昏话也毫不怀疑。而三天之后，几乎全巴黎的人都在传说伯爵在大洪水刚结束不久就出生了，将来也不会死。

很显然，在圣格美伯爵的信徒身上，我们看到了一种近乎迷恋的崇拜心理。不过，仅仅这样还是不够的。

假如一个人只崇拜某个神，那么他还算不上有虔诚的信仰。

只有当他把自己的一切思想资源、一切自愿的服从行为、发自肺腑的幻想热情，全部奉献给一项事业或一个人，将其作为自己全部思想和行动的目标与准绳时，才能够说他是个虔诚的信徒。关于这一点，我们会继续探讨。

## 2. 群体的偶像崇拜（下）

只要拥有了宗教感情，群体的妄想与偏执就被激发出来

了。

我们可以仔细考察一下，凡是自信掌握了现世或来世幸福秘密的人，难免都会有这样的表现。而当聚集在一起的人受到某种信念的激励时，在他们中间也会发现这样的特点。

在17世纪初的德国，“玫瑰十字”教派正是这样一个团体。几乎所有的梦想家和炼金师都加入了这个教派。他们自称教派的前八名成员能够包治百病，如果他们愿意的话，还可以把教皇的三重皇冠摧毁成粉末。

这些人信誓旦旦地声称，加入“玫瑰十字会”的人可以获得神灵的帮助，获得创造奇迹的魔力。所有的会员都可以消除瘟疫，平息狂风暴雨，能够腾云驾雾，一日穿越千里；还能够打败恶魔，治疗百病。

类似于这样的妄想，在许多宗教社团中都有存在。妄想在信徒中快速地传染，使他们变得狂热，最终演变成偏执的宗教狂。

我们可以看出，在法国大革命时代的雅各宾党人正符合上面的分析，他们的骨子里就像宗教法庭时代的天主教徒一样虔诚，这促使他们坚定不移地实施恐怖统治，宣泄着因狂热信仰而产生的残暴激情。

群体的信念有着盲目服从、残忍的偏执以及要求狂热的宣传等等这些宗教感情固有的特点，因此可以说，他们的一切信念都具有宗教的形式。受到某个群体拥戴的英雄，在这个群体看来就是一个真正的神。

拿破仑当了15年这样的神，一个比任何神都更频繁地受到崇拜，更轻松地把人置于死地的神。即使是基督教的神和异教徒的神，对于处于他们掌握中的头脑，也从未实行过如此绝对的

统治。

### 3. 如何建立偶像崇拜

身为一位领袖，如果想让自己创立的宗教或政治信条站住脚，就必须成功地激起群众想入非非的感情。

群体无时无刻不在幻想，如果能够让他们在崇拜和服从中找到自己的幸福，就能够让他们随时为自己的偶像赴汤蹈火。

关于这一点，我们仍然可以在历史中找到例子。

当我们回顾罗马帝国的历史时就会发现，维系这个庞大帝国存在五个世纪之久的因素根本不是武力，整个帝国的武装力量，只有区区三十个军团，然而它能够让整整一亿人俯首听命。

这里面的秘诀就是偶像崇拜，而神就是皇帝本人！

通过少数人的操纵，皇帝成了罗马伟业的人格化象征，他像神一样受到了全体人民的一致崇拜。只要在罗马帝国的疆域之内，即便是最小的城镇也设有膜拜皇帝的祭坛。

根据史料显示，在基督教兴起之前的许多年里，罗马帝国的所有城市，都建造了纪念奥古斯都的神殿。为了维持这种机制，每个城市还专门选举出一名大祭司，他是当地的首要人物，权力与威信都要凌驾于市政官与治安官之上。

从罗马帝国的偶像崇拜中我们可以发现，建立一套类似于宗教信仰的机制，需要这样几个步骤。

第一，要对群体的想象力善加利用，为群体提供一个鲜明的形象，使之产生幻想。



第二，当群体开始沉湎于妄想中时，要果断而大胆地对其进行洗脑，以夸大其词、言之凿凿、不断重复的方式来煽动群众的情绪。

第三，当群众开始陷入狂热之后，则要以领导者的面目出现，为他们指出方向，用信念来激励他们，使得他们重新开始想入非非，并在其中找到属于自己的幸福。

当这些工作完成之后，偶像崇拜就已经被初步建立起来，剩下的工作就是建立一套行之有效的机制，来完成对宗教感情的维护。

我们可以看到，大多数支配着人们头脑的大人物，如今已经不再设立圣坛，但是他们还有雕像，或者他们的赞美者手里有他们的画像。以他们为对象的崇拜行为，和他们的前辈所得到的相比毫不逊色。

之所以在今天这个科学昌明的年代，还会出现如此的丑剧，其原因并不奇怪，只要深入探究一下群众心理学的这个基本问题，即可破解历史的奥秘。

因为群众不论需要别的什么，他们首先需要上帝！

#### 4. 偶像崇拜不会消亡

偶像崇拜永远不会消亡，因为群众需要宗教。

我们万万不可认为，偶像崇拜不过是过去时代的神话，早已被理性彻底清除。在历史上同理性永恒的冲突中，感情从来都是战胜者。

无论是政治还是神学，或者是社会信条，如果想在群众中扎根，就必须采用宗教的形式。因为除了宗教团体之外，没

有一个团体能够排除讨论，而讨论必然会产生分歧，这往往是危险的分裂开端。

即使群众接受的是无神论，这种信念也会表现出宗教情感中所有的偏执，它很快就会表现为一种崇拜。

陀思妥耶夫斯基这位深刻的思想家曾是一位虚无主义者，是虔诚的有神论者。然而有一天，他受到了理性思想的启发而突然觉悟，撕碎了小教堂祭坛上一切神仙和圣人的画像，吹灭了蜡烛，立刻用无神论哲学家的著作代替了那些被破坏的物品。

说到底，这位思想家的宗教感情并没有丝毫变化，发生变化的只是宗教信仰的对象。

同样地，偶像崇拜这种形式并不会真正地消亡，无论时代进步到何种程度，即使不再有圣坛与雕像存在，也会有新的形式来替代它。民众的迷信与崇拜，不会有丝毫的减少。

在当今这个时代里，群众固然已经听不到神或宗教这种词，但是在过去的一百年里，他们从未拥有过如此多的崇拜对象，古代的神也无缘拥有如此多、如此受到崇拜的塑像。

1886年，那位鼓吹对德复仇的布朗热将军开始担任陆军部长。我们可以看到，在“布朗热主义”的旗号下，群众的宗教本能再一次被复活了，对共和政府不满的民众群起而拥戴之，甚至在任何一家乡村小酒馆里，都能够找到这位英雄的画像。

这个人被赋予匡扶正义、铲除邪恶的全权，成千上万的人会为他献出生命。如果不是他懦弱的性格，不是那样临阵怯场不敢发动政变，那么以他传奇般的名望，肯定能在历史上占据伟人的位置。

## 5. 又一个你无法接受的概念

理解了群体的宗教情结，我们可以对一些十分重要的历史给出这样的解释。

任何一桩惨案，总是群众所为！

过去的史学研究者在对社会现象进行研究时，往往只注意自然主义的角度，却忽略了心理学的角度，因此往往看不到一些事件的起源。

这种研究对事实有充分的讨论，然而从研究群体心理学的要求看，却并不总是能够找出大革命的起因。事件中血腥、混乱和残忍的一面让人惊恐，但是从那部伟大戏剧的英雄身上，却很少能够看到还有一群癫狂的野蛮人肆意妄为，看不到他们对自己本能的丝毫约束。

包括这场革命的暴烈，它的肆意屠杀，它对宣传的需要，它向一切事物发出的战争宣言，统统因为研究方法的偏差而被埋没。只有认识到这场革命不过是一种新的宗教信仰在群众中建立起来时，一切才会得到恰当的解释。

除了法国大革命，宗教改革、圣巴托洛缪的大屠杀、法国的宗教战争、西班牙的宗教法庭，都是受宗教感情激励的群众所为。凡是怀有这种感情的人，必然会用火与剑去清除那些反对建立新信仰的人。

譬如遍布西班牙全境的宗教裁判所，仅在1483到1498年十五年的时间里，就以火刑处置了十万人之众。然而这种极端而残酷的办法并不稀奇，凡是那些有着真诚、不屈信念的人，都会采用这样的办法来对付反对者。假如他们采用了别的办法，他们的信念也就不会得到这样的评语了。

因此，我们提到的这些大事件，只有在群众的灵魂想让它们发生时，它们才有可能发生，否则，即使最绝对的专制者也无能为力。

假如某个史学家说，圣巴托洛缪惨案是一个国王所为，那么他显然对群体心理一无所知。

因为所有的屠杀命令，固然可以由君王来发布，却必须由群体的灵魂来贯彻。

即使是握有最绝对权力的专制君主，充其量也只能加快或延缓其显灵的时间。

所以我们可以说，无论是圣巴托洛缪的大屠杀，还是惨烈的宗教战争，并不完全是国王们所为，就像恐怖统治不完全是罗伯斯庇尔、丹东或圣鞠斯特所为一样。

在这些事件的深处，统治者的权力并不是永远存在，有的只是永恒的群体宣泄。

## 第二卷 群体的意见与信念

### 第一章 群体的意见与信念中的间接因素

#### 1. 群众运动的导火索

我们已经研究了群体的精神结构，了解了它的感情、思维和推理方式，现在让我们看看它的意见和信念是如何形成的。

决定着这些意见和信念的因素可以分为两类：间接因素和直接因素。

那么，它们之间究竟有何区别呢？

间接因素是这样的东西，它能够使群体接受某些信念，并使其再也难以接受别的信念。它在很长的一段时间里煽动着群体，使他们的情绪开始酝酿。

某些观念的爆发并被付诸行动，有时看起来十分突然。然而这只是表面的结果，在它背后肯定能够找到延续良久的准备性力量。

而直接因素是指这样一些因素，随着上述长期性准备工作的延续，它们能够成为实际说服群体的资源。不过，若是没有准备性工作，它们也不会发生作用。这就是说，直接因素是使观念采取一定形式并使其能够产生一定结果的因素。

集体突然开始加以贯彻的方案，就是由这种直接因素引起的。一次骚乱的爆发，或一场罢工的决定，甚至民众授予某人权力去推翻政府，都可归结于这种因素。

打个比方，如果说间接因素相当于长时间的虫啃蚁噬，那么直接因素就是一次强烈的地震或台风，虽然看上去是外力破坏了房屋，但房屋的地基实际上早已经被掏空了。

在所有的重大历史事件中，都可以发现这两种因素相继发生作用。这里仅以一个最令人震惊的事件为例，法国大革命的间接因素包括哲学家的著作、贵族的苛捐杂税以及科学思想的进步。有了这些准备，群众的头脑便很容易被演说家的演讲以及朝廷用不疼不痒的改良进行的抵抗所激怒。

有些间接因素具有普遍性，可以看出，它们是群体一切信念和意见的基础。这些因素就是民族、传统、时间、各种典章制度和教育。

## 2. 第一条导火索：民族

我们研究过不同民族的民族性格，现在我们必须指出，民族是最重要的间接因素。

每个民族都有它独有的特点。

这种特点又形成了它的民族性格。

当这种民族性格一代代传递下去，我们就看到了这个民族的力量、它的信仰、它的制度和艺术。总之，它文明中的一切成分，仅仅是其民族性格的外在表现。

民族性格不仅不会被改变，而且还具有巨大的力量。我们可以看到，当某种观念从一个民族传播给另一民族时，总是会发生深刻的变化。

某些环境变化、突发事件可能会为一个民族带来新的暗示因素，带来相当大的影响，引导他们付诸行动。但是如果这种

影响与该民族的民族性格相反，或者说，如果它与一个民族世代继承下来的因素相对立，那么它就只能是暂时的。

英国的南海事件是这方面最好的例子。当时，密西西比股票狂潮在法国正如日中天。在这个神奇的泡沫肆意膨胀的日子里，法国人失去了仅存的理性，不再满足于从事那些赢利较慢的产业，人人都渴望立刻拥有无穷无尽的财富，于是铤而走险，开展了一个大胆的计划。

当这股风潮来到英国时，像法国人一样，英国人也被这种离奇的计划迷惑，千万双眼睛中饱含欣喜，仿佛看到了金银财宝扑面而来的景象。

然而，与法国不同的是，盎格鲁撒克逊民族骨子里那种强烈的理性成分发挥了作用，除了一部分从始至终持反对意见的当权者外，即使是普通民众，也没有完全参与到这场疯狂的游戏中去。

这也正是为什么法国人的疯狂持续了整整四年，而闹剧只在英国进行了八个月的原因。

关于民族这一因素的作用，以后还会有所涉及，我们在这里需要了解的，是它对各民族群体气质特征的影响。事实上，正是这种影响存在着差别，才决定了今日世界的格局。

### 3. 第二条导火索：传统

过去的观念、欲望和感情，构成了传统。

每个民族都拥有自己的传统，因此也可以说，传统是民族的特性之一。这种东西很难发生改变，而且对我们的生活发生着巨大的影响。

这一点可以通过类比的方法来说明。最近在生物学上出现了新的研究成果，从胚胎学的角度证明了过去的时间对生物进化的巨大影响，从此之后，生物学的研究云开雾散。

假如我们把这种理论移植到历史科学中，结果又会如何呢？

我们可以把民族看成单个的生物，那么这样一来，它就是在历史中形成的一个有机体。

如果它是有机体，那么它就像其他有机体一样，只能通过缓慢的遗传积累过程发生变化。

因此，一个民族的传统是极其稳定的，除了一些名称和外在形式，人们没办法对它做什么改变，就如同喀斯特地貌中的钟乳岩——需要长年累月的沉淀，一旦形成就很难被腐蚀损坏。

传统不仅稳定，而且支配着人们的行动，尤其当他们形成群体时更是如此。对这种状况不必感到遗憾。脱离了传统，不管民族气质还是文明，都不可能存在。

我们可以下这样的结论：人类是依附于传统而存在的。因为只要脱离了传统，不管民族气质还是文明，都不可能保存下来。

为了保持传统，自从有人类以来，他们就进行着两大努力，一是建立传统，二是当有益的成果已变得破败不堪时，人类社会便努力摧毁这种传统。

无论是新传统还是旧传统，倘若没有一个传统存在，文明就不可能延续；而如果没有新的传统，文明也不可能进步。



于是，这里就出现了一个严重的困境——如何在稳定与求变之间取得平衡。

如果一个民族使自己的习俗变得过于牢固，它便不会再发生变化，中国是这方面的典型，它死气沉沉的固有习俗，使得整个国家没有任何改进的能力。

在这种情况下，暴力革命也没多少用处。因为由此造成的结果，或者是打碎的锁链被重新拼接在一起，让整个过去原封不动地再现，或者是对被打碎的事物撒手不管，让无政府状态来取代衰败。

因此，对于一个民族来说，最理想的状态是保留过去的制度，同时又用不易察觉的方式一点一滴地加以改进。

这个理想非常不容易实现，因为在稳定与变革之间求得那个平衡点是很困难的事情，使它变成现实的几乎只有古罗马人和近代英国人。更何况，群体会本能地对一切变革进行阻挠。

我们在前文中论述过，群体是最保守的势力，正因为如此，群体才会死抱着传统观念不放，极其顽固地反对变革传统观念。

事实上，即使是最狂暴的反叛行为，最终也只会造成一些嘴皮子上的变化。在18世纪末，教堂被毁，僧侣们或是被驱逐出国，或是殒命断头台。人们也许认为，旧日的宗教观念已经威力尽失。但是没过几年，为了顺应普遍的要求，遭禁的公开礼拜制度又建立起来了，被暂时消灭的旧传统，又恢复了昔日的影响。

由此可见，传统对群体心态有着不可抗拒的威力。

那些最不受怀疑的偶像，并不居于庙堂之上，也不是宫廷

里那些最专制的暴君，他们转瞬之间就可以被人打碎。

支配着我们内心最深处自我的，是那些看不见的主人，它可以安全地避开一切反叛，只能在数百年的时间里被慢慢地磨损。

#### 4. 第三条导火索：时间

时间是世界万物的真正创造者。

时间也是世界万物的唯一毁灭者。

积土成山，要靠时间，从地质时代模糊难辨的细胞到产生出高贵的人类，靠的也是时间。数百年的作用足以改变一切固有的现象。

假如我们赋予蚂蚁足够的时间，它也能把勃朗峰夷为平地。如果有人掌握了随意改变时间的魔法，他便具有了信徒赋予上帝的权力。

同样地，对于群体的信念来说，时间也有着巨大的影响，即使是民族这样重要的因素，也要在极大程度上仰时间的鼻息，没有足够的时间，人群是无法聚合起来形成民族的。

时间引起一切信仰的诞生、成长和死亡。它们因为时间而获得力量，同时也因为时间而失去力量。

具体来说，群体的意见和信念是由时间酝酿起来的，或者它至少为它们准备了生长的土壤。一些观念可实现于一个时代，却不能实现于另一个时代，原因就在这里。

时间把各种信仰和思想的碎屑堆积成山，从而使某个时代能够诞生它的观念。这些观念的出现并不像掷骰子一样全凭运

气，它们都深深植根于漫长的过去。当它们开花结果时，是时间为它们做好了准备。如想了解它们的起源，就必须回顾既往。

这样看起来，信仰与思想既是历史的儿女，又是未来的母亲，然而也永远是时间的奴隶。

席卷整个欧亚大陆的十字军狂飙的出现就绝非偶然。面对潮水般的基督教朝圣者，圣城耶路撒冷的官方颁布了一个苛刻的法令：每个进入圣地的朝圣者，都必须缴纳一个金币的税。

这个规定让那些千辛万苦奔来的朝圣者愤怒至极，然而毫无办法。穷困潦倒的人群在耶路撒冷城外久久徘徊，直到一位富裕的信徒用马车载了一大堆金币来解救他们，替他们交了税才得以进城。对于耶路撒冷的统治者来说，朝圣者成了他们的滚滚财源。

面对不断涌入圣城的信徒，当地统治者唯恐自己被这些人挤出城外，于是就在朝圣的路上设下种种障碍，以各种方式迫害朝圣者：抢劫、鞭打、连续几个月被关在城外、被迫缴纳一块金币的入城税。这样的情形整整持续了一个多世纪，双方的矛盾不断加深，火药桶濒临爆炸的边缘。

终于，一位名叫彼得的隐士历经磨难赶到耶路撒冷，遭受了种种虐待，这让他义愤填膺。返回欧洲后，他到处演讲，历数东方世界的邪恶，声泪俱下地讲述基督徒在圣地所受的虐待，最终使教会做出了“解放圣地”的决定。

从这段历史我们可以看出，如果没有长达一个世纪的情绪积累，西方世界也不可能在仓促之间有此决定。而如果没有几个世纪的杀戮与牺牲，西方的民众也绝不会意识到这样的集体狂热有多么荒谬。

因此，时间是我们最可靠的主人，为了看到一切事物的任何变化，应当让它自由地发挥作用。

没有哪种统治形式可以在一夜之间建立。政治和社会组织是需要数百年才能打造出来的产物。封建制度在建立起它的典章之前，经历了数百年毫无秩序的混乱。绝对君权也是在存在了数百年后，才找到了统治的成规。而这些等待的时期往往是极为动荡的。

正因为如此，面对今天群众可怕的抱负以及它所预示的破坏和骚乱，我们深感不安。要想看到平衡的恢复，除了依靠时间，再也没有别的办法。

## 5. 第四条导火索：政治和社会制度

几乎所有人都认为，制度能够改革社会的弊端。

各种社会学说都有同样的看法：改进制度与统治可以为国家带来进步，社会变革可以用各种命令来实现。

现在我们要说的是，这些看法乃是一系列严重的谬见。因为制度与制度之间，根本不存在好和坏的区别。

我们知道，制度是观念、感情和习俗的产物。

我们又知道，观念、感情和习俗是相当稳定的东西，绝不随着法典改写而被一并改写。

这样一来，对一个民族来说，它就无法随意选择自己的制度，就像它不能随意选择自己头发和眼睛的颜色一样。

既然制度和政府都是民族的产物，这就决定了它绝对不可能创造某个时代，只能被这个时代所创造。

每个民族都有它自己的性格，对各个民族的统治，不是根据他们一时的奇思怪想，而是根据他们的民族性格决定要怎样统治他们。一种政治制度的形成需要上百年的时间，改造它也同样如此。

现在我们知道了，世界上既不存在一个绝对的好制度，也不存在一个绝对的坏制度。各种制度也没有固有的优点，就它们本身而言，无所谓好坏。

正因为如此，在特定的时刻对一个民族有益的制度，对另一个民族也许是极为有害的。

打个比方来说，我们经常会有这样的想法：共和制要比君主制来得民主，因此共和国的人民也比君主国的人民幸福。可实际情况又是怎样的呢？

英国，这个世界上最民主的国家，至今还生活在君主制的统治之下。反倒是拉丁美洲与非洲那些所谓的民主共和国，常常表现出十分嚣张的专制压迫主义。尽管这些国家都建立了共和制度，也制定了共和国的宪法，可决定各民族命运的是它们的性格，而不是它们的政府。

这样看来，把时间浪费在炮制各种煞有介事的宪法上，就像小孩子的把戏，是无知的修辞学家毫无用处的劳动。决定制度是否完善的因素，除了实用和时间之外，别无他物。

因此，我们最明智的做法，就是像英国人一样，束手让这两个因素来发挥作用。

当众多的拉美国家从西班牙的统治下独立出来，它们做的第一件事就是效仿美国，一拥而上发疯般制定宪法文本，而结果却变得十分糟糕。

这样看来，政治家们在调整制度的时候，应当遵循以下几个原则：

一、以实用为制定依据，而不是想当然的推理，更不是机械地照搬。

二、不要考虑是否严谨对称，而是考虑它是否行之有效、方便实用。

三、除非感到有所不满，绝对不加以变革。

四、除非能够消除这种不满，绝对不进行革新。

五、除了针对具体情况必须制定的一些条款外，绝对不制定任何范围更大的条款。

在英国，从约翰国王到维多利亚女王的时代，这五大原则一直支配着议会，让它的行动有章可循，从容不迫。

法国人的情况恰好与此相反，这个由不同民族构成的国家，用了整整一千年的时间来维护集权制，而当法国民众感到不满时，他们选择了粗暴的方式。

当一场目的在于摧毁过去一切制度的大革命过后，人们惊讶地发现，这样大革命的结果仅仅是毁灭了一套集权制，继而建立了一套新的集权制，甚至它还得到了进一步强化，更具压迫性。

在这样的情况下，我们就该承认，集权制乃是法国民众迫切需要的产物，就该承认它是这个民族的生存条件，承认这种制度最适合法国民众。

综上所述得出的结论是，制度无法解决现实中存在的问

题，民族的幸福也不能到制度中去寻找。

我们看到，美国在民主制度下取得了高度繁荣，而另外一些国家，譬如那些西班牙人的美洲共和国，在极为相似的制度下，却生活在可悲的混乱状态中。这时我们就应当承认，制度与一个民族的伟大以及另一个民族的衰败都是毫不相干的。各民族都是受自己的性格支配的，凡是与这种性格不合的模式，都不过是一件借来的外套，一种暂时的伪装。

尽管道理是这样的，但民众认识不到这一点。他们将不满归结于某种制度，又将希望寄托于某种制度，就像对待圣人的遗骨一样对待未实行的制度，赋予这些制度创造幸福的超自然力量。

就这样，各种幻想和新词汇反复地对群众的头脑造成冲击，尤其是后者，它们对民众的影响力，和它们的荒诞同样强大。

正因为如此，为强行建立某些制度而进行的血腥战争和暴力革命一直都在发生，而且还会继续发生，看不到一丝停止的迹象。

## 6. 第五条导火索：教育

人们常常会持有一种错误的观点：教育能够使人大大改变。

这种观点坚持认为：教育会万无一失地改造民众，甚至把他们变成平等的人。

这种观点被人们不断地重复，当它被重复得足够多时，就足以成为最牢固的民主信条。以至于今天要想击败这种观念，就像过去击败教会一样困难。

然而我们要说的是，教育既不会使人变得更道德，也不会使他更幸福；它既不能改变他的本能，也不能改变他天生的热情。

甚至在某些时候，只要进行不良引导，教育的坏处还会大于好处。

统计学家在这个方面为我们提供了佐证。根据他们的观点，犯罪随着教育，至少是某种教育的普及而增加。社会上一些最坏的敌人，也是在学校获奖者名单上有案可查的人。

根据一本著作显示，目前受过教育的罪犯和文盲罪犯的比率是3：1。在50年的时间里，人口中的犯罪比例从每10万居民227人上升到了552人，增长了整整1.3倍。

这一点在法国体现得尤为明显，因为法国的年轻人犯罪率大幅度攀升，而尽人皆知的是，法国为了这些年轻人，已经用免费义务制教育取代了交费制。而那些成为社会敌人的社会主义者，往往是受过高等教育的人群。

之所以会产生这样的危险状况，都是因为这种教育制度建立在一个错误的心理学基础上。这种基础认为，智力是通过一心学好教科书来提高的，只要一个人的成绩足够好，那么他的智力就会获得稳步提高。

由于接受了这种观点，人们便尽可能强化许多手册中的知识。从小学到离开大学，一个年轻人只能死记硬背书本，他的独立思考能力和个人意识从来派不上用场。受教育对于他来说就是背书和服从。

于是，许多孩子就开始在学校里对着一篇篇语法和纲要努力，做到准确重复，出色模仿，直到变成学舌的鹦鹉为止。这种教育的唯一结果，就是贬低自我，让我们变得无能。



如果这种应试教育仅仅是无用，人们还可以对孩子们示以同情，因为虽然没在小学里从事必要的学习，但好歹还被教会了一些科劳泰尔后裔的族谱、纽斯特里亚和奥斯特拉西亚之间的冲突或动物分类之类的知识。然而，制度造成的危险要远比这个严重得多，一个最直接的后果就是，它使服从它的人强烈地厌恶自己的生活状态，极想逃之夭夭。

应试教育的结果是：工人不想再做工人，农民不想再当农民，而大多数中产阶级，除了吃国家职员这碗饭外，不想让他们的儿子从事任何别的职业。学习的唯一目的不是让人为生活做好准备，而是只打算让他们从事政府职业，在这样的行当里想要取得成功，根本无需任何必要的自我定向，或表现出哪怕一丁点个人的主动性。

说到底，应试教育制度在社会等级的最底层创造了一支无产阶级大军，这个群体对自己的命运愤愤不平，随时都想起来造反。

而在最高层，它又培养出一群轻浮的权贵阶级。他们既多疑又轻信，对国家抱着迷信般的信任，把它视同天道，却又时时不忘对它表示敌意，总是把自己的过错推给政府，然而离开了当局的干涉，他们便一事无成。

尽管国家用教科书制造出这么多有文凭的人，然而它只能利用其中的一小部分，于是只能让另一些人无事可做。它只能把饭碗留给先来的，剩下的没有得到职位的人便全都成了国家的敌人。

从社会金字塔的最高层到最底层，从最卑贱的小秘书到教授和警察局局长，有大量炫耀文凭的人在围攻各种政府部门的职位。商人想找到一个代替他处理殖民地生意的人难上加难，成千上万的人都在谋求最平庸的官差。

只在塞纳一地，就有几千名男女教师失业。这些人全都蔑视农田或工厂，只想从国家那儿讨生计。而被选中的人数却是有限的，因此肯定有大量心怀不满的人，他们随时会参与任何革命，不管它的头领是谁，也不管它有什么目标。

可以说，掌握一些派不上用场的知识，是让人造反的不二法门。

## 7. 关于应试教育的题外话（上）

我们了解了引发群众运动的五大导火索，然而对于教育因素，我们还应当额外说上几句题外话。

很明显，法国在教育制度上犯了不小的错误，它所实现的唯一价值就是，为这个多灾多难的国家添加了数以万计的懒汉、寄生虫和不安定因素。放眼全世界，犯下此种错误的民族仍大有人在。

显然，迷途知返为时已晚。只有经验，这位民众最好的老师，最终会揭示出我们的错误。

只有经验能够证明，必须废除我们那些可恶的教科书和可悲的考试，代之以勤劳的教育，让我们的年轻人回到田野和工厂，回到他们今天不惜任何代价逃避的辛勤开拓的事业。

我们必须再一次重申，向人灌输大量肤浅的知识，不出差错地背诵大量教科书，是绝对不可能提高人的智力水平的。

在我们的生活中，能够帮助我们走向成功的条件是判断力，是经验，是开拓精神和个性！而这些优良品质，偏偏是不能从死啃书本中得来的。教科书和字典固然可以充当有用的参考工具，但长久地把它放在脑子里没有任何用处。

那么，我们该如何让孩子们接受有益的教育，让它帮助孩子们获得正确的观念呢？

要知道，观念只有在自然而正常的环境中才能形成。

因此，我们需要年轻人每天从工厂、矿山、法庭、书房、建筑工地和医院中获得大量的感官印象；他得亲眼看到各种工具、材料和操作；他得与顾客、工作者和劳动者在一起，不管他们干得是好是坏，也不管他们是赚是赔。

只有采用这种方式，孩子们才能对那些从眼睛、耳朵、双手甚至味觉中得到的各种细节有些微的理解。学习者在不知不觉中获得了这些细节，默默地推敲，在心中逐渐成形，并且或迟或早会产生一些提示，让他们着手新的组合、简化、创意、改进或发明。

而我们的年轻人，却恰恰在最能出成果的年纪，被剥夺了所有这些宝贵的接触、所有这些不可缺少的学习因素。因为有七八年的时间他一直被关在学校里，切断了一切亲身体验的机会，因此对于世间的人和事，对于控制这些人和事的各种办法，不可能有鲜明而准确的理解。

毫不客气地说，在十个人里面，就有九个人在几年里把他们的时间和精力浪费掉了；而且可以说，这是非常重要甚至是决定性的几年。他们中间有一半甚至三分之二的人，为了考试而活着，然后被残酷地淘汰掉。

另外一半或者三分之一，成功地得到了某种学历、证书或一纸文凭，在规定的某一天，坐在一把椅子上，面对一个答辩团，在连续两小时的时间里，怀着对科学家团体，即一切人类知识的活清单的敬畏，他们要做到正确或是绝对正确。

然后，甚至用不了一个月，他们便不再是这样了。他们不

可能再通过考试。他们脑子里那些过多的、过于沉重的知识不断流失，且没有新东西补充进去。他们的精神活力衰退了，他们继续成长的能力枯竭了，一个得到充分发展的人出现了，然而他也是个筋疲力尽的人了。

他成家立业，落入生活的俗套，而只要落入这种俗套，他就会把自己封闭在狭隘的职业中，工作也许还算本分，但仅此而已。这就是平庸的生活，收益和风险不成比例的生活。

## 8. 关于应试教育的题外话（下）

在教育青年人方面，英国人与美国人明显做得更好。

英国并没有我们那样多的专业学校。他们的教育不是建立在啃书本上，而是建立在专业课程上。

比如说，英国的工程师并不是在学校里学出来的，而是在车间里训练出来的。这种办法表明，每个人都能达到他的智力允许他达到的水平。

如果他是平庸的人，没有进一步发展的能力，他可以成为工人或领班；如果天资不俗的话，他便会成为工程师。与个人前程全取决他在19岁时一次几小时的考试的做法相比，这种办法更民主，对社会的好处也更多。

在医院、矿山和工厂，在建筑师或律师的办公室里，那些十分年轻便开始学业的学生们，按部就班地经历他们的学徒期。在投入实际工作之前，他们也有机会接受一些一般性的教育过程，也就是说，已经准备好了一个框架，可以把他们迅速观察到的东西储存进去，而且他能够利用自己在空闲时间得到的各种各样的技能，逐渐把自己充实成一个全面而健康的人。

在这样的制度下，学生的实践能力得到了发展，并且与学

生的才能相适应，发展方向也符合他未来的任务和特定工作的要求，因为这些工作就是他今后要从事的工作。

正因为如此，英国和美国的年轻人很快便处在能够尽量发挥自己能力的位置上。他不但成了一个有用的工作者，甚至具备了自我创业的能力；他不只是机器上的一个零件，而且变成了一部发动机。

我们不妨看一下笛福的小说主人公鲁宾孙，尽管他只是一个文学形象，却反映了英国教育的成功。当鲁宾孙流落于荒岛上时，他发挥了自己的全部能力，像一个完整的社会体系那样，白手创立了一番事业，而这正和英美两国的教育目标相一致。

而在制度与此相反的法国，一代又一代人越来越向中国看齐，由此造成的人力浪费还能够接受，然而这种教育制度与实践生活不断脱节的趋势却实在令人难以忍受。

从考试、学历、证书和文凭的角度看，坐在学校板凳上啃理论和教科书的时间是有点长得过头了，而且负担过重。采用的方法也糟糕透顶，以至于已经成了一种严重违反自然的、与社会对立的制度。

为此，我们不妨看一下我们的教育制度都做了些什么。

过多地延长实际的学徒期、培养懒汉的寄宿制度，过多的人为的训练和填鸭式教学、繁重的功课，对今后的时代完全没有考虑，对人的职业缺乏安排，对年轻人很快就要投身其中的现实世界装聋作哑，不考虑学生如何适应社会，不考虑人类为保护自己而必须从事的斗争，不教给学生如何保持坚强意志……

所有必要的准备、所有最重要的学习、那些丰富的常识、

坚忍不拔的意志力，凡是该赋予年轻人的东西，我们的学校一样也没有教。

这样看起来，我们的教育不但没有让他们获得生存能力的素质，反而破坏了他们的这种素质。

正因为该准备的没有准备，才使得我们的年轻人一旦走入社会，进入他的活动领域，就开始遭遇一系列的痛苦与挫折，由此给他造成的创痛久久不能痊愈，有时甚至失去生活的能力。

可以说，这样的教育制度，对年轻人的精神和道德都造成了不良影响，甚至存在难以恢复的可能，在年轻人的心目中，那种在学校中形成的幻想与美梦，在严酷的现实面前，彻底地破灭了，这种强烈的欺骗感、强烈的失望感，是一个心理素质不完善的年轻人绝对难以承受的。

也许有人会认为，以上对于教育制度的批判，已经严重脱离了群体心理学的主题。然而可曾有人想过，那些今日正在群体中酝酿，明日就会出现的各种想法和信念，究竟是怎样产生的呢？它产生的土壤究竟又是怎样的呢？

当我们了解了现实之后，就更有理由知道，那些被恶化的群众头脑，究竟是如何由当前的制度培养出来的，冷漠而中立的群众是如何变成一支心怀不满的大军，随时打算听从一切乌托邦分子和能言善辩者的暗示的。

如果我们不能认清这一点，还任由我们的学校培养一批批狂热的暴徒、无知的民众，那么可以预见，在不远的将来，为我们的民族走向衰败铺平道路的，必将是我们的学校。

## 第二章 群体意见的直接因素

### 1. 那些直捣人心的东西

我们曾经打过这样的比方，诱发群众运动的间接因素相当于长时间的虫啃蚁噬，而直接因素则是强烈的地震、台风。

按照我们的理论，那些间接因素赋予了群体心理以特定属性，使某些感情和观念得以发展；而直接因素的作用是完成最后的工作，对民众的心理造成最后一击。

我们在本书的第一部分研究过集体的感情、观念和推理方式，根据这些知识，显然可以从影响他们心理的方法中，归纳出一些一般性的原理。

比如说，我们已经知道什么事情会刺激群体的想象力，也了解了暗示，特别是那些以形象的方式表现出来的暗示的力量和传染过程。然而，正像暗示可以有完全不同的来源一样，能对群体心理产生影响的因素也相当不同，因此必须对它们分别加以研究。

毫无疑问，这种研究是有益的。群体就像古代神话中的斯芬克司，必须对它的心理学问题给出一个答案，不然我们就会被它毁掉。

### 2. 第一，形象

我们知道，群体容易被鲜明的形象所打动。

关于这一点，我们已经在前面证明了。然而鲜明的形象不是随时都有，也不可能遍地都是。在它们不存在的时候，可以利用一些词语或套话，巧妙地把它们从民众心中激活。

在1718年的苏格兰，大部分地区对巫术的错误观念已经被根除，然而在一个叫开斯尼斯的偏僻小镇里，仍然有人保留着这些愚昧的观念。

一个木匠很讨厌猫，但是不知道什么原因，猫总是喜欢聚集在他的后院。木匠感到很困惑：为什么被骚扰的总是他？他思考再三，得出结论：折磨他的不是猫，而是女巫。他的女仆对此十分赞同，还补充说，她亲耳听见那些猫在一起说人话。

后来这些猫又聚在后院时，木匠冲出去砍杀它们，群猫四散逃命，其中一只猫背部受了伤，一只屁股上挨了一刀，还有一只腿部受伤。

几天后，这个地区有两个老妇人去世，她们的尸体被抬出来，人们发现一位的背部有伤，另一位臀部有新疤痕。木匠和女仆很高兴，认定她们就是那三只受伤的猫中的两只。这个消息传遍了全国，所有人都加入了搜寻女巫的队伍。

很快，一个老太婆引起了人们的注意，她摔断了腿躺在床上，而且面目可憎，一看就是女巫。大家公认她就是受伤的第三只母猫。有人把这个消息通知了木匠，木匠说，他记得很清楚，他用刀砍伤了一只猫的腿。人们听完了这话，立即把老太婆从床上拉起来关进监狱，第二天，她就在监狱里被折磨死了。

我们可以看到，像这种经过一番艺术处理的形象，毫无疑问具有神奇的力量，它们能够在群众心里激起最可怕的风暴；反过来说，它们也能平息风暴。在历史上，因为各种词语和套话的力量而死去的人，其尸骨甚至可以重新建造一座胡夫大金字塔。

事实上，即使是说理与论证，也战胜不了那些鲜明的形象。因为它们是和群体一起隆重上市的。只要一看到它们，人



人都会肃然起敬，俯首而立。

许多人把它们当作自然的力量，甚至是超自然的力量。它们在人们心中唤起宏伟壮丽的幻象，也正是它们的含糊不清，使它们有了神秘的力量。我们甚至可以说，这些鲜明的形象是藏在圣坛背后的神灵，信众只能诚惶诚恐地来到它们面前。

### 3. 第二，词语和套话

在这一点中，我们谈到了语言的作用，谈到了它可以激活群众心目中的形象，或是让它变得更鲜明，我们也初步见识了它的威力。

事实上，语言的作用还远远不止于此。除了诱发其他形象之外，有一些词语本身就是某种形象的代表。

民众往往会把自己潜意识中的希望，寄托在几个似是而非的词语上。有的时候，那些最不明确词语，引起的反响反而最大。

比如说，民主、社会主义、平等、自由等等，它们的含义极为模糊，即使一大堆专著在手也搞不清它们究竟在说什么。然而，正是这区区几个词语，却蕴含着神奇的威力，它们被看成是解决一切问题的灵丹妙药。各种极不相同的潜意识中的抱负及其实现的希望，它们全部集于一身。

如果我们对历史有所了解，就会知道，这些热门的词汇已经和它们原来的意义完全是两码事。

让我们先来说说“共和”这个词。它是古希腊人创造出来的，而古希腊人的共和国，本质上是一种贵族统治的制度，是由一小撮团结一致的暴君统治着一群绝对服从的奴隶构成的制度。

说到底，希腊的共和只是几个贵族的共和，建立在民众的奴隶制之上。没了这种奴隶制，这所谓的“共和”一天也不能存在。

接下来是“自由”，这个词同样诞生于古希腊，然而在那个国家，民众从来也没有过思想上的自由。如果谁敢讨论城邦的诸神、法典和习俗，那么他就犯下了最严重的罪行。类似这样的自由，和我们今天所说的自由又怎么能画等号呢？

再比如说“祖国”，对于古希腊的雅典人或斯巴达人来说，他们只崇拜自己的雅典城和斯巴达城，他们拒绝把对方认作自己的同胞。其他的城邦也是一样，互相敌视，彼此征伐不断，甚至从未曾统一在希腊的名义下。

而在西欧地区，许多相互敌视的部落和种族组成了高卢，它们有着不同的语言和宗教，恺撒能够轻易征服它们，正是因为他总是能够从中找到自己的盟友。罗马人缔造了一个高卢人的国家，是因为他们使这个国家形成了政治和宗教上的统一。

即使在两百年前，人们也不存在什么“祖国”的概念。过去跑到外国去的法国保皇党人，他们认为自己反对法国是在恪守气节。他们认为法国已经变节，因为封建制度的法律规定，诸侯要效忠自己的君主，而不是某一块土地，因此有君主在，才有祖国在。可见，祖国对于他们的意义，不是也与现代人大不相同吗？

可见，词语的意义会随着时代的变迁而发生深刻变化，随着时代和民族的不同而不同。对于人类来说，它只有变动不定的暂时含义。

因此，我们若想以它们为手段去影响群体，就必须搞清楚某个时候群体赋予它们的含义，而不是它们过去具有的含义，或精神状态有所不同的个人给予它们的含义。

在这方面，历代政治家都颇为精通。

假如群体因为政治动荡或信仰发生了变化，开始对某些词语唤起的形象深感厌恶，而有些东西又实在没办法改变，那么最好的办法就是给这些词换个说法，用新名称把大多数过去的制度重新包装一遍。

比如说，大革命之后，执政府把令人生厌的“地租”变成了“土地税”，“盐赋”换成了“盐税”，过去的“徭役”改成了“间接摊派”，而商号与店铺的税款，也被起了个新名字叫作“执照税”。

这些新名词代替那些能够让群众联想的负面形象的名称，因为它们新鲜，能有效地防止群众产生反感。

可见，政治家最基本的任务之一，就是对流行用语，或至少对再没有人感兴趣、民众已经不能容忍其旧名称的事物保持警觉。名称的威力如此强大，如果选择得当，它足以使最可恶的事情改头换面，变得能被民众所接受。

那些身处大革命风潮中的雅各宾党人，正是利用了“自由”和“博爱”这样的流行说法，才建立起堪比禽兽的暴政，建立起宗教法庭一样的审判台，干出灭绝人性的大屠杀来。

在上面的例子中，时间促成了词意的变化。如果再考虑到种族因素，我们就会看到，在同一个时期，在教养相同但种族不同的人中间，相同的词也经常代表着不同的观念。比如今天使用如此频繁的“民主”和“社会主义”，就属于这种情况。

拿拉丁民族和盎格鲁·撒克逊民族来说，在前者看来，民主是说个人意志和自主权要服从于国家所代表的社会的意志和自主权。

这就是说，代表了民众的国家要支配一切，控制一切，要集中权力，要垄断并制造一切。在这样的民主制度下，不论你是激进派，还是社会主义者，或者是铁杆儿的保皇派，一切党派一概要服从国家。

而在盎格鲁·撒克逊民族，尤其在美国人看来，民主说的却是个人意志的有力发展。这种发展是超越一切的，国家要尽可能服从这一发展，除了政策、军队和外交关系外，它不能支配任何事情，甚至公共教育也不例外。

这样看来，同样的一个词，在这个民族就代表个人服从国家，而在另一个民族，却指国家对个人的彻底服从。

我们现在知道了，词语唤起的形象往往独立于它们的含义。这些形象因时代而异，也因民族而异。不过套话并没有改变，有些暂时的形象是和一定的词语联系在一起的：词语就像用来唤醒它们的电铃按钮。

并非所有的词语和套话都有唤起形象的力量，有些词语在一段时间里有这种力量，但在使用过程中也会失去它，不会再让头脑产生任何反应。这时它们就变成了空话，其主要作用是让使用者免去思考的义务。

因此，无论这些词汇和套话是否荒谬，只要我们用这些东西把自己武装起来，就再也不会对任何事情进行思考。于是，我们便拥有了做出暴行的一切条件。

#### 4. 第三，幻觉

自从有了文明，群体便开始被幻觉包围着。

最早的幻觉，来自于对自然的敬畏，于是人们捏造出神灵，开始崇拜偶像，沉迷在宗教幻觉里。

随着文明的进步，人们开始不再相信神灵，而是把注意力集中到人文科学的领域里，无数种世界观、人生观、价值观被诠释，又促使无数民众把它们当成信念来恪守，于是哲学幻觉就成为了那个时代的风潮。

进入近代之后，关于社会制度的讨论又甚嚣尘上。当民众对现实感到不满时，所有的弊病就被归结到制度上，于是民众展开憧憬，甚至发动动乱来满足他们的社会幻觉。

不论是这些幻觉中的哪一种，都拥有牢不可破而又至高无上的力量，它们可以在我们这个星球上不断发展的任何文明的灵魂中找到。

古代巴比伦和埃及的神庙，中世纪的宗教建筑，是因为它们而建！

一个世纪以前震撼全欧洲的那场大动荡，是因为它们而发动！

我们的所有政治、艺术和社会学说，全都难逃它们的强大影响！

有时候，人类以可怕的动乱为代价，似乎暂时消除了这些幻觉，然而这种动乱，却注定了还会让它们死而复生。

没有了这些东西，人类不可能走出自己原始的野蛮状态；没有它们，人类似乎很快就会回到那种野蛮状态。毫无疑问，它们不过是些无用的幻影，但是这些我们梦想中的产物，却使各民族创造出了辉煌壮丽值得夸耀的艺术或伟大文明。

假如有人把博物馆和图书馆一把火烧毁；假如有人冲上教堂前的石板路，把那些雕像推倒，把因宗教鼓舞而创作的艺术品统统摧毁，那么人类伟大的梦想还会留下些什么呢？

人类只有怀抱着那些希望和幻想，否则就无法活下去。而这就是诸神、英雄和诗人得以存在的原因。在五十年前，科学承担起了这个任务，但是在渴望理想的心灵里，科学是有所欠缺的，因为它既不敢做出过于慷慨的承诺，也做不到像幻想一样撒谎。

在整个19世纪里，哲学家们热情地投身于对宗教、政治和社会幻想的破坏，全然不顾我们的祖辈已在这种幻想中生活了许多世纪。他们毁灭了这些幻想，使得希望和顺从的源泉随之枯竭。

在幻想遭到扼杀后，哲学家与民众就要直面盲目而无声无息的自然力量，而它对软弱和慈悲心肠一概无动于衷。

无论哲学取得了多大进步，它迄今仍没有给群众提供任何能够让他们着迷的理想。这恰恰与群众的本能不相符，群众无论付出多大的代价，他们必须拥有自己的幻想，于是他们便像趋光的昆虫一样，本能地转向那些迎合他们需要的巧舌如簧者。

可以这样说，推动各民族演化的主要因素，永远不是真理，而是谬误。

今天，社会主义之所以强大的原因，就在于它是仍然具有活力的最后的幻想。尽管有许多证据证明了它的荒谬，但它依然继续发展。

它具有这样的生机，都是因为它的鼓吹者是非常无视现实，因而敢于向人类承诺幸福的人。如今，这种社会主义幻想肆虐于过去大量的废墟之上，未来是属于它的。

群众从来就没有渴望过真理，面对那些不合口味的证据，他们会拂袖而去。假如谬论对他们有诱惑力，他们更愿意崇拜

谬论。

凡是能向他们供应幻觉的，就能够轻易地成为他们的主人；凡是让他们幻想破灭的，最终都将沦为他们的牺牲品。

## 5. 第四，经验

经验是真理的传播手段，也是幻想的敌人。

可以说，经验是唯一能够让真理在群众心中牢固生根的方法，也是唯一让危险的幻想归于破灭的有效手段。

然而，为了达到这样的目的，经验必须是积累了许多代的，并且可以随时被验证的。

通常，一代人的经验对下一代人是没多少用处的。这就像一些被当作证据引用的历史事实达不到目的的原因。它们唯一的作用就是证明了，一种广泛的经验即使仅仅想成功地动摇、或是压制那些牢固根植于群众头脑中的错误观点，也需要一代又一代地反复出现。

比这些更令人感到难过的，是经验的获取过程，它们通常需要付出血的代价。

在19世纪以及稍早几年的时代，充斥着大量奇异的经验，在过去的任何一个时代里，都没有做过如此多的试验。

最宏伟的试验要算法国大革命。从这次试验中，我们知道了一个社会必须要遵照理性的指导。如果从下而上地革新一遍，至少要牺牲上百万人的生命，让整个欧洲陷入长达20年的动荡。

为了用经验向我们证明，独裁者会让拥戴他们的民族损失

惨重，法国民众在50年里进行了两次破坏性试验。

民众在第一次试验中拥戴了暴君拿破仑，结果付出了三百万人的生命和一次被入侵作为代价。第二次试验则拥戴了拿破仑三世，结果以割让阿尔萨斯与洛林为代价证明了预备一支常备军多么有必要。尽管这两次试验都准确无误，但现在来看，好像仍然不能令民众信服，此后估计还要来第三次试验。说不准哪天它就必然发生了。

我们还需要很多很多的经验，而它们的代价可能同样让我们悲痛欲绝。

比如说，要想让整个民族相信，庞大的德国军队并不像30年前我们认为的那样，只是一支无害的国民卫队，就必须来一次让我们损失惨重的战争，也许可能是两次。

再比如，想让人认识到，推行闭关锁国的贸易保护政策会毁掉实行这种制度的民族，就至少需要20年国家的灾难来作为试验周期。这种事情已经发生在鞑靼王朝统治下的中国，那个东方的民族为此付出的代价甚至要比这更多。

## 6. 第五，理性

我们必须提到一点，群众从不受理性的影响，它们只能理解那些拼凑起来的观念。

正因为如此，那些知道如何影响他们的演说家，总是借助于他们的感情而不是他们的理性，因为群体从来也不会遵循正常的逻辑。

现在，就让我们来看一下，一位善于鼓动群众的演说家，是如何把握分寸的。



第一，如果想要让群众相信什么，就先得搞清楚让它们兴奋的感情，并且装出自己也有这种感情的样子，甚至要带着群众振臂高呼、大喊口号。

第二，演说家要以一种很低级的组合方式，用一些非常著名的暗示性概念去改变它们的看法。比如说捏造场景、追忆往昔或是憧憬未来，只有这样做，才能够带着群众再回到最初提出的观点上来。

第三，在这个演讲的过程中，演说家一定要密切注意群众的情绪变化，看清楚他们是高兴还是沮丧，是悲痛还是愤怒。只有注意到这一点，才知道该如何调整自己的言辞，把群众的情绪引到自己需要的轨道上来。

说到底，想要成为一名成功的演说家，或者做一次成功的演讲，都必须把握这样一条原则：演讲者必须要遵循听众的思路，而不是自己的思路，否则他就不可能取得任何影响。

许多演说家都会犯这样的错误，就是他们希望以精密的逻辑来引导听众，或是用严谨的推理来牵制听众。因此在向群众讲话的时候，总是会借助一系列大体严密的论证步骤，而当这种手法不起作用时，他们又会感到万分困惑。

曾经有一位逻辑学家在遭遇失败后愤怒地说：“我的逻辑毫无谬误，我建立在三段论法上的推理公式是不可更改的。就算是无机物，只要它能来推演这组公式，也会不得不同意。”

这位大学者的话再正确不过，不过他在愤怒中也没弄清楚一点，群体不比无机物更聪明，它甚至没有理解的能力。

你只要尝试着用推理来说服原始的头脑，比如说服一个野蛮人或儿童，你就会知道推理是多么地不值钱。

事实上，不要说野蛮人或者儿童，即使是对付几百年前的那些宗教狂，理性也抵挡不过感情。在长达两千年的时间里，最清醒的天才也不得不在群体的感情面前俯首称臣。

直到现代，它们的真实性才多少受到了一些挑战。中世纪和文艺复兴时代也有不少开明之士，但没有一个人通过理性思考认识到自己在迷信中极为幼稚的一面，或者对魔鬼的罪行、烧死巫师的必要性表示过丝毫的怀疑。

不过，对于群体不受理性引导这件事，我们倒不必过于遗憾。

毫无疑问，是幻觉引起的激情和愚顽，激励着人类走上了文明之路。在这方面，人类的理性反倒没有多大用处，它既不能带来音乐，也不能带来美术。这样看来，作为推进人类文明的力量，幻觉无疑是必要的。

我们在前面说过，每个民族都拥有其独特的民族性格。现在，我们甚至可以说，每个民族的精神成分中都携带着它命运的定律，它简直等同于一种神秘的力量，就像那种使橡果长成橡树或让行星在自己的轨道上运行的力量一样。

如果我们要对这种力量有所认识，就必须研究一个民族的整个进化过程，而不是这一进化过程中不时出现的一些孤立的事实。

如果只考虑这些事实，历史就会变得仿佛由一连串不可能的偶然性所造就的结果。

比如说我们的上帝，如果不是犹太民族的坚信，耶稣也不可能由一个木匠之子变成一个持续两千年之久的全能的神，让最重要的文明以他为基础成形。

再比如说伊斯兰教的创立，假如不是阿拉伯民族那种无与伦比的虔诚，一小撮从沙漠里冒出来的阿拉伯人不可能征服希腊罗马世界的大部分地区，建立一个比马其顿王国领土还大的国家。

还有，如果不是法兰西民族对民主与自由的狂热，以拿破仑这样一个区区的炮兵中尉，又如何能在等级森严的制度下，征服几乎全欧洲的民族与国王？

于是，我们终于知道了，尽管理性永远存在，但文明的动力仍然是各种感情，就像尊严、自我牺牲、宗教信仰、爱国主义以及对荣誉的爱这些东西。

正因为如此，还是让我们把理性留给哲学家，不要过于强烈地坚持让它插手对人的统治吧。

现在，我们的结论是：群体永远不欢迎理性，一切文明的主要动力也并不是理性。

对于群体来说，理性除了反面的影响，什么作用也无法施加，他们接触到的理性越多，就越是憎恶理性，也就变得更加狂热。

### 第三章 群体领袖及其说服的手法

#### 1. 群体的领袖

有群体的地方，就有领袖。

不管组成群体的是人还是动物，也不管他们为什么聚在一起，只要他们组成了群体，就会弄出一个头领，并且本能地让

自己处在他的统治之下。

对于人类来说，这个头领被称作领袖。有的时候，他不过是个小头目或煽风点火的人，但即便如此，他的作用也相当重要。

这个人的意志帮助群体形成意见，再将意见汇成一致，可以说，他是核心，他是各色人等形成组织的第一要素。

这个人为群众组成派别铺平了道路，假如没有这个人，一群人就像失去头羊的温顺羊群，变得茫然而不知所措。

这个人让精神力量在群体中产生影响，然后把它有效地转变成实践的力量，尽管这种力量可能意味着破坏、杀戮，甚至毁灭。

现在，就让我们展开新一轮的研究，看一看这个对群体至关重要的人，究竟是如何产生，又有着怎样的特征，以及他是如何发挥作用的。

## 2. 领袖是如何炼成的

只有最极端的人，才能成为领袖。

在最初的时候，领袖可能也跟你我一样，混杂在芸芸众生之中，并没有什么特别之处。

接下来，他本人被一些观念所迷惑，然后变成了它的信徒。这个时候，往往会产生一点儿变化，就是他对这些观念十分着迷，以至于除此之外的一切事情都消失了。

正是这一点区别，才赋予了这个人成为领袖的条件。因为在他看来，一切相反的意见都是谬论或迷信。

当这样的人出现后，他就成为群体中最极端的那个，而群体偏偏又最欢迎这样的人。于是，群体越是欢迎，他就越是极端；而他越极端，群众就越是欢迎他。当赢得了大多数人的拥戴时，他也就顺理成章地获得了领袖的地位。

与其说在群体中存在着一个恶性循环的怪圈，还不如说是热爱偏激的群体造就了他们的领袖。

无论采用怎样的说法，这位领袖都会采取最偏执、最专横的态度对付那些反对者。而在他懂得利用群体的破坏力之后，这种态度就会付诸实践，做出为人不齿的暴行来。

在这方面有一个很好的例子。法国大革命中的雅各宾派党魁罗伯斯庇尔，他本人在学习了一些哲学知识后，开始对卢梭的哲学观念如醉如痴。当雅各宾党人掌握了权力之后，他为了把卢梭的观念传得更广所采用的手段就连宗教法庭的刽子手看见都自愧不如。

在这里，我们所说的领袖，更有可能是个实干家而非思想家。他们并没有头脑敏锐、深谋远虑的天赋，他们也不可能如此，因为这种品质一般会让人犹疑不决。

那么，究竟是什么人最适合成为领袖呢？

根据我们的经验，在那些容易兴奋的、半癫狂者、神经有毛病的以及一切处于疯子边缘的人中，尤其容易产生这种人物。

他们强烈的信仰使他们的话具有极强的说服力。芸芸众生总是愿意服从意志坚强的人，而他也知道如何迫使他们接受自己的看法。聚集成群的人会完全丧失自己的意志，本能地转向一个具备他们所没有的品质的人。

不管领袖们坚持的观念或追求的目标有多荒谬，只要他们保持着坚定的信念，就可以让任何理性思维都对他们不起作用。

他们往往心如铁石，对于别人的轻蔑和保留态度无动于衷，而且这只会让他们更加兴奋。

他们会毫不犹豫地牺牲自己的利益和家庭，甚至牺牲自己的一切。

自我保护的本能在他们身上消失得无影无踪，在绝大多数情况下，他们孜孜以求的唯一回报就是以身殉职。

### 3. 领袖召唤信仰狂潮

每一个民族都不缺乏领袖，但是他们却不全然是狂热的疯子。

在各群体的领袖之中，有相当一部分并不是狂信者，他们也没有被那种强烈的信念所激励。

这些领袖往往精通巧言令色之道，他们一味追求私利，善于用取悦无耻的本能来说服众人。鉴于这一点，我们可以把他们归到野心家的队伍中去。

野心家可以利用他们的手腕在群体中产生巨大的影响，然而，这只能奏效于一时。因为他们只受野心和私欲的驱使，而这无法令他们丧失理性。

凡是能够打动群众灵魂的人，无不有着狂热的信仰。

1095年，十字军在众多领袖的领导下向圣地进军。在所有的宗教领导者中，最显赫的是一个叫“隐士彼得”的人。他又老

又矮，肤色黝黑，不吃面包也不吃肉，只吃鱼，并且赤脚行走，衣衫褴褛。然而就是这样一个外表卑微的人，却能用几句话就成功激励别人。几年前，他曾试图到耶路撒冷朝圣，但受到了土耳其人的虐待。他回到欧洲之后，就成了收复圣地的死硬分子，心急如焚地想要报仇。

引领德国农民焚烧教会法典的路德，在一次回家的路上遇到了猛烈的暴风雨。当时雷声轰鸣，闪电撕破长空，他被雷电击倒了。这让他惊恐万分，苦苦哀求神灵饶命，并起誓愿意进入修道院来报答神的恩泽。从此，这个人把一生都献给了同教会的斗争。

在1496年的意大利，信仰“上帝之城”的萨伏那罗拉多次煽动信徒闹事。当教皇试图用一项红衣主教的红帽子来抚绥萨伏那罗拉时，这个人傲慢地说，他只希望是一顶“用血染红的”帽子。

于是在第二年，这位宗教狂煽动佛罗伦萨的民众进行了暴乱，将美第奇家族颠覆，随后在德拉西尼奥列广场上用一把大火烧毁了他厌恶的所有东西。这些东西包括但丁的著作，奥维德、薄伽丘、彼特拉克的诗歌，所有古希腊哲学家的书籍，西塞罗的历史作品以及大量珍贵的绘画作品、雕塑，就连乐器也没能幸免。火焰腾腾之时，他带领群众高唱拉丁文圣歌，以表答对上帝的虔诚。

上面说到的这些人，都是在自己先被各种信条搞得想入非非之后，才能够让别人也想入非非。

只有这样，他们才能够在自己信众的灵魂里唤起一股坚不可摧的力量。

这种力量，就是我们通常说的信仰。

在人类所能支配的一切力量中，信仰的力量最为惊人。福音书上说，它有移山填海的力量。这话一点儿也不假。使一个人具有信仰，就是让他强大了十倍。

有了信仰，能让一个人变得完全受自己的梦想奴役。

有了信仰，能让一个仁慈的人变得冷酷无情。

有了信仰，能让最吝啬的守财奴抛弃一切。

有了信仰，就能让平时最温顺的民众在一瞬间干出杀人放火的残暴勾当。

无论信仰是宗教的，是政治的，还是社会的。

也无论信仰的对象是一本书，还是一个人，或者是一种观念。只要想让信仰建立并形成蛊惑人心的狂潮，就离不开人群中那位伟大领袖的作用。

正是在这一点上，领袖才体现出巨大的影响力。

重大的历史事件一直是由一些默默无闻的信徒成就的，他们除了自己赞成的信仰外，几乎什么也不知道，而他们往往都是群体中最受尊敬的，也是最狂热的那个人。

无论是传遍全球的伟大宗教，还是从这个半球扩张到另一个半球的帝国，它们之所以能够建立，靠的并不是学者或哲学家的帮助，更不是怀疑论者的帮助。

没有人知道1618年5月22日的那个晚上，究竟是谁鼓动了群众。我们只知道，在第二天的布拉格，骚乱的群众冲进了王宫，把几个皇家官吏从王宫的窗口扔了出去。而正是这次“掷出窗外事件”，引发了那场长达三十年的战争，让德国人民陷



入了长久的灾难。

这样的事情直到今天还在发生，或许，就在今天的某个烟雾缭绕的小酒馆里，某个人正在向自己同志的耳朵里灌输只言片语，慢慢地使其着迷。

对于那些话的含义，他们自己可能也很少理解，但是根据他们的说法，只要将其付诸实施，一定会促成一切希望和梦想的实现。然而无论它能否实现，带给我们的可能都是一场不小的灾祸。

#### 4. 领袖的权威

毫无疑问，领袖是群众的引路人。

在每个社会领域里，无论是最高贵者还是最低贱者，只要他一脱离孤独状态，便立刻要处于某个领袖的影响之下。

不客气地说，大多数人，尤其是群众中的大多数人，除了自己的行业之外，对任何问题都没有清楚而合理的想法。

正因为如此，群众才需要一个人来带领他们。

尽管历史经验表明，定期出版物可以取代领袖的作用，但是效果绝没有某个领袖亲力亲为来得直接。它最大的用处就是制造有利于群众领袖的舆论，向他们提供现成的套话，使其不必再为编造演说词操心。

像这样一个引路人，往往握有非常专制的权威。

我们在近年来的罢工运动中可以发现，领袖的权威无需任何后盾，就能轻易使工人阶级中最狂暴的人听命于自己。

领袖们规定工时和工资比例，他们发出罢工命令，罢工何时开始、何时结束，全凭他们一声令下。

政府由于软弱和妥协，使得自己越来越没有力量。因此，这些领袖和煽动家日益倾向于攫取政府的位置，用自己的权威和信条，逐步地取代国家的威信与法规。

这些暴政带来的结果是，群众在服从他们时，要比服从政府温顺得多。如果因为某种变故，领袖从舞台上消失，群众就会回到当初群龙无首、不堪一击的状态。

在一次巴黎公共马车雇员的罢工中，政府尝试了种种办法，也没办法让骚乱的群众平息下来；而当两个指挥罢工的领袖一被抓起来，罢工便立刻结束了。

领袖之所以会拥有如此的权威，是因为群体的奴性心态。

可以说，在群体的灵魂中占上风的，并不是对自由的要求，而是当奴才的欲望！

他们是如此倾向于服从。因此，不管谁自称是他们的主子，他们都会本能地表示臣服。

## 5. 两类不同的领袖（上）

和生物的多样性相比，领袖的类型显得十分单薄。不过，这并不意味着普天之下的领袖都是一样的。

大体上，这些首领和煽动家可以分成明显不同的两类，他们之间的区别在于意志力的持久度。

第一类领袖往往充满活力，但是只拥有一时的坚强意志。这类领袖通常一身蛮勇，在领导突然决定的暴动，带领群众冒

死犯难，让新兵一夜之间变成英雄这些事情中，他们特别派得上用场。

比如说，拿破仑手下的内伊元帅就属于这种人，甚至拿破仑也不得不对他表示钦佩。在1815年的滑铁卢战役里，他奉命指挥左翼对抗威灵顿公爵率领的英军。当时他手下只有五万名毫无经验的新兵，这位元帅面对他们念念有词，祈求士兵们奋勇作战，夺得最后的胜利。他热泪长流，感人至深。这一切都被聚集在身边的新兵看在眼里，士气一下子就高涨起来，每个士兵都摩拳擦掌，跃跃欲试。虽然他们对战争一无所知，但是浑身充满力量，急着上阵抗击敌军。

于是，迎着英国方阵密集的排枪，法军一排排地冲锋，全然不顾伤亡，踏着死者的尸体不断前进。而当他们面前出现一道壕沟时，冲在最前面的士兵毫不犹豫地跳入沟中，用自己 and 战马的尸体将沟填平，为后面的战友打开通路。

在意大利的统一战争中，加里波第也属于这类人物。他虽一无所长，却是个精力充沛的冒险家。他只带领一小撮乌七八糟的渔夫、水手、矿工、木匠，就能够拿下古老的那不勒斯王国，尽管对方拥有一支纪律严明、装备精良的军队。

不过，尽管这类领袖的活力是一种应予重视的力量，但它却不能持久，很难延续到使它发挥作用的兴奋事件之后。

当这些英雄回到日常生活中时，他们往往暴露出最惊人的性格弱点。他们虽然能够领导别人，却好像不能在最简单的环境下思考和支配自己的行为。

可以说，第一类领袖具有这样的特点，在某些条件下，他们本人也受人领导并不断地受到刺激，总是有某个人或观念在指引他们，有明确划定的行动路线可供他们遵循，不然他们就不能发挥自身的作用。

## 6. 两类不同的领袖（下）

和第一类领袖相比，第二类领袖更为罕见，他们的意志力也更持久。

尽管这类领袖未必那么光彩夺目，但他们的影响力却要大得多。我们在这些人当中，常常可以找到各种宗教和伟业的真正奠基人——圣保罗、哥伦布和雷赛布都属于这一类。

这一类领袖或是聪明机智，或是心胸狭隘，或是有着这样那样的毛病，然而这些都无关紧要，因为这个世界，实际上是属于他们的。

第二类领袖所具备的持久意志力，是一种极为罕见、极为强大的品质，它足以征服一切。强大而持久的意志究竟能成就什么，并不总是能够得到足够的重视，然而，没有任何事情能阻挡住它，无论自然、上帝还是人，都无法阻挡他们的步伐。

关于强大而持久的意志能造成什么结果，来自法国的德赛布为我们提供了一个最新的例子。

1854年，雷赛布从埃及人手中取得了开凿苏伊士运河的权力。在十年的时间里，他将这条运河凿通，成为第一个把大陆分成两半的人。他所成就的事业，在过去三千年的时间里，即使是那些最伟大的统治者也没能做到。他后来虽然也败在巴拿马运河的开凿上，但那是因为他年事已高的缘故，包括意志在内的一切事情，都会在衰老面前屈服。

如果想说明单凭意志的力量能够完成什么事业，只须仔细想一下与开凿苏伊士运河时必须克服的困难有关的历史记载就足够了。

在雷赛布的事业中，他战胜了一切阻力，把不可能变成了可能。而他在遭遇一切反对意见、一切与他作对的联盟、一切失望、逆境和失败时，都没有灰心丧气。

英国人尝试着打击他，法国人与埃及人犹豫不决，在工程初期，法国领事馆居然也带头反对他，有人试图用拒绝供应饮水，使他的工人因口渴而逃跑；包括海军部长和工程师在内，一切富有经验、受过科学训练且有责任心的人，全都自然而然地变成了他的敌人。

这些人全都站在科学立场上，断定灾难就在眼前，预言它正在逼近，并且计算出它会在某日某时发生，就像预测日食一样言之凿凿。

由此，我们可以看出，成为一位真正的领袖，只靠信仰与技巧是不够的，这也正是人类历史上野心家与宗教狂居多，伟大的领袖却寥寥无几的原因。

我们可以断言：涉及所有这些伟大领袖生平的书，不会包含太多的人名，但是，这些名字会和文明史上最重大的事件永久地联系在一起。

## 7. 领袖的名望

对于如何动员群众，你可能已经有所领悟，甚至可能很快列举出一些手段。它们或许是正确的，不过比起一个关键要素，这些手段都可能黯然失色。

这个要素十分重要，在这里，我们把它称为领袖的名望。

如果想在很短的时间里激发起群体的热情，让他们采取任何性质的行动，譬如掠夺宫殿、誓死守卫要塞或阵地，就必须让群体对暗示做出迅速的反应，其中效果最突出的就是榜样。

不过为了达到这个目的，群体应当在事前就有一些环境上的准备，尤其是希望影响他们的人应具备某种品质。

举个例子来说，1815年的2月26日的傍晚，拿破仑带着三名将军和一千名士兵乘着七条船趁夜色逃离厄尔巴岛。拿破仑以充满自信的腔调向部下们宣称，他可以不放一枪就到达巴黎。

三天后，拿破仑在法国南部的儒安湾登陆，一个整编制的掷弹兵团挡住了他的去路。当将军们提醒拿破仑潜在的危险时，拿破仑再一次为部下做出了榜样，他迎着枪口走上去，向那些阻拦他的人朗声宣布，他是他们的皇帝。

那些士兵果然没有向拿破仑开枪，甚至还脱帽向这位昔日的皇帝致敬。当效忠于波旁王室的军官发出进攻的命令时，整营的士兵掉转枪口，加入到了拿破仑的队伍中。

在通往巴黎的一路上，拿破仑所向披靡，法国民众欣喜若狂，成团成师的军队重新投入拿破仑的麾下，一直护送他重登皇位。只花了十九天的时间，拿破仑就赤手空拳，完成了一场神话般的政治变革。

我们看得出，拿破仑之所以能够东山再起，与法国民众的情绪具有莫大的关联。在波旁王朝复辟后，法国领土上到处是外国军队。显然，这种刺激激起了法国人的民族热情，特别是那些曾经随着拿破仑东征西讨的军人。往日的辉煌与现状鲜明的对比，很容易使他们想入非非，继而在目睹拿破仑出现的时候陷入莫名的狂热之中。

然而我们不该忽略一点，那就是拿破仑的特殊身份。民众的确有一定的狂热情绪，但是除了拿破仑，恐怕没人能够让他们再陷入幻想。对于这一点，我们只能说，是一个恰当的领袖在恰当的时候做出了恰当的举动。

领袖可以利用他的名望，关于这一点我们以后还要提到，但是，当领袖们打算用观念和信念——比如利用现代的各种社会学说来影响群体的头脑时，就需要借鉴其他的手段了。

## 8. 领袖的动员手段之一：断言

每个领袖都有自己独特的动员手段，其中有三种手段最为重要，也十分明确，即断言法、重复法和传染法。这些手段的作用或许不如榜样的力量来得更快，然而一旦生效，却有持久的效果。

第一类手段是断言法，做出简洁有力的断言，不理睬任何推理和证据，是让某种观念进入群众头脑最可靠的办法之一。

一个断言越是简单明了，证据和证明看上去越贫乏，它就越有威力。

一切时代的宗教书和各种法典，总是以简单断言的文风来写作。在这一点上，无论是号召人们起来捍卫某项政治事业的政客，还是利用广告手段推销产品的商人，都深知断言的价值。

一个著名的例子出现在16世纪的瑞士。帕拉齐斯被人尊称为“炼金术士的顶峰”，他写了很多研究炼金术的文字，言之凿凿地声称自己掌握了炼金术的秘密。这样的大话不但没有影响他的声誉，反而引起了全欧洲的关注。话说得越是坚决、狂妄，那些狂热的人就越崇拜他。

帕拉齐斯很可能懂得如何用断言来影响群众，因为在此之前，他就成功地在这方面做过尝试。

他原本是位著名的医生，33岁那年，成为了巴塞尔大学物

理学和自然哲学的教授，算得上年少有为。学生们喜欢听他的课，于是他越发傲慢，不把人放在眼里。他当众烧毁了许多前辈的著作，口出狂言地说，这些著作还不如他的脚后跟蕴含的知识丰富。这种疯狂的举动使他的崇拜者们愈加狂热，帕拉齐斯的名望如日中天。

我们在前文说过，群体是最极端的，他们很容易陷入偏激的情绪之中。而不负责任、不经调查的断言，往往代表了最极端的说法。它不容置疑，言之凿凿，很容易在群体中产生影响。

特别是当群体已经陷入狂热状态时，这时你所面对的就是一群脑子空空的躯壳，无论说什么，群体都会相信，这时你需要做的只有一样，就是大胆地给出结论，让群体开始振臂高呼。

## 9. 领袖的动员手段之二：重复

如果只下断言，效果往往不会最理想，因此我们还需要第二种手段——重复。

拿破仑曾经说过，极为重要的修辞法只有一个，那就是重复。而另外一句谚语也说，谎言重复千遍就成了真理。

这就是说，那些断言的事情，必须要通过不断地重复能够在头脑中生根，并且这种方式最终能够使人把它当作被证实的真理接受下来。

事实上，我们只要看一看重复对最开明的头脑所发挥的力量，就可以理解它对群体的影响。而且，人脑的生理机制就决定了，我们对那些来自不断重复的影响，注定逃无可逃。

从生理学的原理上讲，在人的大脑中存在着一个无意识的



深层区域，我们的行为动机正是在那里形成。而那些不断重复的说法最终会进入这个无意识的区域，到了一定的时候，我们会忘记谁是那个不断被重复的主张的作者，认为它来自自己的判断，最终对它深信不疑。

广告之所以有令人吃惊的威力，其原因就在这里。

假如我们成百上千次地读到，某某牌巧克力是味道最好的巧克力，我们很快就会以为自己听到四面八方都这样说，而最终我们就会确信事实如此。

如果我们成百上千次地听到，某某牌药粉治愈了某位身患绝症的知名影星，或者是某某著名人士对某某牌药粉大加褒扬，那么我们一旦患上了同样的疾病，便一定会忍不住去试用一下这种药。

如果我们总是在同一份报纸上读到，约翰是个臭名昭著的流氓，而汤姆是一位最诚实的老实人，我们最终就会相信事实就是如此。除非我们再去反复读一份观点相反的报纸。

现在我们看到，重复对于群体的作用力无疑十分强大。如果有两位领袖尝试着把断言和重复分开使用，那么它们想必势均力敌，一定会有一场激烈的拼杀。

## 10. 领袖的动员手段之三：传染

比起前两类手段，传染拥有更强大的力量。

如果一个断言得到了有效的重复，在这种重复中再也不存在异议，此时就会形成所谓的流行意见，强大的传染过程便会就此启动。

在德赛布先生获得了苏伊士运河的开凿权之后，他遭遇了

多方力量的掣肘，即使是在他的苏伊士运河公司内部也一样。

据知情人透露，德赛布先生运用了一些不方便在报纸上刊登的手法，成功地解决了这个问题——他收买了所有的参与者，使得他们不再表示反对，而是热烈地响应德赛布先生的主张。

这种热烈的气氛迅速传播开来，很快便形成了拥戴德赛布先生的环境。这件事情的直接后果就是，德赛布先生从此在重大决策上基本上再也没遇到阻力，至少在公司内部是这样的。

各种观念、感情、情绪和信念，对于群众来说，都具有病菌一样强大的传染力。

这其实是一种十分自然的现象，因为甚至在聚集成群的动物中，也可以看到这种现象。

比如说，一个马厩里如果有一匹马踢了它的饲养员，那么其他的马也会跟着效仿，哪怕是最温顺的那匹也不例外。而当有几只羊对环境感到惊恐时，这种情绪也很快会蔓延到整个羊群。

这种生物性特征覆盖了整个生物界，即使是人也不例外。在聚集成群的人中间，所有的情绪也会迅速传染，而这正是恐慌往往会在一瞬间爆发的原因。

有一句古老的诗句预言，说魔鬼将要在1630年毒死所有的米兰人。在这年4月的一个清晨，人们吃惊地发现，在米兰城中心，所有的门上都画着奇怪的画或污点，像是用烂疮流出的脓血涂上的。全城人为此奔走相告，警钟迅速敲响。大家齐心协力寻找元凶，却一无所获。

就在这个时候，瘟疫开始爆发，它是如此令人害怕，以至

于人与人之间充满了不信任与恐慌。人们怀疑井里的水不能喝，担心田里的庄稼和树上的果子也被魔鬼涂了毒，觉得墙壁、门把手、马车也很不可靠。

有位年过八旬的老人经常在圣安东尼奥教堂祈祷，一次，他刚刚想用衣角擦下坐凳，马上就有人喊他在涂毒。聚集在教堂里的一群妇女立刻像疯了一样，揪着老人的头发把他拖向市政官那里。如果不是他在半路上就断了气，肯定会被严刑拷打，被迫供出同伙。

还有一位叫毛拉的药剂师被控告勾结魔鬼，人们包围了他的房子，发现了许多化学药品。药剂师声称这些药品是用来染发的，但是别的医生却宣布它们是毒药。毛拉受到严刑拷打，在很长时间里都辩解自己是清白的，但最终还是屈服了。他承认自己串通魔鬼，而且计划毒死全城的人。他甚至还承认用毒药抹门，在泉水中投毒。最后他被处以绞刑，房子也被推倒，并且在原址处立了一块碑，上面刻着毛拉的“罪行”。

从这里可以看出，头脑混乱就像疯了一样，它本身也是易于传染的。有统计表明，在精神病医生之中，不时会有人变成疯子，而这已经是广为人知的事情。最近的新闻表明，在一次广场集会中，慌乱的驴马在人群中引发了一场骚乱，而在另一场集会中，狂热的人群甚至传染出了几条疯狗。

## 11. 传染来源于模仿

制造传染究竟需要什么条件？这是领袖不可不知的问题。

从上面的例子中我们可以看出，传染往往发生在人群聚集的地方，然而每个人都同时处在同一个地点，可见这并不是他们受到传染不可或缺的条件。

比方说，有些事情能让群众的头脑产生一种共同的倾向，

或者是一种群体共有的性格。

在该事件的影响下，即使是相距遥远的人，也能感受到传染的力量。尤其当人们在心理上已经有所准备的时候，那些前面提到的间接因素已经打好基础的时候，传染就变得容易多了。

在这方面的一个事例是1848年的革命运动，它在巴黎爆发，仅仅几个星期之内就传遍了大半个欧洲，让许多皇室与政府的地位岌岌可危。

其实，有一点我们始终没有提到，那就是，这种传染实际上要归结到模仿的原因上。

之所以我们没有在前面说到它，是因为模仿其实并不属于群体的特征，每个人都有这种天性。只要他看到，就会自然而然地模仿，模仿对他来说是必然的，因为学别人是天底下最容易不过的事情。

正是因为这种必然性，才使所谓时尚的力量如此强大。放眼今天这个世界，无论是意见、观念、文学作品甚至服装，有几个人有足够的勇气与时尚作对？这也正像我们前面所说的那样，支配着大众的是榜样，而不是论证。

在历史的每一个时期，都有那么几个特立独行的人，通过公开和别人作对来吸引目光，受到无意识群众的模仿，这是建立榜样的一种方式。

然而，无论这些人多么有个性，都不能逾越传统，至少不能过于明目张胆地反对公认的观念。他们要是这样做，倒不是会引起群众的反感，而是会使模仿他们变得过于困难，建立影响也就无从谈起。

正是这个原因，使得过于超前于自己时代的人，一般不会产生太大的影响。这是因为两者过于界限分明。

也是由于这个原因，欧洲人的文明尽管有许许多多的优点，却只能对东方民族产生微不足道的影响，因为两者之间的民族性格差别实在是太大了，传统也相差得太大了。

## 12. 你逃不掉传染

由于传染和模仿的存在，使得我们的世界出现了一个有趣的现象。

这件有趣的事情就是，同一个国家的人，甚至同一个时代的人都非常相似。

假如我们肯用心思开展一番研究，就会发现不仅群众是这个样子，就是那些十分理性，好像坚决不受双重影响的个人，也不可避免地受到了这样的影响。

比如说，哲学家、博学之士和作家这类人，他们的思想和风格也散发着一股相似的气息，让我们一眼就看得出来他们属于哪个时代。假如我们想全面了解一个人读什么书，他有什么消遣的习惯，他生活于什么样的环境，并没必要真的和他展开一番交谈。

传染不仅能够传播意见，甚至还能将好恶情绪传播开来。比如说，一本书可能在某个时期被群众蔑视，就在几年后，同样的原因，那些持批评态度的人，又会对它大加赞赏。

传染物的种类是如此之多，以至于你要时刻受到它们的侵袭。而现在我们需要指出的是，这些东西在传染的过程中，是不会看人下菜碟的。

几乎所有的社会成员都会受到传染，无论他们是何种身份。

也就是说，传染在作用于广大民众之后，也会扩散到社会的上层。

今天我们看到，社会主义信条就出现了这种现象，它正在被那些会成为它首批牺牲者的人所接受，当权者往往也会成为它的狂热信徒，以至于意识不到他们会因此被轰下台。

传染的威力是如此巨大，在它的作用下，甚至个人利益的意识也会消失得无影无踪。

由此解释了一个事实：被民众接受的每一种观念，最终总是会以其强大的力量在社会的最上层扎根，不管获胜意见的荒谬是多么显而易见。

社会下层对社会上层的这种反作用是非常奇特的现象。因为群众的信念总是来自上层，源于一种更高深的观念，而它在自己的诞生地往往一直没有什么影响。

当领袖和鼓动家被这种更高深的观念征服后，就会把它挪为己用，对它进行歪曲，组织起使它再次受到歪曲的宗派，然后在群众中传播，而他们会让这个篡改过程变得更快。

当观念变成大众的真理，它就会回到自己的发源地，对一个民族的上层产生影响。

我们或许会认为，人类的智力可以阻止一些愚蠢想法的传染。但是由于群体智力的欠缺，这种作用十分间接，也将是一个无比漫长的过程。即使那些哲学家的思想通过一个复杂的过程终于大获全胜时，提出这种观念的哲人们也恐怕早已作古。

现在，我们可以得出最终的结论了：可供传染的东西是那样多，它的速度又是那样快，覆盖面又是那样广，而智力却很难在民众身上起到免疫的作用。正因为如此，我们才可以下一个断言，任何人都逃不掉传染，你也包括在内。

### 13. 比财富更诱人的东西

当一种观念经过断言、重复、传染而被普及开来后，就因为环境获得了巨大的威力。

这种力量十分神奇，甚至比财富更令人动心。

因为在我们生活的这个世界上，不管什么样的统治力量，无论它是观念还是人，只要他想加强权力，就必须借助这种令他人难以抗拒的力量，而这种力量，就是我们曾经提到过的名望。

每个人都了解这个词的含义，但却没有人能够准确地说出它的含义。这是因为名望在不同人的手中，可能有完全不同的用法。

一个人的名望，既可能代表了正面的光辉形象，也可能意味着恶势力的魁首。也就是说，对于同样一个人，有的人抱着赞美的感情歌颂它，有的人则可能感到十分恐惧。

有的时候，这些感情是名望存在的基础，但是没有它，名望也能够继续存在。

比如说，最大的名望往往归死人所有，即那些我们不再惧怕的人，例如亚历山大、恺撒、穆罕默德和释迦牟尼。反过来，另外一些形象则利用它们的声望让人感到恐惧，比如印度地下神庙中那些嗜杀的神灵。

在现实生活中，名望对人的作用更大，它往往是某个人、某本著作或某种观念对我们头脑的支配力。而这种支配力，会完全麻痹我们的批判力，让我们心中充满惊奇和敬畏。

这种感觉就像所有感情一样难以理解，不过它好像与魅力人物引起的幻觉没有什么不同。它令我们痴迷，令我们甘心臣服，从而情愿将自己奉献给这种名望的拥有者。

正因为名望有如此神奇的作用，才使得几千年来出现了那么多沽名钓誉之徒。名望足以让人拥有操控民众的权力，它也是拥有其他权力的主因，不管神仙、国王，还是美女，缺了它一概没戏。

#### 14. 第一类名望

天下存在着形形色色的名望，但是它们却可以被概括起来分成以下两大类：先天的名望和个人名望。

先天的名望来自称号、财富和名誉。它可以独立于个人的名望而存在。

相反，个人名望基本上为一个人所特有，它可以和名誉、荣耀、财富共存，或由此得到加强，不过就算没有这些东西，它也完全能够存在。

比起个人的名望，先天的名望更为常见。如果一个人占据着某个位置，拥有一定的财富或头衔，仅仅这些事实，就能使他享有名望，不管他本人多么没有价值。

我们在生活中可以发现，那些一身戎装的士兵，或是身着法袍的法官，总是会令人肃然起敬。

这也是为什么法官总是会戴着夸张的白色假发的原因，假



如没了这种东西，他的形象就会混同于常人，他的权威则至少会损失一半。

这种天生的名望会带给人极大的威信。即使是最狂放不羁的社会主义拥护者，当他面对着一位亲王或公爵的时候，也多少会有些内心触动。拥有这种头衔的人在和普通人做生意时，总是会轻而易举地占一些便宜。

以上我们说的这种名望，是通过人来体现的。在这些名望之外，还有一些名望体现在各种意见、文学和艺术作品等事物中，它们往往是长年累月重复的结果。

就历史而言，尤其是文学和艺术的历史，实际上只是在重复那些毫无意义的东西。每个人都不想这样做，但是历史所具有的名望压迫着他们，每个人最后都会重复他从学校里学到的东西，直到这些东西变成了一些再没人敢说三道四的称号和事物。

比方说，一个现代读者，要他去读荷马史诗，这实在是一件令人厌烦的事情，但是这部史诗的名望摆在那里，就没有人敢对它说不。

现在的巴特农神庙，只不过是一堆毫无生趣的破败废墟，但是它的巨大名望却让人不敢有丝毫不敬，甚至还要装出一副对伟大建筑的崇拜表情来。

假如一个贵族能够保住自己的财产和身份，那么就可以断定民众一定会爱戴他。只要能和他交往，群体甚至会心甘情愿地把自己的一切都交付到他手中。当这个贵族露面时，民众会高兴得脸上泛红；如果贵族同他们说话，抑制不住的愉快会让他们面红耳赤，眼睛里闪烁着不同寻常的光芒。

可以说，民众的血液里流淌着对贵族的崇敬，正像西班牙

人热爱舞蹈与斗牛，德国人热爱音乐与机械，意大利人喜欢恋爱与足球，法国人喜欢美食与革命一样。

民众们甚至到处搜罗描述贵族生活的书，出版商也刻意迎合民众的这个需求，于是这种书随处可见，就像人手一部的圣经；而这类东西带给他们的满足和骄傲，几乎算得上他们生活中不可分割的一部分。

把这些现实联系在一起，可以看出名望的一个特点，那就是阻止人们看到事物的本来面目，让我们的判断力彻底麻木。某个人或某件事是对是错无所谓，人们只认名望，也只屈服于名望。

## 15. 第二类名望

第二类名望是个人的名望，它的性质完全不同于我们说过的那些先天的或人为的名望。

个人的名望是一种这样的品质，它与一切头衔和权力无关，只为极少数人所具备。当某个人拥有这种品质时，他就可以对自己周围的人施以神奇的幻术，即使这些人和他有着平等的社会地位。

这种品质接近于个人魅力，他们强迫周围的人接受他们的思想与感情，众人对他的服从，就像吃人毫不费力的动物服从驯兽师一般。

那些伟大的群众领袖，比如释迦牟尼、耶稣、穆罕默德、圣女贞德和拿破仑，都是这种崇高声望的享有者，同时也是它的受益者。

这些伟大领袖能取得他们的地位，和这种名望有着密切关系。各路神仙、英雄豪杰和各种教义，能够在这个世界上大行

其道，都是因为有其深入人心的力量。不过，他们是经不起我们的讨论的，因为只要稍作理性思辨，这些东西就会立刻烟消云散。

这些伟大人物早在成名之前就拥有一种神奇的力量，假如没有这种力量，他们也不可能成名。

比如，拿破仑在达到权力巅峰之后，仅仅因为他的庞大权力，就享有巨大的名望。但是在他籍籍无名、没有这种权力时，他依然具有相当大的个人名望。

在他刚刚成为准将的时候，还是个名不见经传的小人物。当那些有权有势的人派他去指挥意大利军队时，他一到任，就发现自己正处在一群愤怒的将军中。这些人无法理解，像这样一个二十几岁的青年，是如何凌驾于他们之上的。于是这些人决定团结起来，想要给这个总督派来的年轻外来户一点儿颜色瞧瞧。

在师部的将军里面，有一位名叫奥热罗的将军火气最大。此人为自己的高大身材和彪悍性格扬扬自得，他是督政官巴拉斯的宠儿，因为旺代事件而得到了将军头衔。他在学校里的成绩就是街头斗殴，他相貌不佳，还曾有着数学家和梦想家的美名。

奥热罗对巴黎派给他们的暴发户一肚子怒气，而对于那些有关此人如何强大的描述，他准备粗暴地不予理睬。

而当奥热罗将军等人来到军营后，拿破仑却让他们在外面等着。最后他终于佩带着剑出现在他们面前。拿破仑戴上帽子，说明了他采取的措施，下达了命令，最后，毫不客气地让他们离开。

在整个过程中，拿破仑没有借助任何语言、姿态或威胁，

而奥热罗一看到这个就要变成大人物的人，就已经被征服了。他一直沉默不语，直到出门后他才重新找回了自信，让自己像通常那样骂骂咧咧地说话。这个小个子魔鬼将军让他感到敬畏，他无法理解那种一下子就把他压倒的气场。

当拿破仑的权力达到巅峰之后，他的名望也随着他的荣耀一起增长，至少在他的追随者眼里，他和神灵的名望已不相上下。即使是那些最粗鲁的莽夫，也会臣服在他的脚下。

比如说，他手下的旺多姆将军是一个粗汉，大革命时代的典型军人，甚至比奥热罗更粗野。在1815年与阿纳诺元帅一起登上杜伊勒利宫的楼梯时，他对元帅谈到了拿破仑：“那个魔鬼般的人物对我施用的幻术，我自己也搞不懂为何如此厉害。一看到他，我就像个小孩子一样禁不住打战。他简直能让我钻进针眼儿，投身火海。”

不仅这两位将军，拿破仑对其他人的影响也是一样的。科本茨尔伯爵就是这样，当拿破仑生气地把一个价值昂贵的花瓶摔到他面前时，这位奥地利外交大臣被吓得浑身哆嗦。而大臣达武在谈到另一位大臣马雷和他本人的奉献精神时，曾说过这样的话：

“如果拿破仑帝对我们说：‘毁灭巴黎，不让一个人活着或跑掉，这对我的政策至关重要。’我相信马雷是会为他保密的，不过他还不至于顽固到不想让自己的家人离开这座城市。而我会因为担心泄露真情，把我的妻儿留在家里。”

## 16. 如何博得个人名望

我们首先要说明一点，这种近似于魅力性质的个人名望，是没办法用学习的方法获得的。尽管它不是与生俱来的贵族封号，但却往往比一个封号更自然地落在某位领袖的头上，但愿你也是那些人中的一个。

不过，我们在这里提供这样一条守则，只要遵照它行事，至少可以让你在个人名望方面不至于走下坡路。

这条守则就是：要意识到自己的名望，并懂得以命令的方式将它运用起来。

在这一点上，拿破仑同样有着清醒的认识。他知道，如果他把自己身边的人看得还不如马夫，他的名望就会更上一层楼，而这些人中甚至包括国民议会里的令全欧洲心惊胆战的显赫人物。当时的许多闲谈都可说明这一事实。

在一次国务会议上，拿破仑就曾粗暴地羞辱过他的财政大臣伯格诺，其无礼就像对待一个男仆。产生效果后，他走到这人面前说：“喂，笨蛋，你找到脑子了吗？”伯格诺是一个比仪仗官还要高大的人，却深深地躬着腰。小个子拿破仑伸手揪住大个子伯格诺的耳朵，把他提了起来。出人意料的是，伯格诺却认为这是令人心醉的宠信的表现，是主人发怒时常见的亲切举动。

我们可以看出，名望能够催生多么无耻的陈词滥调。它也能够使我们看到一位大暴君对其喽啰们极为轻蔑的态度，他甚至只把他们看作奴隶一般。而这些喽啰也恰如其分地表现出了奴隶的态度。

当拿破仑几乎孤身一人从厄尔巴岛返回法国时，面对着一个对他的暴政想必已感到厌倦的大国，他却能闪电般地征服它。那位曾经在波旁王室面前夸下海口，发誓要将拿破仑这个“破坏和平者”装进笼子带回巴黎的内伊元帅，只是看了拿破仑一眼就屈服了。

英国将军伍思理曾经写道：“拿破仑，一个来自他的王国厄尔巴岛的逃犯，几乎是孤身一人在法国登陆，几周之内便把

合法国王统治下的法国权力组织统统推翻。想证明一个人的权势，还有比这更惊人的方式吗？在他这场最后的战役中，从头至尾，他对同盟国又施加了多么惊人的权势！他们让他牵着鼻子走，他差一点就打败他们！”

他的名望长于他的寿命，而且有增无减。他的名望让他的一个籍籍无名的侄子变成了皇帝。直到今天他的传奇故事仍然不绝于耳，足见人们对他的怀念是多么强烈。

这个独裁者随心所欲地迫害他人，为了满足他的私欲而进行一次次的征伐，然而人们却一再地追随他。这也再一次证明了，只要有足够的名望和付诸实施的天才，人们就会允许你这样为所欲为。

在历史上，正是因为许多领袖有着这样的声望，才使得民众趋之若鹜，许多伟大的宗教、伟大的学说和伟大的帝国也因之发端。假如没有名望对群众的影响，这些发展就会成为不可思议的事情。

## 17. 另一种博得名望的方法

尽管我们在博得名望方面的办法不多，但我们还是有办法尽量接近它，不过总的说来，这并不是一件容易的事。

名望主要来自于个人的权势、军事业绩或宗教敬畏，也可以有比较平庸的来源，而它的力量却不会因此而有所消减。

在我们生活的这个时代，就有若干这样的例子，最能让后人世代不忘的，要属那个将大陆一分为二，改变了地球面貌和通商关系的雷赛布先生。而他之所以能完成自己的壮举，是因为他有强大的意志，也因为他能让自己周围的人着迷。

为了克服他遇到的无数反对声音，他只让自己的表现说

话。他的言语简洁，他的魅力可以化敌为友。英国人反对他的计划尤其卖力，但是他一出现在英国，就把所有选票都争取到了自己一边；晚年他路过南安普顿时，一路上教堂钟声不断；如今又有一场运动在英国展开，要为他树立一座塑像。

在征服了一切的人、一切的事，征服了沼泽、岩石、沙地之后，德赛布先生的威望达到了顶点，他不再相信还有什么事情能拦阻他，他想在巴拿马再挖一条苏伊士运河。他按老办法着手这项工程，但是他已上了年纪，而该项工程也实在过于浩大。

1881年，工程因为缺乏资金停工，这场突如其来的灾难，直接抹去了这位英雄身上耀眼的光环。而雷赛布先生在运河公司破产之后，差点被法庭以侵吞公款罪判监禁五年。

雷赛布先生的一生，既说明了威信如何出现，也说明了它如何消失。在成就了足以同历史上最伟大的英雄媲美的业绩之后，他又被自己家乡的官僚打入最下贱的罪犯之流。他去世时没人留意，灵柩经过之处，是一群无动于衷的民众。只有外国政府像对待历史上每个最伟大的人一样，怀着敬意对他表示纪念。

现在，我们可以得出结论了，名望的产生与若干因素有关，而成功永远是其中最重要的因素。

每个成功者，每个得到承认的观念，仅仅因为成功这一事实，便不会再受到人们的怀疑。

成功是通向名望的主要台阶，其证据就是成功一旦消失，名望也几乎总是随之消失。昨天受群众拥戴的英雄一旦失败，今天就会受到侮辱。当然，名望越高，反应也会越强烈。在这种情况下，群众会把末路英雄视为自己的同类，为自己曾向一个已不复存在的权威低头哈腰而进行报复。

当年罗伯斯庇尔把自己的同伙和大量的人处死时，他享有着巨大的声望。然而当几张选票的转移剥夺了他的权力时，他便立刻失去了一切，群众齐声咒骂他的狠毒，把他送上了断头台，正像不久前对待他的牺牲品一样。信徒们总是穷凶极恶地打碎他们以前神灵的塑像。

## 18. 如何不让你的名望流失

我们知道，所有的名望，都会让它的拥有者在史书上占据一席之地。

我们还知道，名望是说服群众的一个基本因素，享有无与伦比的地位。

我们甚至了解了，如何通过一定的手段，在民众中博得名望。

现在就让我们来探讨一下，如何在获取它之后，有效地将它保持下去，不至于因为一些外界因素的影响而流失。

在这方面有一个反面的例子，就是那位发现了南美洲的哥伦布。他在获得了西班牙王室的资助后，经过苦难重重的历程，最终找到了美洲。

这一发现让哥伦布声名鹊起，曾经给他冷板凳坐的那些贵族和亲王们，立刻对他毕恭毕敬，打算给他一个总督的职位，并想要热情地和他握手。而哥伦布越是保持克制，这些人就越发失去原有的尊严，甚至国王的兄弟们也邀请他参加私人晚宴。

然而在他第三次西行后，人们的态度却急转直下，原因是哥伦布的航行以及美洲的发现，一时间并没有给当时的贵族们



带来大量黄金和其他财富，人们对他也就越发冷淡了。1506年的一个深夜，这位贫病交加的老水手，在自己的阁楼中抑郁而死。

雷赛布先生的命运也一样。很明显，他最清楚凯旋的狂喜与挫折的创痛。当雷赛布成功地贯通了两个海洋时，国王和人民向他致敬；如今，他败在巴拿马运河的事业面前，群众又把它看作是个毫无教养的骗子。

由此我们可以看出，缺少成功的名望，会在很短的时间里消失。这是保持名望的关键。

除此之外，名望也可以在探讨中被磨蚀，只是时间要更长一些。

不管怎么说，探讨的力量是极为可靠的。当名望成为问题时，便不再是名望。我们可以看到，能够长期保持名望的神与人，对探讨都毫不宽容。为了让群众敬仰，必须同它保持距离。

我们可以看到，从上一个一千年开始，每当有不同的异端教派出现时，罗马教廷总是不遗余力地将他们打压下去，其手段之血腥足以令成吉思汗也感到惊恐。如果说真有地狱存在的话，那它就是遍布欧洲大陆的一个个异端裁判所。

尽管教廷对教义探讨如此不留情，但是这种探讨仍然取得了相当好的效果，许多信徒不再对罗马教廷顶礼膜拜，而是转向了加尔文教、胡斯派、再洗礼派等派别，使得罗马教廷几乎损失了一半以上的信徒。

由此我们可以得出结论，无论是保持名望也好，博取名望也罢，都需要不断取得事业上的成功来作为支持。而在这个过程中，务必要以种种手段维护名望。假如有人对此表示反对，

则需要强势的舆论、弹压，甚至不惜用最残酷的手段把它扼杀在苗头阶段。

## 第四章 群体的信念与意见的变化范围

### 1. 两类信念与意见

生物的解剖学特征和心理特征往往存在着密切的相似之处。

比如说，在生物学研究上，我们经常要对不同时代的同一种生物进行比较。在那些解剖学特征中，会看到一些不易改变或只有轻微改变的因素，它们的改变甚至需要以地质年代来计算。

除了这些稳定的、不可摧毁的特征外，也可以看到一些极易变化的特征，比如利用畜牧和园艺技术就很容易加以改变的特征。有时候，这些特殊特征是那样鲜明，它们甚至会让观察者看不到那些基本特征。

在道德特征上，我们也可以发现同样的现象——一个种族除了有不可变的心理特征外，也能看到它有一些可变因素。

因此，在研究一个民族的信仰和意见时，在一个牢固的基础结构上，总是能观察到一些嫁接在上面的意见，其多变一如岩石上的流沙。

于是我们知道，群体的意见和信念可以分成非常不同的两类。

第一类，我们有重要而持久的信仰，它们能够数百年保持

不变，整个文明也许就是以它为基础。例如过去的封建主义、基督教和新教，在我们这个时代则有民族主义原则和当代的民主以及社会主义观念。

第二类，是一些短暂而易变的意见。它们通常是每个时代生生灭灭的一些普遍学说的产物，这方面的例子有影响文学艺术的各种理论，例如那些产生了浪漫主义、自然主义或神秘主义的理论。这些意见通常都是表面的，就像时尚一样多变，它们类似于一池深水的表面不断出现和消失的涟漪。

现在，就让我们来展开探讨，研究一下这两类不同的信念和意见究竟是如何在群体间发生变化的。

## 2. 信仰的变化范围

伟大的普遍信仰，数量十分有限。它们的兴衰在每一个文明种族的历史上，都绝对是令人瞩目的事件。也就是说，这些信仰构成了文明的真正基础。

通过前面的探讨我们得知，群体有着极为偏执而保守的本能。因此，用一时的意见影响群众的头脑不难，想让一种信仰在其中长久扎根却极为不易。反之，一旦这种信念确立，要想根除它也同样困难。通常只有用暴力革命才能对它们进行革新。

即使是信念对人们的头脑已经几乎失去控制力时，也要借助于革命。在这种情况下，革命的作用是对几乎已经被人抛弃的东西做最后的清理，因为习惯势力阻碍着人们完全放弃它们。

可以说，一场革命的开始，其实就是一种信念的末日。

一种信念开始衰亡的确切时刻很容易辨认——就是它的价

值开始受到质疑的时刻。我们在前面说过，一切普遍信念都不过是一种虚构，它唯一的生存条件就是它不能受到审察与讨论。

不过，即使一种信念已经摇摇欲坠时，根据它建立起来的制度仍会保持其力量，消失得十分缓慢。最后，当信念的余威尽失时，建立于其上的一切也很快会开始衰亡。

迄今为止，没有哪个民族能够在没有下决心破坏其全部文明因素的情况下转变它的信仰。这个民族会继续这一转变过程，直到停下脚步接受一种新的普遍信念为止，在此之前它会一直处在一种无政府状态中。

普遍信念是文明不可缺少的柱石，它们决定着各种思想倾向。只有它们能够激发信仰并形成责任意识。每个民族都清楚获得普遍信念的好处，它们本能地知道，这种信念的消失是它们衰败的信号。

比如使罗马人能够征服世界的信念，是他们对罗马的狂热崇拜；当这种信念寿终正寝时，罗马也注定衰亡。至于那些毁灭了罗马文明的野蛮人，只有当他们具备某种共同接受的信念，取得了一定的团结，摆脱了无政府状态时，才能做到这一点。

各民族在捍卫自己的意见时，总是表现出不宽容的态度，这显然事出有因。这种对哲学批判表现出来的不宽容，代表着一个民族生命中最必要的品质。

在中世纪，正是为了寻求或坚持普遍信仰，才有那么多发明创新者被送上火刑柱；即便他们逃脱了殉道，也难免死于绝望。也正是为了捍卫这些信念，世界上才经常上演一幕幕最可怕的混乱，才有成千上万的人战死沙场或将要死在那里。

建立普遍信念的道路可谓困难重重，不过一旦它站稳了脚跟，便会长期具有不可征服的力量，无论从哲学上看它多么荒谬，它都会进入最清醒的头脑。

在长达一千五百年的时间里，欧洲各民族都坚持认为，那些野蛮的宗教神话都是真实、不可争辩的。那位伟大的上帝，居然因为他创造的生物不听话，便进行了残酷的自我报复，让他的子民们承受洪水的惩罚。

这种故事是这样的背离逻辑，然而在十多个世纪里，居然一直没人认识到它的荒谬至极。即使是那些有着过人天赋的学者，比如伽利略、牛顿、莱布尼茨，也从来都没有觉得这种说教的真实性值得怀疑。

普遍信仰有催眠作用，没有任何事情比这个事实更典型，也没有任何事情能更确切地表明，我们的理智有着令人汗颜的局限性。

### 3. 如何用信仰抓住群众

新的教条一旦在群体的头脑中生根，就会成为鼓舞人心的源泉，会由此发展出各种制度、艺术和生活方式。

在这种环境下，它对人们实行着绝对的控制。正因为如此，实干家才一心要让这种普遍接受的信仰变成现实，立法者一心想把它付诸实施，而哲学家、艺术家和文人全都醉心于如何以各种不同的方式表现它，除此之外再无他想。

从基本信仰中可以派生出一些短暂的观念，它们总是具有那些信仰赋予的印记。埃及文明、中世纪的欧洲文明、阿拉伯地区的穆斯林文明，都不过是寥寥几种宗教信仰的产物。在这些文明中，即使那些最微不足道的事物，也都留下了它们一眼就能辨认出来的印记。

正是因为这些信仰的存在，才使得每个时代的人都在一个由相似的传统、意见和习惯组成的文明环境中成长，他们不能摆脱这些桎梏。

我们知道，人的行为首先受他的信念支配，也受由这些信念所形成的习惯支配。这些信念调整着我们生活中最无足轻重的行动，即使是最具独立性的精神，也摆脱不了它们的影响。

在不知不觉中支配着人们头脑的暴政，是唯一真正的暴政，因为你无法同它作战。

比如说，古罗马皇帝提比略在位的时候，其杀戮行径令人侧目，成吉思汗为欧洲带来了比黑死病更大的灾难，拿破仑让三百万法国儿郎命丧疆场，这些人的确都是可怕的暴君。但是只要他们死去，这些暴行也就终止了。而那些躺在坟墓深处的人，诸如摩西、释迦牟尼、耶稣和穆罕默德，却在他们死后，还对人类实行着更深刻的专制统治。

我们可以利用政变来推翻一个暴君，也可以利用战争来打倒一个独裁者，但是对待那些坚定的信仰，以及那些牢固的信念，我们却没什么手段可供利用。

在同罗马天主教的暴力对抗中，最终屈服的是法国大革命。尽管群体的同情显然在它这一边，尽管它采用了像宗教法庭一样无情的破坏手段，但最终的结果是，无形的信仰打败了实实在在的杀人放火。上帝的概念深植于人的内心，无论是刀还是火，都没办法把它斩断或是烧毁。

所以说，人类世界中的唯一暴君，历来就是他们对死人的怀念或他们为自己编织出来的幻想。

我们可以看到，从哲学角度分析，这些普通的信念往往十分荒谬，但这从来不会成为它们获胜的障碍。因为群体在智力

上有所欠缺，又习惯沉迷于幻想，它们只会相信最偏激的东西。如果这些信念缺少了提供某种神奇的荒谬性这一条件，它们也不可能获胜。

正因为如此，抓住群众的关键，就是让他们在崇拜和服从中，找到自己的幸福。

如果我们了解了这一点，就可以得到一些新颖的结论。

就今天来看，社会主义信念虽有明显的破绽，但也没有阻止它们赢得群众。因为它成功地抓住了群众，让它们开始信仰社会主义。

然而，和所有宗教信仰相比，它只能算是等而下之的信仰。因为前者所提供的幸福理想只能实现于来世，因此人们无法反驳它，而社会主义的幸福理想要在现世得到落实，只要有人努力想实现这种理想，它的许诺的空洞就会立刻暴露无遗，从而使这种新信仰身败名裂。

照这样看来，社会主义力量的增长，也只能到它获得胜利，开始实现自身的那天为止。由于这个原因，这种新宗教虽然像过去的所有宗教一样，也以产生破坏性影响为起点，但是将来它并不能发挥创造性的作用。

#### 4. 形形色色的意见

我们已经知道了牢固信念的力量，然而在这个基础的表面，有时还会派生出一些生灭不定的意见、观念和思想。

其中一些也许朝生暮死，较重要的也不会比一代人的寿命更长，但是它们同样会对群众产生影响。

从前面的研究中我们知道，群众意见的变化有时不过是表

面现象，它们总是受到某些种族意识的影响。

比如说，在法国大革命时期，几乎一夜之间，形形色色的派别如雨后春笋般冒了出来。这里面有保皇派、激进派、帝国主义者，甚至还有社会主义者。从表面上看，这些政党是绝不相同的，但实际上，它们都有着一个绝对一致的理想——建立一个强大的专制法国。

这个理想完全是由法兰西民族的精神结构决定的，因为凡是那个革命时代的人，无一不受拉丁文学的熏陶，他们从心底崇拜古老的罗马共和国，幻想着采用它的法律、它的权标、它的制度。然而法国最终没有成为罗马，因为后者是处在一个有着强大的历史意义的帝国的统治之下。

在另一些民族中，我们会在相同的名称下会看到一些完全相反的理想。

比如说，在南美洲的许多民族中，都存在着大量名目不一的政党，这里面有农工党、小农党、天主教民主党、人民解放阵线，它们之中的任何一个，都打出了民族解放、民族独立的旗号，然而在这个旗号下却有着种种不同的政治主张。

于是我们终于知道了，无论是给那些意见所起的名称，还是其骗人的用法，都不会改变事物的本质。

现在，我们的任务就是，研究古代的信念在其表面变化背后有什么东西在支撑着，在不断变化的意见中找出受普遍信念和种族特性决定的成分。

## 5. 意见的循环过程

人们普遍认为，群众经常随意改变他们的政治或宗教信仰。但其实只要我們做一下深入探讨，就知道这完全是错误



的。

群众的意见确实会改变，但那只是暂时的现象。

一切历史，无论是政治的、宗教的、艺术的或文学的历史，似乎都证明了事情就是如此。

作为例证，让我们来看看法国历史上非常短暂的一个时期，看一下从1790年到1820年这三十年的时间里究竟发生了什么。

在这一代人的这段时间里，原本忠心拥戴波旁王室的群众，忽然在一夜之间由保皇派变成了最坚定的革命派。当拿破仑出现后，他们又开始追随他，妄图将法兰西的旗帜遍插欧非两洲，从而成为了极端的帝国主义者。最后又随着拿破仑的垮台，重新变回了君主制的支持者。

在宗教问题上，法国民众在这段时间从天主教倒向了无神论，将上帝抛弃得一干二净。随着科学上不可解释的事情逐渐增多，他们又倒向自然神论，进行着原始的自然崇拜，而最后又回到了最坚定的天主教立场。

这样的变化不只发生在群众中，甚至也发生在他们的领导者中，就连那些最高层的议员和革命领导者也不例外。

我们吃惊地发现，那些国民公会中的要人，曾经是国王的死敌，他们既不信上帝也不信君主，到最后竟然会变成拿破仑恭顺的奴仆。而在路易十八的统治下，这些人居然又手持蜡烛虔诚地走在宗教队伍中间。

在以后的几十年中，群众的意见又发生了无数次变化。即使在国际关系方面，也是这样。

本世纪初，那些曾经与法国发生过两次战争、被法国民众斥骂为“背信弃义英国佬”的英国人，忽然在一夜之间成为了友好邻邦、最值得信赖的盟国。而两度遭到法国入侵的俄国，怀着满意的心情看着法国人内讧不止，最后也变成了法国人的盟友。

在文学、艺术和哲学的领域，这种意见的变化更为迅速。诸如浪漫主义、自然主义、神秘主义、怀疑主义等各大流派轮番登场，生生不息，一位昨天还受尽吹捧的艺术家或作家，可能在第二天就被人痛加责骂。

假如我们对这些表面的变化进行深入分析，会发现什么呢？

一切与民族的普遍信念、情感相违背的东西，都没有持久力，就像一条分叉的支流，最终还是会回到主河道一样。它们只能是在暗示和传染的作用下形成的一种暂时现象，它们匆匆成熟，又匆匆消失，就像海边沙滩上被风吹成的沙丘。

## 6. 缭乱的当代形势

目前，群体中易变的意见比以往任何时候都多，这里面存在三个不同的原因。

第一个原因，昔日的信仰正在日甚一日地失去影响力。

因此它们再也不像过去那样，能够形成称雄一时的短暂意见。由于传统信仰的衰落，一大堆既无历史也无未来的偶然意见得以百花齐放。

第二个原因，群众的势力不断增长。

由于政府的软弱无能，群众势力越来越没有制衡力量。这

使得我们已经有所了解的群体观念极其多变这一特点，得以无拘无束地表现出来。

第三个原因，由于报业最近的发展，使得它们不断地把完全对立的意见带到群众面前。关于这一点，我们后面还会谈到。

由于这三大原因的存在，群众的意见层出不穷，其变化的速度也令人目不暇接，从而让我们这个时代呈现出空前的缭乱态势。

之所以会有这样的现象，是因为每出现一种个别的意见，就会出现一种对立的意见。当个别意见开始产生暗示作用的时候，很快就会受到对立意见的暗示作用的破坏。

有了这种互相制约的关系，其结果是任何意见都难以普及，最终使它们全都成了过眼烟云，一种意见甚至还来不及被足够多的人接受，来不及成为普遍意见，往往已经寿终正寝。

在过去的时代里，政府的政策、少数作家和寥寥几家报纸的影响，常常能够成为民众舆论的导向，而在今天，这种影响力早已消失得无影无踪。

作家已经丧失了全部的影响力，他们一个个地沦为靠卖文为生的普通劳动者。

报纸出于经营需要，真正地做到了百家争鸣，然而这就意味着，它们只会把形形色色的意见印在纸上，却拿不出一个自己的观点。

对于政府来说，政客们别说是引导各种意见，就是追赶意见还怕来不及。政客们琢磨不透某种意见究竟会引发什么后果，这使得政府开始害怕来自民间的意见，有时甚至变成了极

度的恐惧，这使得政府的政策不能稳固，飘忽不定。

由于缺乏引导与制约，群体的意见开始左右社会风气，左右人的行为准则，左右政府的政策运行，甚至越来越倾向于成为政治的最高指导原则。它已经发展到了一种空前的地步，竟然能够迫使国家之间结盟。

比如说，最近的法俄同盟，就几乎完全是一场大众运动的产物。当德国人大肆造舰，几十艘万吨级战舰航行在大西洋上时，法国民众十分恐慌，一封封信函如雪片般飞往政府内阁，一场场的集会在全国各地举行。舆论迫使政府急急忙忙地调整战略，通过与俄国结盟，使欧洲的整个格局发生改变。

目前甚至出现了这样的情形，就连教皇、国王和皇帝们也同意接受记者的采访。我们常常可以看到，当社会上出现一条大新闻后，王室和教皇会在极短的时间内表明意见，仿佛他们也愿意把自己在某个问题上的看法交给群众评判。

我们常说，在政治事务上不可感情用事，过去这种说法也许还算正确，但是当政治越来越受到多变的群众冲动的支配，而群众又不受理性的影响，只受情绪支配时，这种说法恐怕就很难再成立了。

## 7. 媒体的堕落

我们不得不面对一个现实，媒体正在堕落。

这种所谓的堕落，并非说这些媒体都在道德方面走了下坡路，而是说它们正日渐变得人云亦云起来。

在过去的时代里，作为一个社会的精英阶层，媒体掌握着丰富的信息来源，同时也以其学识和理性，担负着引导意见的作用。然而，它却正在逐步丧失自己的影响力。

和政府一样，报纸在群众势力面前也变得卑躬屈膝，看不到一点儿自己的立场。

当然，在发生了这样的变化后，报纸仍然有相当大的影响，然而这只不过是因为它成了群众意见的传声筒，或是群众情绪的晴雨表。

当报纸只能提供信息的时候，它就放弃了自己的地位，放弃了让人接受某种观念或学说的可能。

于是，报纸便在公众思想的变化中随波逐流，出于和其他报纸竞争的需要，它只能大幅度扩充版面，加大信息量，尽量使每一个读者都能在报纸里找到自己支持的观点，因为它害怕失去自己的读者。

在过去的时代里，曾经有一些稳健而又不失影响力的报纸，比如《宪法报》《论坛报》或《世纪报》，它们曾被上一代人当作智慧的传播者，如今，它们不是已经消失，就是变成了典型的现代报纸，最有价值的新闻被夹在各种轻松话题、社会见闻和金融谎言之间。

如今，没有哪家报纸富裕到能够让它的撰稿人传播自己的意见。因为对于那些只想得到消息，对经过深思熟虑后做出的所有断言一概表示怀疑的读者，这种意见的价值微乎其微。甚至评论家也不再会有把握地说一本书或一台戏获得了成功。他们可以做到恶语中伤，但是提供不出有价值的服务。

同样地，这些报社也十分清楚，在形成批评或个人意见上没有任何有用的东西，于是它们便采取压制批评的立场，只限于提一下书名，再添上两三句“捧场的话”。在未来几年的时间里，同样的命运也许会降临到戏剧评论的头上。

在今天这个时代，政府和报社把全部精力都放在密切关注

各种意见上，这已经成为了它们的第一要务。它们需要在没有任何中间环节的情况下知道一个事件、一项法案或一次演说造成的效果。

这实在不是一项轻松的任务，因为没有任何事情比群众的想法更为多变，一件事情可能今天还会得到褒扬，第二天就会遭到群众的痛骂。

## 8. 历史观的消亡

我们可以在此得出结论：现代人的历史观正在逐渐消亡。这指的是他们在判断问题的时候，很难秉承一个长久的标准。

之所以会出现这样的现象，是因为没有一种能够引导意见的力量，再加上普遍信仰的毁灭，最后的结果就是极度的分裂。

这种分裂波及方方面面，比如说，人们对于一切社会秩序都存在着至少两种极端分歧的信念；更有甚者，如果一件事情不是明确地触及他们的直接利益，他们就绝不会关心。

比如说，像社会主义信条这样的问题，只在极度缺乏文化的阶层里得到赞成，比如那些矿山和工厂里的工人，最为拥护这一主张；而那些中产阶级的下层成员以及一些受过教育的工人，不是彻底的怀疑论者，就是对此保持谨慎的观望的态度。

在过去的25年里，这种趋势越来越明显。在此之前，人们的意见还可以大致预料，因为它们都来自一些基本信仰，也就有着屈指可数的几种来源。

比如说，只要某个人是君主制的铁杆拥护者，那么就可以断定他有着怎样的历史观和科学观。同样地，只要某个人是共和主义者，就可以断定他有着完全相反的观点。

拥护君主制的人十分清楚，人不是从猴子变过来的，而共和主义者同样十分清楚，人类的祖先就是猴子。

拥护君主制的人有责任为王室说话，共和主义者则必须怀着对大革命的崇敬发言。凡是提到那些革命领袖，如罗伯斯庇尔和马拉，语气中无不是带着宗教式的虔诚，还有一些人名，如恺撒、奥古斯都或拿破仑，也必须在提到时予以痛斥。

目前，由于讨论和分析的缘故，使得一切意见都失去了名望；它们的特征很快退化，持续的时间之短，很难唤起我们的热情，让现代人日益麻木不仁。

尽管这是一个民族生命衰败的征兆，但是我们对于这种理念的衰退，并不需要太悲伤。

无论到什么时候，那些伟大的人，那些具备超凡眼光的人以及使徒和民众领袖，所有的真诚而又有强烈信念的人，总是要比那些只会否定、批判或麻木不仁的人有更大的影响，同时也能够发挥更大的作用，而他们才是历史的真正创造者。

不过我们还是要记住一点，由于目前群众拥有庞大的势力，因此，如果有一种意见赢得了足够的声望，使自己能够被普遍接受，那么它很快就会拥有强大的专制权力，使一切事情全要屈服于它，自由讨论的时代便会长久地消失。

群众偶尔是个步态悠闲的主人，但他们同时也是狂暴且反复无常的。

当一种文明让群众占了上风时，它便几乎没有多少机会再延续下去了。如果说还有什么事情能够推迟自身毁灭的话，那就是极不稳定的群众意见，以及他们对一切普遍信仰的麻木不仁。

## 第三卷 不同群体的分类及其特点

### 第一章 群体的分类

#### 1. 群体的两大类别

在前两卷的论述中，我们知道了群体的一般特点，也知道了他们是怎样运作的，然而有待说明的是，不同的人群会转化为不同的群体，它们拥有各自的特点，现在我们就来研究一下群体的分类。

当许多不同种族的人群聚在一起时，我们就看到了群体最初级的形态。

在这种情况下，他们能够团结在一起，全靠领导者的名望和意志。当某位头领的名望不够，或者意志软弱的时候，这个团体就很可能立刻分崩离析。

比如说，在古罗马帝国时代，罗马人与野蛮人的战争持续了百年之久。而这些不断进犯帝国边界的野蛮人，有着十分复杂的来源，他们中间有高卢人，有日耳曼蛮族，还有斯拉夫人，以及许许多多叫不上名字的零散部落。这些各种族的野蛮人就可以被当作这种人群的典型。

比不同种族的个人组成的人群更高的层面，是那些在某种影响下获得了共同特征，因而最终形成一个种族的人群。它们有时表现出某些群体的特征，不过这些特征在一定程度上敌不过种族的因素。

在我们前面阐述过的某些影响的作用下，这两种人群就可



以转变成群体。我们可以把这些有机的群体分为以下两类：

第一类群体被称为异质性群体，它们中的每一位成员都可能有着不同的性质。

这一类群体可以分成两种，一种是无名称的群体，比如那些随时可能在街头聚集起来的群体；另一种是有名称的群体，比如法庭陪审团、上下议院等。

第二类群体被称为同质性群体，它们的成员都有着一样的性质。

有三种标准可以区分同质性群体，第一种标准是派别，按照这个标准可分为政治派别、宗教派别等等。

第二种标准是身份，按照这个标准则可以分为军人、僧侣、劳工等等。

第三种标准是阶级，按照这个标准可以分为中产阶级、无产阶级、农民阶级等等。

接下来，我们就开始研究，指出这些不同类型群体的特征。

## 2. 异质性群体

异质性群体中的每个成员都不相同。

首先，这些成员的特点绝不相同，比如说，有些成员嗜酒如命，有的成员却滴酒不沾，有的成员吝啬小气，有的成员却慷慨大方。

其次，他们的职业绝不相同。在这些人中既可能有某位著

名医生，也可能存在着一个钳工，甚至可能有一位神父，即使是贵族，也可能和一名乞丐同属一个群体。

再次，他们的智力水平各有差异。这里面或许有天才的发明家，但是也不会将乡野村夫与智障者排除在外。

总之，异质性群体是各色人物的大杂烩，它是由有着各种特点、各种职业、各种智力水平个人组成的。

尽管是这样，但在两个异质性群体之间，总还是存在一些差别的，而民族就是最主要的决定因素。

我们已经知道，民族是决定人们行动最强大的决定因素，它的作用在异质性群体的性格中也同样有迹可寻。

比如，一群英国人偶然聚集在一起，组成了一个群体，那么它一定与同样情况下形成的中国人群体不同。同样地，一群俄国人的群体也绝不会与西班牙人的群体保持相同的特征，而我们只消看上一眼，就能够把一群法国人同德国人区别开来。

### 3. 异质性群体的特征

我们在前面说过，每个民族都有自己的民族性格，由此给人的感情和思想方式造成巨大差异。假如我们把许多不同民族，但是比例大体相同的个人集合成一个群体，那么这种差异就会变得极为突出。

这种差异会让群体成员间产生分歧，并且有可能爆发激烈的争吵，即使他们有着一致的利益，共同的目标，也还是会发生这种情况。

比如说，社会主义运动家总是试图在大型集会中把不同国家的工人聚集在一起，尝试着在一起做些什么，而最后总是以

公开的分歧收场。

在这方面，第一国际就是个典型的例子。

拉丁民族集合成的群体，不论它是革命派，还是保守派，为了实现自己的要求，总是会要求国家实施干预政策，也总是倾向于集权统治，总是或明或暗地要求建立独裁。

于是，在一场场独立战争过后，拉丁美洲的西班牙人被赶走了，然而新政府的专制程度却要比原来的更严重。

与此相反，美国人的群体就不拿国家当回事，他们只求助于个人的主动精神。而法国的群体特别看重平等，英国的群体特别看重自由，德国人的群体则特别看重纪律。

正因为有了如此多的差异，我们才能够看到，几乎有多少个国家，就有多少种不同的社会主义和民主。

由此可见，一个民族的民族气质，对群体的性格有着重大的影响。它是一种决定性的力量，限制着群体性格的变化。

因此，我们可以得出一条基本定律：正是由于这种精神力量的强大，才使得群体的其他性格不那么重要。

此外，对于一个民族来说，民族气质还有其他的作用。

我们在前面说过，群体的状态类似于野蛮状态，而支配群体的力量也近乎一种野蛮力量，当一个民族拥有自己的气质之后，也就获得了结构稳定的集体精神。

由于这种精神的作用，才使得一个民族在越来越大的程度上摆脱缺乏思考的群体力量，走出野蛮状态。

除了种族因素外，对异质性群体最重要的分类，就是把它们分为无名称的群体和有名称的群体，前者往往是一些临时的街头团体，后者则是一些精心组织起来的议会和陪审团。前一种群体缺乏责任感，而后一种群体则发挥了这种责任感，这往往使它们的行动有着很大的不同。

#### 4. 同质性群体

同质性群体有三种类型，分别是派别、身份团体、阶级。

派别是最初级的同质性群体，也是组织一个同质性群体的第一步。它的成员可以是各种教育程度的人士，可以从事各种各样的职业，甚至可以属于许多不同的社会阶层。把他们联系在一起的是共同的信仰，比如宗教派别和政治派别，就属于这一类。

在1788年法国的亚阿城内，一个名叫“罗萨蒂”的新社交团体开始引人注目。在这个团体中，僧俗齐聚一堂，气氛相当融洽，不起眼的市民在此大声诵读诗歌，举办文学讲座，军人和平民打成一片，教士与屠夫称兄道弟。

在这些人中，我们可以看到后来权倾一时的约瑟夫·富歇，此人后来数度担任法兰西警务大臣，无论时局如何变迁，他都有办法成功地保住自己的权势。

此时的富歇还是一个不蓄发的教士，每天都在为大家讲物理学领域的新发现。而那位杀人如麻的革命家罗伯斯庇尔，这个时候还尚未舍弃自己的贵族称号，每天脸色苍白地为大家朗诵辞藻华丽的抒情诗。那位著名的社会活动家马拉，则沉迷于撰写伤感离别、情意绵绵的长篇小说。

这些形形色色的人之所以会聚集在这里，只是因为他们对当时的政府深感不满，要求赋予民众更多的人权而已，尽管那

时他们还没有什么号召革命的主张，而这样的政治派别当时遍布法国。

比起派别，身份团体是最容易组织起群体的一个因素。

派别中总是包含着职业、教育程度和社会环境大不相同的个人，他们仅仅是被共同的信仰联系在一起，要找到这样的共同点有时候并不容易。而身份团体则由职业相同的个人组成，因此，他们也有大致相似的教养和一致的社会地位，比如军队和僧侣团体，就属于这一类。

比起前两种群体，因阶级因素结合而成的群体最为特殊。

一个阶级是由来源不同的个人组成的，这一点与派别颇为相似，但不同的是，让他们结合在一起的既不是共同的信仰，也不像身份团体那样是因为相同的职业。

一个阶级能够出现，是因为他们的成员有着某种相同的利益、相同的生活习惯，以及几乎同等水平的教育程度。这方面的例子是中产阶级和农民阶级。

在我们生活的这个世界上，因为这三种因素产生的群体数不清，它们在历史上也的确发挥了重大的作用。然而只要人群由这三个因素中的一个形成群体后，他们就拥有了明确的指向性，从而成为一个组织。

组织是与群体完全不同的东西，其特点与我们前面说的群体迥然不同，也就必须用全新的方法来研究它。因此，我们暂时不在这里研究同质性群体的特点，仍然将话题放在那些乌合之众上面。

## 第二章 被称为犯罪群体的群体

### 1. 拒绝认罪的罪犯

群体从来不承认他们的罪行，即使把事实摆在他们眼前也是一样。

在1868年的美国西部，恶名昭著的卡斯特中校领导的第七骑兵团在攻陷了一个印第安营地之后，残忍地屠杀了数百名夏延族印第安人，其中绝大多数是妇女、老人和儿童。

这样的暴行原本不该发生，即便是放下武器的敌军，也应当得到俘虏的待遇，何况是没有抵抗能力的妇孺。来自正义一方的指责纷至沓来，然而面对这些质问，不仅是卡斯特中校始终以激烈的态度对抗，就连他的士兵，也振振有词地宣称，这是为了“更好地完成使命”。

之所以会有这样的事件发生，其原因仍在于群体的特性。

我们在前面曾经研究过，当个人融入群体后，会产生一段莫名的兴奋期，既为自己的归属感感到欣喜，也为那种潮水般汹涌的口号、宏大的仪式与场面所感动，对此我们能够在拿破仑时代的阅兵式中找到例子。

在那些被召集过来参加观礼的绅士中，有些人起初也对此冷眼旁观，然而当整齐的近卫军掷弹兵方阵通过观礼台的时候，人群中爆发出雷鸣般的欢呼。许多人在一瞬间就改变了自己的看法，情不自禁地融入到对帝国军队的歌颂中来。

这样的例子还有很多，它再次验证了我们前面的论断，群体具有强大的感染力，而个人的情绪也会因为这一点而发生变化。

当兴奋期过后，群体就会自动进入一种纯粹的无意识状态。丧失了自己的独立人格，也丧失了最基本的思考能力，保持着一种茫然而又躁动的状态。

在这种状态下，群体很容易受到各种暗示的支配，并且非常容易将这种支配付诸行动。

于是，犯罪行为由此产生了。

## 2. 不平常的犯罪

通常来说，诱发群体去犯下罪行的动机，往往是一种强烈的暗示。

而这种暗示往往会赋予犯罪以高尚的名义。正是由于这一点的存在，才使得群体犯罪与平常的犯罪有着相当大的区别。

这种区别主要有三方面：

第一，比起一般的罪犯，群体犯罪的犯罪动机往往冠冕堂皇，并不等同于卑鄙龌龊的刑事犯罪。

第二，由于这种犯罪动机有着好听的名声，它对犯罪者的控制与影响也就愈发强烈，这使得群体犯罪者更加坚定，在犯罪过程中绝不会出现动摇，因此其手法也就更加残忍，毫无怜悯之心。

第三，普通的犯罪者在案发后，总是千方百计地否认犯罪事实；而群体犯罪者则对犯罪事实供认不讳，但却拒绝承认有罪，反而坚信他们的行为是在履行责任，或是在主持正义，仍然以高昂的情绪来面对指控。

这种情绪甚至会感染群体之外的成员。许多心理学家坚持

认为，群体犯罪只是受到教唆的结果，在这个过程中，群体中的每一个人都是无辜的，它们只是在茫然状态下，被人利用去做了一件他们意识不到的事情。

不错，群体的确受着各种暗示的支配，因此很难把它说成是一个犯罪群体。但如果你据此认为，群体不应该对他们的罪行负全部责任，那就错了。

在历史上，群体的一些暴行，如果仅就其本身来说，的确是被教唆的结果，但是在大部分情况下，这种犯罪行为同一只老虎为了保存体力，而让幼虎把一个印度人撕得血肉模糊，然后再动手把他吃掉的行为是一样的。

我们必须在这里指出，认为群体犯罪情有可原的观点是绝对错误的。

犯罪就是犯罪，一旦一桩罪行被实施，那么就绝对没有高尚与卑劣的分别，至少对于被害者来说，群体犯罪与普通犯罪所带来的伤害是一样的，而且前者往往更为严重。

### 3. 群体犯罪的历史

关于群体犯罪的历史，我们有着详细的记载。

1789年7月14日，在用大炮轰断了吊桥铁链之后，暴动的民众冲进了巴士底狱。

在监狱里，暴动者既没有如愿以偿地找到政治犯，也没有找到传说中残暴贪婪的看守。

巴士底狱里总共只有八个人，除了监狱长外，其中有四个是假证件贩子、两个精神病患者，以及一个性变态者——此人的性倾向使得他的父母不得不把他交给巴士底狱代为看管。



监狱长的职责，就是以保姆的身份，照料这些病人。当暴乱者冲进来的时候，监狱长正在替一个精神病患者擦口水，他转过身示意这些暴动者不要大声喧哗，以免刺激到病人让他们发病。

然而很快，监狱长就被这群兴奋到极点的人团团围住，他们从四面八方对他拳打脚踢，在饱受殴打之后，走投无路的监狱长不小心撞到了一个厨子的身上。

这个厨子之所以来到巴士底狱，主要是他无所事事且充满好奇心。他只是做完饭出门散步，恰好遇到了人们攻打巴士底狱，于是就想要看看究竟发生了什么热闹事。

立刻有人建议，将这个“试图反抗”的监狱长吊死，或者是砍下他的头，挂在马尾巴上。

这些建议先后被否决了，只有最后一个主意得到了所有人的认同，那就是让这个被撞到的厨子割断监狱长的喉咙。

厨子来这里并不是为了杀人，然而由于大家的意见都是如此，于是他也就相信这是一种爱国行为，甚至觉得应为杀死一个恶棍而得到一枚勋章。

就这样，这位厨子满怀神圣的心情，从一旁借来一把刀，开始慢慢地割这位监狱长的脖子。但是这把刀有些钝了，他没能切动。于是他从自己的兜里掏出一把黑柄小刀，以他娴熟的厨师手艺，成功地割断了监狱长的喉咙。

我们在前面指出的犯罪过程，清楚地反映在这个例子里面。我们都会服从别人的怂恿，而这种怂恿会因为来自集体而变得更加强大，杀人者会认为自己做了一件功德无量的事情，因为他得到了无数同胞的赞同，因此就会很自然地产生这样的想法。

毫无疑问，这样的事情在法律上代表着极大的罪恶，但在心理学上，我们却很难把它视同为犯罪。而这种事情在人类历史上屡见不鲜，或许我们应当在学术领域着手，将它归纳成一种新型的犯罪心理。

由此，我们就需要对犯罪群体的特征，做一番细致的了解。

#### 4. 犯罪群体的特征（上）

犯罪群体的一般特征，与我们在所有群体中看到的特征一模一样。

它们容易受到怂恿、轻信，容易变化，容易走极端，习惯把正面或负面的感情予以夸大，表现出前所未有的道德等等。

假如我们仔细研究，就会发现在法国历史上留下最凶残记录的群体，即参与“九月惨案”的群体之中，有着全部的上述特征。

在那次惨案中，没人确切地知道究竟是谁下达杀掉犯人、空出监狱的命令。这个人也许是丹东，也可能是罗伯斯庇尔，然而这一点并不重要。

因为无论是谁下达这样的命令，都意味着对参与屠杀的群众给予了强烈的怂恿。

这个杀人群体残酷地屠杀了3000人，而且它完全是个典型的异质性群体。除了少数职业无赖之外，它的成员包括了一些小店主以及各行各业的手艺人。

这些靴匠、锁匠、理发师、泥瓦匠、店员、邮差，在别人的怂恿下，就像我们前面提到的那个厨子一样，完全相信自己

是在完成一项爱国任务。他们呐喊着冲进一间间办公室，把官员、贵族当场活捉。

这些人承担了法官和执行人的双重角色，他们先是大义凛然地对贵族们进行审判，随即又将他们当场杀死，却丝毫不认为这是在犯罪。

这些人深信自己肩负着重要的使命，亲手搭起审判台与行刑台，与这种行动联系在一起的是，他们无时无刻不在表现群体的率直和幼稚的正义感。

考虑到受指控的人数众多，他们决定把贵族、僧侣、官员和王室仆役一律处死，没有必要对他们的案件一一进行审判。

群体的伪推理能力在此又一次起了作用，在他们看来，贵族们犯下了许多恶行，而他们往往又勾结成一股贵族势力，因此整个贵族阶层都是十恶不赦之徒。相应地，那些与贵族有着千丝万缕联系的僧侣、官员与王室仆役，自然也就不能予以宽宥。

这就是说，在这些杰出的爱国者眼里，处决一个人并不需要多么确凿的证据来证明他有罪，只要看一下他的职业，就能够知道他是否是罪犯。剩下的人则将根据他们的个人表现和声誉做出判决。

就这样，群体幼稚的良知以这种方式得到了满足，屠杀也就可以合法地进行了，群体残忍的本能也就随时会尽情释放了。

在其他的惨案中也是一样，群体总是会将他们残忍的本能发挥得淋漓尽致，因为这样的事情一旦被引发，就很难再平息下去。

## 5. 犯罪群体的特征（下）

正像群体通常的表现那样，残忍的本能并不妨碍他们表现出一些相反的感情，也就是说，他们的善心常常和他们的残忍一样极端。

在席卷巴黎的大革命中，暴乱者对巴黎的工人们怀有深刻的理解，并以极大的同情来对待他们。

他们随意冲进工厂，宣布工人从此得到解放，并勒令工厂主立即停工，由他亲自去从事生产。当工人们对此表示反对时，暴乱者就更加凶残地殴打工厂主和工程师，认定是他们平日的贪婪残酷才让这些勤劳的工人胆怯到这种地步。

在阿巴耶地区，暴乱者攻进了一座监狱，当这帮人中的一员在得知囚犯二十四小时没喝上水时，几乎想把狱卒打死，如果不是犯人们为其求情，他们一定会这样做的。

当一名囚犯被暴乱者的临时法庭宣告无罪后，包括卫兵和刽子手在内的所有人都兴高采烈地与他拥抱，并为之疯狂地鼓掌。然后就开始了针对贵族的大屠杀。

在这个过程中，欢快的情绪从未间断。暴乱者与囚犯们围在尸体旁跳舞唱歌，甚至还礼貌地为女士安排了长凳，共享观看处死贵族之乐。而且从始至终，这种表演一直充满特殊的正义气氛。

当时，阿巴耶地区的一名刽子手抱怨说，为了让女士们看得真切，把她们安排得太近了，使在场的人中只有很少一部分享受了痛打贵族的乐趣。于是暴乱者又当即决定，让受害者在两排刽子手中间慢慢走过，让他们用刀背砍他，以延长其受苦的时间。

在同一时间的福斯监狱，这一过程要残酷得多，受害人被剥得精光，在半个小时里施以凌迟的刑罚，直到每个人都看够了，再由刽子手一刀切开他们的五脏六腑。

在整个过程中，刽子手并非全无顾忌，他们身上出现了令人吃惊的纪律与道德观念。这些受害者都是些身家显贵的人物，身上有许多价值不菲的物品，然而暴乱者却拒绝占有受害人的钱财和首饰，而是把这些东西都收集起来，放在大厅的会议桌上。

在这些人的所有行为中，我们都可以看到群体头脑中特有的那种幼稚推理方式。

比如说，在屠杀了一千五百名“民族的敌人”后，有人提议说，那些关着老年人、乞丐和流浪汉的监狱，其实是在养着一些没用的人，只是国家的累赘而已，不如把他们统统杀掉。

这个人补充说，这些人中还有不少人民的敌人，比如一位名叫德拉卢的寡妇，此人犯有投毒罪，她对坐牢非常愤怒，曾经宣称，如果她能办到的话，她会一把火烧掉巴黎。

在暴乱者看来，既然监狱里关押着这样的人，那么其他囚犯也必定有着同样的想法。这个说法非常令人信服，于是这些囚犯就全都被处死了，其中甚至包括五十名十几岁的儿童——他们被冠以“人民公敌”的罪名，被通通处决掉了。

当一周的工作结束时，这些残忍的杀戮终于停止了，刽子手们认为自己终于可以休息一下了。他们深信自己为祖国立下了汗马功劳，于是竟然集体向政府请求奖励，其中最热情的人甚至要求为自己授予勋章。

1871年巴黎公社的历史记载，也为我们提供了一些类似的事实。

在巴黎建立集体公社的构想，来自于大革命时期的激进主义者巴贝夫，此人要求由集体公社掌握国有财产和被没收的敌产，建立以农业为中心的经济体系。

按照这样的构想，公社成员们将街心花园中的花草树木挖掉，将雕塑与建筑夷为平地，改为种植小麦、玉米，以响应农业中心的思想。

更极端的行为还在后面。在公社成员看来，财产属于社会资源，应该归国家所有，而性资源也属于社会资源，那么也应该归国家所有。于是这些富有想象力的公社成员制作了很多所谓的“许可证”，这种“许可证”的持有者，可以随意将妇女娶为妻子。

有不计其数的妇女成为这一措施的受害者，其中既有他人的妻子，也有五年级的小女孩。而几乎所有的巴黎妇女，都被要求到公社的一个专门委员会去登记造册，以便公社能够对这些“公共资源”进行集中掌控和分配。

这场闹剧不仅仅意味着荒唐，同时也反映了群体的残忍本能，因为如果被征集的妇女不能满足许可证持有者的要求，就要被立刻冠以“拒绝参与革命”的罪名。在那个时代，这种身份与“人民公敌”毫无区别，也就意味着灾祸的来临。

也许你会认为，这样的事情只会发生在那个蒙昧而混乱的年代，并且确信这样的血腥不会重染法兰西大地。

事实上，真实的情况恰恰相反。早在拿破仑时代的法国，这样的事情就曾经发生过。拿破仑带着一群伤痕累累的老兵开进巴黎市区的时候，看到许多妓女和交际花，于是惊呼：“首都到处都是女人。”于是他就采取措施，强行为全国的贵族小姐和妓女分配丈夫。

在当今这个时代，我们惊讶地发现，群体的势力在不断增长，而政府的权力却在它面前节节败退，如果这种趋势不能得到有效的控制，在不久的将来，我们一定还会看到许多性质相同的事情。

### 第三章 刑事案件的陪审团

#### 1. 陪审团的智力泯灭

在这里，我们不可能对所有类型的陪审团一一进行研究，因此我们只把重心放在最重要的对象上，那就是刑事法庭的陪审团。

在法国，刑事法庭的陪审团有很大的权力，他们可以通过表决来决定被告的生死、自由。然而我们要说的是，陪审团的表决往往并不高明。

我们在前面说过，陪审团属于异质性群体的一种，只不过被赋予了一个名称。正因为如此，群体所有的特征，在它身上一应俱全。

比如说，它时常会表现出容易受暗示和缺乏推理能力的特点，而当它处在群众领袖的影响下时，也会受到无意识情绪的支配。在这个研究过程中，我们会不时地看到，那些智力欠缺的陪审员犯下的错误的有趣事例。

在里昂地区曾经发生过这样的案例：一个人在村子外面的田地里发现了两只陶制的大坛子，坛子里装有许多贵重物品，但是他不知道它们具体值多少钱，也不知道它们应该归谁所有。于是只向陪审团报告说，曾经有两个名叫西蒙和朗热的人在二十二年前找到过相同的财宝，而这两个人在发现了财宝之

后，生活水平上了一个大台阶。

根据这样的事实，陪审团最终做出决定：现在西蒙就在法庭上，因此要先将他投进监狱。朗热不在这里，所以，要将他逮捕归案。

在这个案例中，群体拙劣的推理能力再次表现得淋漓尽致。此外，组成群体的不同成员在做出判决的时候，其智力水平无关紧要，陪审团在这方面也提供了一个很好的例子。

在赛万纳山区曾经发生过这样的案例：屠夫西勒斯被控虐待动物，唯一的证词来自一个名叫阿堪索的人，他毫不含糊地证明了西勒斯所做的一切：他将一头牛拴在大日头底下一整天，既不给它水喝，也不喂它粮草。用公共道德和公共行为准则的要求来衡量，这简直是一次可耻的丑行。

西勒斯为自己辩护说：这头牛不是他的财产，也不属于他，他只不过是把牛拴在那里，以便让它的主人能够找到它。

由学者们组成的陪审团怒不可遏，认为这位不“牛”道的屠夫残忍至极，于是判定西勒斯有罪，罚款2.5法郎买食物给它吃，0.5法郎买水给它喝。然而，这个判决却遭到了农民们的嘲笑，因为在农村，西勒斯先生的行为并没有什么不妥，大家都是这么干的。

## 2. 陪审团的坚定立场

我们已经知道，当一个善于思考的团体要求就某个并非完全技术性的问题发表意见时，智力起不了多少作用。

比方说，一群组成了一个团体的科学家或艺术家，在一般性问题的判断上，绝不会比一群泥瓦匠或杂货商更高明。



政府也曾意识到这个问题，因此在1848年之前，法国政府规定，对于召集起来组成陪审团的人，务必要慎重加以选择，要从有教养的阶层中选出陪审员，这些人包括了教授、学者、官员、文人等等。

如今大多数陪审员都来自小商人、小资本家和商店雇员。然而，令专家大惑不解的是，无论组成陪审团的是什么人，他们的判决总是一个样子。甚至那些对陪审制度极度反感的地方长官，也不得不承认这种判决总是维持着一贯的原则。

贝拉·德·格拉热先生是刑事法庭的前庭长，他在自己的《回忆录》中用下面一席话表达了看法：

“今天，选择陪审员的权力实际上掌握在市议员手里。他们根据自己环境中的政治和选举要求，把人们列入名单或从名单上划掉。大多数选入陪审团的人都是生意人和属于某个政府部门的雇员。只要法官的开庭时间表一定，他们的意见和专长便不再有多少作用。许多陪审员都是有着新手的热情，有着最良好意图的人，被同时放在了恭顺的处境下，陪审团的精神并未改变，它的判决依然如故。”

对于这段话，我们必须记住它最后的结论，而不是那些软弱无力的解释。对于这样的解释，我们不必感到奇怪，因为法官通常和地方长官一样，对群体心理一窍不通，因此他们也不了解陪审团。

在这位德·格拉热先生看来，刑事法庭最著名的出庭律师之一的拉肖先生，在所有的案件中，处心积虑地利用自己的权利反对让聪明人出现在名单上。

经验终究会告诉我们，这种反对是毫无用处的，这可以由一个事实来证明——今天的公诉人和出庭律师，以及所有那些关在巴黎监狱里的人，都已完全放弃了他们反对陪审员的权

利，因为正如德·格拉热先生所言，陪审团的判决并无变化，它们既不会更好，也不会更坏。

### 3. 陪审团最痛恨的人

我们知道，群体是极端感性的，和它一样，陪审团也受感情因素极其强烈的影响，很少会被证据所打动。

鲜明的形象能够对群体造成强烈的影响，因为一个鲜明的形象，总是能够给群体以最大限度的刺激，引发群体丰富的想象力，在头脑中臆造出种种幻想的场景。

在一位出庭律师看来，这些陪审团成员从来见不得孤儿寡妇，也见不得有位母亲用乳房喂孩子。而在刑事犯中流传的经验是，一个妇女只要装出一副唯命是从的样子，就足以赢得陪审团的慈悲心肠。

事实上，陪审团受感情因素影响的方面还远不止这些，对于自己可能成为受害者的罪行，陪审团通常毫不留情。

例如，在17世纪时，法国人沉浸在对女巫的仇恨之中，在南特地区有一个不知道姓名的女人，可能是一名女巫，此人在晚祷告的时候走进了一个名叫约翰的人的家中。

就在约翰以手画十字时，这个女人对他大加咒骂。当时晚祷还在进行中，约翰奋起反击，仿佛从魔鬼那里得到了力量，用一根木棒猛击女巫，直到她倒地死亡。

此后，经全部由神职人员组成的陪审团商议，这个女人的尸体被掩埋了，而约翰却因为受到刺激患上了精神病。后来，约翰恢复神智，他记起了这件事情，因为害怕受到惩罚，他逃离了他所属的教区。但陪审团却并不认为他犯有杀人罪，所以他们最终做出判决：

只要约翰愿意，他可以随时回来。不过考虑到他私自逃跑的行为，表现出对陪审团正义性的不信任，他的财产要予以没收，他的总资产为：半个法郎。

再举个例子，法国有名的强盗首领艾默尔·泰特努埃尔。在查理六世统治时期，此人极为活跃，手下有四五百人，在利木森和奥维根地区拥有两座坚固的城堡。

他周围的地区，是许多贵族的领地，他经常靠侵犯这些贵族获得收入，却从来不抢劫贫民。此人曾涉险从监狱逃脱，当时他被囚禁在监狱三楼的牢房中，身上戴着铁镣铐，但他还是巧妙地避开了看守逃到楼下，然后带着镣铐游过了河。游到河中心时，他被发现了，但他仍然游到了对岸并成功脱逃。

几年后，他再次被捉拿归案，并被判处了死刑。尽管几乎全体法国人都同情他的命运，尤其是妇女们，恨不得亲自上阵将这位充满传奇色彩的英雄从屠刀下拯救出来，然而陪审团却对此无动于衷。因为他们几乎都是贵族，对于可能侵犯到自己的罪犯，他们是绝难产生一丝一缕怜悯的。

毫无疑问，这样的罪行对社会也是最危险的，陪审团决意严惩此类罪犯，还是有一定的道理的。但是对于一些因为感情原因而违法的案件，陪审团却往往十分优柔寡断。

对于未婚母亲杀害自己的婴儿，或者用泼硫酸的手段来对付那些始乱终弃的男人的妇女，他们很少表现得十分严厉。因为他们本能地感觉到，即使有了这样的犯罪，也不会影响社会的正常运转。更重要的是，这种犯罪对他们没有多大威胁，而且在一个被抛弃的姑娘不受法律保护的国家里，她为自己复仇，非但没有害处，反而大有裨益，因为这可以事先吓阻那些潜在的诱奸者。

#### 4. 陪审团最怜悯的人

关于陪审团究竟会对什么样的罪犯产生怜悯之情，历史上著名的弗朗索瓦·布瑞威利斯夫人的故事，可以为我们提供一个绝好例子。

这个女人的出身、婚姻都与法国的贵族有关。她先是嫁给了布瑞威利斯伯爵，两人共同生活了多年，但是生活并不幸福。这位侯爵是个荒淫无耻的人，正是他将同样荒淫的拉·齐斯介绍给自己的妻子，在精神和行为上都陷入了罪恶的深渊。

几年后，拉·齐斯另结新欢，于是便将布瑞威利斯夫人抛弃了。这使得布瑞威利斯夫人非常愤怒，产生了杀人的念头。她偷偷学会了配置毒药，为了测试毒药的效力，她常常用狗、兔子、鸽子做试验。为了进一步了解药力在人身上的反应，她经常访问医院，假装成慈善人士，带给那些可怜的病人一些肉汤，汤里面混杂着毒药。由于她配置的毒药不会立即致人死命，所以她可以放心地把它用于某一个病人身上，不必担心背上谋杀的罪名。在和家人共同进餐时，她又在客人身上继续这一阴险的试验，在客人们的菜肴里下毒。为了更加准确地了解毒药的效果，她甚至还拿自己做了一次试验。

在试验成功之后，布瑞威利斯夫人开始对自己的情人下手。她在拉·齐斯的巧克力里下了第一剂毒药，效果很是显著，这位荒淫的情人很快就病倒了，而夫人则在床前殷勤侍候，看上去无比关切和焦虑。第二天，她端来了一碗肉汤，汤里又含有剧毒，通过这种方式，拉·齐斯体力逐渐耗尽，不到十天就送了性命。

在这之后，为了报复丈夫为她介绍了这样一个错误的情人，以及出于贪图遗产的心理，布瑞威利斯夫人又将毒药下在了她丈夫的饭食里，不到六个星期，布瑞威利斯侯爵也被送上

了西天。

像这样一个罪恶滔天的女人，却得到了大多数人的怜悯。许多人帮她寻找住所，隐瞒身份，她最终在一座修道院内被发现。负责抓捕的总督多次与修道院院长交涉，要求把她交出来，但是毫无结果。那个修道院长得到了地区大主教的支持，坚决拒绝交人。

总督的忍耐已经到了极限，在他看来，一个如此凶狠残暴的罪犯，是不该受到教会保护的。于是他打破了教会的特权，派一队士兵破墙进入修道院，抓走了布瑞威利斯夫人。

然而，在随后的审讯中，陪审团却并不认同总督的看法。在他们看来，布瑞威利斯夫人之所以会成为投毒犯，全是因为她荒淫的丈夫，而那个情人拉·齐斯先生也是罪有应得。政府为了平息总督冲进修道院而引起的教徒的怒气，也为了将这个罪犯绳之以法，不得不对外散布消息说，布瑞威利斯夫人已经在全城的水井和泉水里下了毒。这样，这个女人才被获准绞死。

和任何群体一样，陪审团在很多时候也深受名望的影响。

尽管从表面上看，陪审团的成员囊括了形形色色的社会成员，甚至有来自社会底层的小人物，这种构成看上去虽然十分民主，但却无法掩盖陪审团在好恶态度上的贵族化。

比方说，一个拥有贵族头衔的罪犯，总是能得到陪审团的宽宥。

在18世纪初的法国，道贺纳伯爵是道贺纳亲王的弟弟，此人放肆而狂妄，是个有名的浪荡子弟。

一次，他和两个狐朋狗友计划抢劫一个非常富有的股票经

纪人，他们得到消息说，这个人总是随身携带着大量的现金和股票。于是道贺纳伯爵与他的两个朋友商定，由伯爵出面来约见此人，假装求购印度群岛公司的股票，并约定在一家酒吧见面。

见面之后，谈了没几分钟，道贺纳伯爵这几个恶棍就突然跳了起来，扑向那个经纪人，把他皮包里价值10万克朗的股票抢劫一空，并用短剑猛刺对方的胸口，直到把对方刺死。由于这起案件是在光天化日之下发生的，整个巴黎都因此笼罩在一种恐怖的气氛下。

像这样穷凶极恶的杀人罪犯，只要事实明确，在当时是要被判处车裂之刑的。然而在第二天开庭的时候，考虑到车裂有辱伯爵的贵族身份，会使罪犯的亲属蒙羞，因此陪审团决定只对道贺纳伯爵处以砍头的刑罚，就连摄政王也同意这个决定。直到在一位愤怒的权势人物的坚持下，法庭才不得不依据法律做出公正的处罚。

除了头衔之外，出身、家财万贯、名望或者某位著名律师的出面帮助，也能够起到非同凡响的效果。总之，一切不同寻常或是可以给被告增光的事情，都会让他的处境变得更为有利。

## 5. 掌控陪审团的秘诀

对于将要成为领袖的人，或者对于一名律师、一个即将登上法庭的人来说，我们将要说到的内容至关重要，因为它关系到你能否在与陪审团的较量中获胜，能否将陪审团掌控于股掌之中，能否利用陪审团来实现自己的意愿。

无论是这些人中的哪一种，想要做到对陪审团产生影响，秘诀就在于打动陪审团的感情。

正如对付一切群体一样，施加影响并不需要做很多的论证，只需要采用十分幼稚的推理方式，佐以坚定无比的断言就可以了。

一位因为在法庭上赢了官司而赫赫有名的英国律师，曾经就此总结出以下应当遵循的行为准则：

当一个人进行辩护的时候，只要留心观察陪审团，就会一直占据着有利的先机。一位好的律师，总是会依靠自己的眼光和经验，从陪审员的面容上领会每句话的效果，然后从中得出结论。

这套过程的步骤大概如下：

第一步是确认的过程，要确认哪些陪审员已经赞同他的说法，哪些还处在犹豫之中，哪些还对说法存在犹豫的态度。

确定陪审团是否赞同并不需要费很大的工夫，从他们的气色与姿态上就能够看出端倪。

第二步，找到了联盟者之后，就应当把注意力转向那些看起来还没有拿定主意的陪审团成员，努力搞清楚他们究竟为什么反对，为什么敌视被告。

这是律师工作中十分微妙的一部分。因为指控一个人，除了因为正义感外，还可以有许多其他的理由，找到这些额外的理由，就是律师辩护术的全部奥妙。

因此，我们就可以理解，为什么事先准备好的演说，效果总是很差，这是因为必须要随时根据印象来改变措辞。

和所有团体一样，在陪审团里也存在着少数对别人有支配作用的人物。根据一位著名律师的经验，往往一两个有势力的

人就足以让陪审团的人跟着他走。

也就是说，想要操控陪审团，辩护人并不需要让陪审团里的每一个人都接受他的观点，他只需要争取那些左右着普遍观点的灵魂人物就足够了，而这就需要用巧妙的暗示，来取得那两三个人的信任。

在这个过程中，最简便也最实用的诀窍就是，取悦那一两个关键人物。

只要成功地博得了群体中灵魂人物的欢心，使他处在一个即将被说服的时刻，一个思想上的临界状态，这时无论向他提出什么样的证据，他都很可能认为十分令人信服。

拉肖先生是著名的大律师，下面这则关于他的有趣小故事，就为我们提供了这方面的良好例子。

根据传说，拉肖在法庭审判时的一切演说中，无时无刻不把眼睛盯在那么两三个人身上，而他们就是那些拉肖感到很有影响而又十分固执的陪审团成员。

通常来说，拉肖先生总是会把这些不易驯服的陪审员争取过来。不过有一次，拉肖先生遇到了一点儿意外。

这次，拉肖先生是在外省替客户辩论，他不得不对付一位固执的陪审员，此人是第七陪审员，坐在第二排的第一个位置上。拉肖先生花了大半个小时，采用了最狡猾的辩论技巧，最精彩激昂的演讲方式，此人却仍然不为所动。

局面僵持不下，十分令人沮丧。突然，在激昂的辩论过程中，拉肖先生停顿了片刻，然后转向法官说：“阁下，您是否可以下命令，命令把前面的窗帘放下来？尊敬的第七陪审员已经被阳光晒得头昏脑涨了。”



那个陪审员顿时脸红起来，他微笑着向拉肖先生表达了自己的谢意。随后，他就被成功地争取到拉肖先生的一边来了。

## 6. 陪审团的人道色彩

尽管陪审团制度存在着许多问题，但是我们必须要说，这项制度必须保留下去。

许多作家和学者，甚至包括一些最出众的作家，在最近开展了一场反对陪审团制度的宏大运动，这实在是相当荒谬的见解。

面对一个不受控制的团体犯下的错误，面对革命者所建立的严酷法律，这种制度是保护我们免受其害的唯一办法。

有的学者认为，应当只从受过教育的阶层招募陪审员，然而我们在前面已经证明了，即使在这种情况下，陪审团的判决也不会和现在有什么区别。还有一些学者拿陪审团的错误来做例子，希望将陪审团废除，然后彻底用法官取而代之。

这些观点实在是令人费解。这些改革家对此过于一厢情愿，他们一定是忘记了一点，那些被指责为陪审团所犯下的错误，首先是法官犯下的错误，而且当一名被告被带到陪审团面前的时候，那些地方官员、督察官、公诉人和初审法庭已经认定他有罪了。

由此可以看出，如果对被告做出判决的是地方官员，而不是陪审团，那么他将失去找回清白的唯一机会。根据统计结果来看，陪审团的错误，历来首先是地方官员的错误。因此，当出现了特别严重的司法错误的时候，首先应当受到谴责的其实是地方官。

比如，最近对一位医生的指控，就很好地说明了这一问

题。有一位半痴呆的女孩向督察官揭发，指控医生为了30个法郎，非法地为她做手术。这个愚蠢透顶的督察官便根据这个而对医生提起了诉讼。

如果不是因为这件事惹恼了公众，使得最高法院院长亲自出面还医生清白，他是一定会身陷囹圄的。被指控的医生有着良好的名声，得到了自己同胞的广泛声援，才使得这一错案的野蛮性昭然若揭。

在这桩案件中，那些地方官自己也承认犯了错误，但是出于身份的考虑，他们不愿意面对这一点，甚至还极力阻挠最高法院院长签署赦免令。

在所有类似的事情上，陪审团在遇到自己无法理解的技术细节时，自然会倾听公诉人的意见，因为他们认为，那些在搞清楚最复杂的事态上训练有素的官员，已经对事件进行了调查。

这样一来，我们就应该看清，究竟谁才是错误的真正制造者？是陪审团还是地方官员？答案显然是清楚的，只有糊涂的地方官员，才会导致冤案错案的一再出现。

正因为如此，我们才应当大力维护陪审团，因为它是唯一不能由任何个人取代的群体类型。也只有它能够缓解法律的严酷性，将人性关怀的光辉带进法庭。

我们知道，我们的法律是由暴乱者在非常状态下制定的，又在暴君拿破仑的手里得到了正式的确认。这样的法律的确做到了对任何人都一视同仁，然而却也有它的致命缺点，那就是从原则上说既不考虑也不承认特殊情况，绝不会对谁网开一面。

从法官的角度讲，他是法律的执行者，因此他的职责就是

让法律得到最大限度的执行，他是绝对冷漠无情的，除了法律条文，绝不会理会任何事情。

出于职业上的严肃性，在法官看来，黑夜中杀人越货的强盗，和那些因为贫困、因为受到诱奸者的抛弃而杀害婴儿的可怜姑娘是一丘之貉，也就会对他们施以同样的刑罚。而陪审团则会本能地感觉到，与逃避法网的诱奸者相比，被诱奸的姑娘罪过要小得多，也就理应对她宽大为怀。

从这里我们可以看出，只要对陪审团这个群体的特性善加利用，是足以让它起到好的作用的。

在了解了身份团体的心理，也了解了其他群体的心理之后，对于一个受到错误指控的案件，我们就知道应该如何处理了。一条应当遵守的原则是，尽量去找陪审团，而不应当去和地方官打交道。

从前者那里，我们还有些找回清白的机会，让后者认错的机会却是微乎其微。群体的权力固然令人生畏，然而有些身份团体的权力，则更加让人害怕。

## 第四章 选民群体

### 1. 选民群体的特征

有权选出某人担任职务的群体，就叫选民群体。

选民群体的成员可以有着各种特点、各种职业、各种智力水平，因此说，它是一个典型的异质性群体。

尽管如此，但是由于他们的行为，仅限于一件规定得十分

明确的事情，那就是在不同的候选人中做出选择，因此，他们只具有前面说到的少数特征。

在群体所有的特征中，选民群体往往表现出极匮乏的推理能力。

同样，他们也没有批判精神，容易轻信，容易发怒，而且头脑极度简单。

此外，从选民群体的决定中，我们还可以发现群众领袖的影响，也能看到前面所说的那些因素和手段，比如断言、重复以及传染的作用。

毫无疑问的是，在那些群众领袖登上政治舞台的过程中，这些特征都一一地发挥了作用。

假如选民团体有着足够的推理能力，就绝不会在1848年选举的时候做出如此愚蠢的行为。

一个名叫路易·拿破仑·波拿巴的人，在这次选举中得到了总票数700万张中的550万张，超过了其他几位候选人得票的总和。

而令人费解的是，在他当选之前，没有人了解他，他也不过是一个名不见经传的小政客而已。恰好遇到全国大选，就报名碰碰运气，结果却令他本人惊讶万分，他得票率之高，仿佛是全体法国民众在齐声呼唤他一样。

说到底，这些所谓的选民们，根本不知道自己到底选出来一个什么样的人。他们只是看到这个名字，联想到波旁王朝统治者的仁慈，又想到了拿破仑曾带来的荣耀，于是就齐刷刷地做出了这样的决定。

假如选民群体存在一点儿批判精神，就绝不会将巴贝夫的公社理论奉若神明，那些将私人财产收归国有、在城市中开荒种地的想法经不起丝毫的推敲，却得到了大多数人的响应。

同样地，没有选民团体的轻信，罗伯斯庇尔绝对无法用他所谓的“民主”一呼百应；没有选民团体的易怒，也就不会有圣巴托洛繆、九月惨案、拉雪兹公墓等地的血腥罪行。

所有这些，都证明了我们的论断。看起来，这样的情况并不会随着时代的进步而稍稍减少，因为只要选民团体的性质不变，它就永远具有异质性群体的一切特征。

## 2. 如何在选举中取得成功

现在，就让我们来看一下，究竟要如何说服选民群体，在选举中取得成功。关于这一点，我们有不少得到验证的套路，从中我们也可以很容易地发现他们的原理。

第一点，由于名望对群体有着巨大的支配力，它超越了一切其他的因素。因此，候选人一定要享有名望，或者尽量去博取它。

能够取代个人名望的因素只有财富，除此之外，学识、才干，甚至天才，都不是非常重要的成功因素。

我们可以看到，在相同的条件下，一位名人在竞选中胜出的概率，要大大高于一个默默无闻的普通人，其原因就在于名望的作用。在选民群体看来，把票投给一个他们熟知的名人，要比随便投给一个陌生人更可靠，哪怕这个名人是个彻头彻尾的恶棍，选民群体也会觉得他们起码对他的缺点有所了解。

第二点同样重要，那就是享有名望的候选人，必须能够迫使选民不经过讨论就接受自己。

由于大部分选民都是些工人或者农民，因此他们很少会选出自己的同行来代表自己，其原因就在于他们蔑视和自己一样的人，这种人在他们中间也没有名望。

也许有人会有疑问：许多人不正是从社会基层中脱颖而出吗？前一天他们不是还在工厂里拧螺丝帽，在田间播撒粪肥吗？像这样的人又是如何被选民推举出来的呢？

不错，这样的例子的确存在，不过这并不足以推翻我们的论断。

当选民偶然选出一个和自己相同的人时，一般来说都是由一些次要原因。比如，他们为了向某个大人物或有权势的雇主泄愤，而这些人往往是选民依靠的对象，当选民对他们不满时，就会用这样赌气的方式来发泄。或者仅仅是想要通过这种方式，满足自己做一次主人的幻觉。

第三点，一位候选人如果想保证自己取得成功，那么只有名望是不够的。选民同样具备群体爱走极端的特点，因此就要尽量在他们面前表现出这一点来。

候选人必须用最离谱的哄骗手段，才能够征服选民，同时还要毫不犹豫地向他们做出最令人异想天开的承诺。

打个比方，如果选民是工人，那就尽量侮辱和中伤他们的雇主，这样的行为再多也不过分。

对于竞选的对手，必须利用断言法、重复法和传染法，竭力让人确信他是个十足的无赖，他恶行不断是尽人皆知的事实，如果把票投给了他，就意味着一场大灾难将要降临。

美国作家马克·吐温在他的作品《竞选州长》中曾记载过，当他决意要竞选州长时，只在几个星期之内，他的名声就

从一个老实人变成了通奸者、溺婴犯、酒鬼、无赖、骗子和小偷。这样的描写虽然存在夸大其词的文学成分，却也能说明一个候选人应该怎样对付他的对手。

第四点，假如你的对手正在诋毁你，那么就必须记住，为任何表面证据费心都是没有用的。假如一个人对群众心理缺乏了解，那么他就会用各种论证来为自己辩护，而不是用斩钉截铁的断言来否认那些传闻。这样一来，他也就没有任何获胜的机会了。

第五点，一个候选人千万不可以把写成文字的纲领处理得过于绝对，一定要为自己留下一定的余地，否则你的对手将来就会用它对付你。当纲领成为白纸黑字之后，就是板上钉钉的证据，容不得否认与抵赖。

不过，如果你只是在口头叙述中阐述你的纲领，那么再夸夸其谈也不算过分。你可以面无惧色地向听众承诺最重要的改革，也可以大言不惭地向听众宣讲美好的未来。

我们要知道，群体欢迎极端夸张的东西，说出这些偏激的话，能够在群众中产生巨大的效果，但是在实际的政治领域，它们对未来根本不存在约束力。

因为事情总是会变化的，任何改革都需要不断地观察，而选民既没有精力，也没有机会来看到这些事，他们甚至绝对不想为这事操心，他们也并不想知道，自己支持的候选人在实施它的竞选纲领上走了多远，改革究竟进行到了什么程度，尽管选民以为正是这个纲领才让他的选择有了保证。

### 3. 用言语控制选民

在以上提到的事例中，能够看到我们前面讨论过的所有说服的因素。这样一来，口号、词语和套话自然也就包含其中

了。

在前面的章节中，我们已经谈到过这些东西神奇的控制力，群体会为它们如痴如狂，在下面的研究中，我们还会看到它们所发挥的作用。

一个明白如何利用这些说服手段的演说家，都会对这些东西大加利用，因为他能够用刀剑和杀戮成就的事情，用这种方法照样可以办到。

比如说，像不义之财、卑鄙的剥削者、可敬的劳工、财富的社会化之类的说法，永远会产生同样的效果，尽管它们已经被用得有些陈腐。此外，如果候选人满嘴新词，其含义又极其贫乏，因而能够迎合极不相同的各种愿望，他也必能大获全胜。

1873年的时候，在西班牙发生的那场血腥的革命，就是由这种含义复杂、因而每个人都可以自己做出解释的奇妙说法引起的。在史料中，我们可以找到许多关于这件事的记载：

最初的时候，暴动者推翻了当时国王的统治，成立了一个临时政府。然而随着时间流逝，激进派却发现集权制的共和国，其实就是乔装打扮的君主国，于是为了迁就他们，议会全体一致地宣告建立一个“联邦共和国”。

虽然投票者中谁也解释不清楚自己投票赞成的是什么，然而这个说法却让人皆大欢喜。人们无比高兴并陶醉其中，好像一个充满美德与幸福的王国就要在地球上揭幕。共和主义者如果被对手拒绝授予联邦主义者称号，就会认为自己受到了致命的侮辱。

人们在大街上奔走相告，以这样的话互相问候：“联邦共和国万岁！”然后便响起一片赞美之声。当时的军队已经涣散



到了极点，没有一点儿纪律可言，士兵们借着士兵自治的名义，拒不服从军官的指挥，然而人们却对这一点大唱赞歌，仿佛军队成为了一盘散沙，就意味着民主时代的来临。

那么，人们对这个“联邦共和国”是如何理解的呢？

有些人认为它是指各省的解放，是和美国的行政分权制相似的制度。

有些人认为它是一个伟大的国度，就像国土横跨世界的英联邦一样。

还有些人认为它意味着消灭了一切权力，从而需要迅速着手于伟大的社会变革。

比方说，巴塞罗那和安达路西亚的社会主义者受巴黎公社的影响，赞成公社权力至上，他们建议在西班牙设立一万个独立的自治区，根据它们自己的要求制定法律，在建立这些自治区的同时禁止警察和军队的存在。

在南方沿海各省份，叛乱很快便开始从一座城市向另一座城市、从一个村庄向另一个村庄蔓延。有个发表了宣言的村庄，它所做的第一件事情就是立刻破坏了电报线和铁路，以便切断与相邻地区和马德里的一切关系。

处境最可怜的村庄注定只能寄人篱下。联邦制给各立门户大开方便之门，到处都在杀人放火，人们无恶不作。整个西班牙的大地上，充斥着血腥的狂欢。

这个例子仅仅是这方面千万件例子中的一个。从中我们可以看到，一个小小的名词竟然能让整个西班牙民族陷入癫狂，可见，言语对群体的影响之大。正因为这个原因，任何想要对群体施加影响，或是想要操控选民群体的人，都不要轻易放弃

这一有效的手段。

#### 4. 选民群体拒绝理性

毫无疑问，在选民群体中不存在任何理性，他们也绝不愿意接受任何理性的影响。

在报纸的宣传中，选民集会常常被描写成一场在公平气氛下举行，充满睿智的辩论会，其实真实的情况远不是这样。

在这种集会上，演讲者往往言之凿凿，咬牙切齿地痛骂对手，甚至拳脚相加，但绝对听不到论证。即使有片刻安静的时候，也是因为有个享有“粗汉”名声的人在场，宣称自己要用一些让听众开心的麻烦问题难倒候选人。然而反对派的满足是短命的，因为提问者的声音很快就会被对手的叫喊声压倒。

在一些史料中选出来的有关公众集会的记载，可以作为这方面的典型例证：

在法国南特地区一次选民的公众集会中，会议的组织者之一请大会选出一名主席，骚乱立刻席卷全场。无政府主义者跳上讲台，粗暴地占领会议桌；社会主义者极力反抗；保皇党大声叫骂。人们相互扭打，每一派都指责对方是拿了政府佣金的奸细，无数人因此受伤。事后，警察和民兵在会场收集的钱包、胸针、义齿、假发等小零碎，整整装满了两个大筐。

在一片喧嚣声中，会议只好拖延了很长时间，原定中午结束的集会，到了下午还在进行。

当说话的权利被转移给X同志的时候，这位演讲人开始猛烈地抨击社会主义者，台下的人则开始用“白痴、无赖、流氓”等等的叫骂声来打断他。X同志则针对这些脏话做出了反应，他很快就编造出来一套理论，根据这种理论，社会主义者

都是一些“白痴”或者“可笑之人”。

我们可以看到，在这样的集会中根本不存在任何的理性，参与者要么用恶毒的语言互相攻讦，要么干脆拳脚相向。在这样的气氛中，辩论和冷静的探讨是绝无可能的。

也许有人会说，这种集会的成员囊括了各种政治派别，他们存在着观念上的分歧，有不同的利益，自然不可能体现出理性的光辉。其实，即使在有着共同利益的集会中，也很难保证冷静与理性。

在第二国际的一次会议中，为给五一节工人庆祝会做准备，各个国家的代表团开始坐在一起讨论。为了防止争吵，会议的口号被设定为“沉着冷静”。

然而讨论很快就变为激烈的争吵，因为有一位G同志在发言中暗指社会主义者是“白痴”和“骗子”。所有这些恶言恶语最终变成了互相攻讦，演讲者和听众分成两派，争吵到最后又变成了武斗，两派大打出手，椅子、桌子、板凳全都变成了武器，就连大会主席最后都加入了战团。

我们千万不要以为，这些事情只发生在固执的选民群体中，也不要认为这取决于他们的社会地位。在不管是什么样的无名称的集会中，即使参与者全是受过高等教育的人，会上的争论也没什么两样，在下一节我们还会谈到这个问题。

## 5. 选民是被操纵的群体

在前面的研究中我们已经说过，当人们聚集成一个群体时，一种降低他们智力水平的机制就会发生作用。

我们可以在很多场合找到这方面的证明，比如1895年2月13日的《财报》上就记载了一次学术集会的场景。

那个晚上，随着时间的流逝，喧嚣声有增无减，没有哪个演讲者能够说上两句话而不被人打断的。每时每刻都有人在这个角落或那个角落大叫大嚷，或者一起齐声叫喊。

一个演讲者在得到掌声的同时，他也一定会得到嘘声。听众中的个别成员也在不断地互相激烈争吵。一些人可怕地挥舞着木棒，另一些人不停地击打地板。那些打断演说的人，总是会引来一片呼喊：“把他轰下去！”或是：“让他说！”

一位名叫C先生的学者，在获得了讲话的权利之后，一张嘴就是白痴、懦夫、恶棍、卑鄙无耻、唯利是图、打击报复之类的用语。他挥舞着双手，信誓旦旦地宣称，要把这些东西统统消灭。

我们可以看到，参加集会的成员不是学者就是教师以及为数不少的高校学生。这些人显然都是受过高等教育的，但在这方面，他们却和街头的流氓一样表现得毫无教养。

也许有人会问，处在这种环境里的选民怎么能够形成一致意见呢？

我们的回答是，选民群体可以说他们持有意见，但是绝对不能夸口说这个意见是自己提出来的，也绝不能夸口说这个意见合乎理性。

因为实际的情况是，选民的意见和选票，通常是操纵在选举委员会的手里的，而它的领袖人物，通常都是著名的政客，他们向工人许诺好处，在这些人中间很有影响，因此也就可以将他们的意愿夹杂在许诺之间，一股脑儿地塞给选民群体。

正如今日最勇敢的民主斗士之一的谢乐先生所言：“你可知道什么是选举委员会？它不多不少，是我们各项制度的基石，是政治机器的一件杰作。今日法国就是受着长期选举委员

会的统治。”

选举委员会的威力之大，以及它对选民群体控制程度之高，操纵手段之熟练，都是我们绝难想象的事情。曾经有一位选举委员会成员放出狂言，声称只要候选人能够被群体所接受，并拥有一定的财源，解决选民群体的问题并不困难。

在他看来，只要300万法郎，就能让犯有叛国罪的布朗热将军重新当选；即使是拿破仑，也没问题，只要他能够重新活过来，并且拿得出5000万法郎就可以了。

通过上面的研究，我们终于对选民群体的心理有了较为透彻的了解，可以说，它包含了群体的一切特性，和其他那些群体相比，它既不更好也不更差。

## 6. 不可动摇的普选制度（上）

我们看到了选民群体的弱点，也就知道了法国普选制度的荒唐之处，可以得出的结论是，该项制度和古罗马的元老院毫无区别，甚至更像雅典城的所谓共和，是由少数人主导，操纵大批民众的制度。

然而话虽这样说，我们却必须要将普选制度保留下来，尽管我们知道它的机制如何，但出于一些实际的原因，我们实在没有办法将它一笔抹杀。

事实上，我们是通过对群体心理的调查归纳出了这些原因，基于这些考虑，我要对它们做进一步的阐述。

毫无疑问，普选制度的弱点十分突出，因此我们很难对其视而不见。但是我们无法否认一桩事实，那就是社会一定是要由少数人操纵的。

我们的文明，乃是少数智力超常的人的产物，这些人构成了金字塔的顶点。随着这座金字塔各个层次的加宽，智力也相应地减小，而这座金字塔的底座，就是一个民族中的广大群众。

一种文明的繁荣与进步，如果仅仅依靠以人多势众自夸的低劣成员的选票，是绝对无法让人放心的，一个国家的稳定与发展，必须要由少数社会精英阶层来掌舵。

从历史事实来看，群众投下的选票往往十分危险。它们已经让我们付出了若干次遭受侵略的代价。今天，我们眼睁睁地看着群体蜂拥聚集在社会主义者的旗号下，眼看着群体正在为其铺设道路的社会主义就要大获全胜。倘若让这种异想天开的人民主权论占领我们的政府，十有八九会让我们付出更惨重的代价。

正因为如此，我们与其任由民众将国家航船开往危险的深渊，反而不如听任几个政客掌控他们，至少在接受正确观念的难易程度方面，影响几个人要比影响群众简单得多。

从另外一个方面来说，普选观念已经深深地根植于法国民众的心中，一个多世纪以来，他们一直在为争取这项权利而血洒大地，要想将这项权利夺走，或是仅仅做一个名称上的改变，都势必遭到民众的迎头痛击。

我们只要记得，观念变成教条后有着不可征服的力量，我们就会承认这一点。

从纯粹的学术角度看，群体权力至上的教条就像中世纪的宗教教条一样不堪一驳，但是如今它却拥有和昔日宗教教条一样强大的绝对权力，因此，它就像过去我们的宗教观念一样不可战胜。

我们不妨想象一下，假设有个现代的自由思想家，因为时空穿梭而被送回到中世纪。难道你会认为，当他发现盛行于当时的宗教观念有着至高无上的权力后，会对它们进行攻击吗？

假如这个思想家落入了一个能够把他送上火刑柱的法官之手，指控他与魔鬼有约或者参加了女巫的宴会，他还会对存在魔鬼或女巫的说法提出质疑吗？

假如他坚持自己的自由思想，他还有活命的机会吗？

正如这个思想家的命运一样，我们如果要用讨论的方式试图动摇普选制度，那就比群众的信念高明不了多少。而普选制度所受到的推崇，它所具有的威力，和过去的宗教几乎是一样的。

今天，那些演说家和作家在提到普选、民主这一类词语时，所表现出来的恭敬与媚态，甚至就连烜赫一时的路易十四也无缘享受。

因此，我们并不需要急于动摇这项制度，也暂时无法动摇其分毫，对于它，我们必须采取和对待宗教教条一样的立场，除了时间之外，谁也没有办法对它产生影响。

## 7. 不可动摇的普选制度（下）

除了以上我们说到的，还有一个因素，使得破坏普选制度教条的努力，变得更加苍白无力——普选制度具备一种对自己有利的外表。

在我们今天这个号召人人平等的时代，人们其实并不相信他们之间全都是一样的说法。

民众总是认为自己的身边生活着一群傻瓜，这就使得他倾

向于在更广泛的范围内寻找志同道合者，寻找支撑自己观点的意见。于是，每个人都开始毫无节制地信赖公众的判断力，似乎人数越多，里面就会囊括更多的聪明人，似乎真理总是与人数上的优势携手同行。

正因为如此，当我们尝试着要废除普选制度时，一定会遭到最猛烈的反击，每个人都会认为，这种做法破坏了产生真理的道路，仿佛将智慧之泉的泉眼堵死一样可恶。

有人认为，只要对普选制度加以改革，对民众的选举权加以限制，必要的话，可以直接把这种权利限制在聪明人中间，这样就可以解决掉一切问题。

这样做真的会改良群众投票的结果吗？

我们必须要说，这种情况永远也不会出现。无论那些聪明人的睿智程度如何，也无论他们的人数少到什么程度，局面都无法得到改观。

我们知道，只要人凑在一起，形成了一个群体，那么不论它成员多寡，不论其成员素质如何，都统统患上智力低下症。只要身处一个群体中，人们总是倾向于变得智力平平。

在一个一般性的问题上，四十名科学院院士的投票，绝不会比四十个卖水人所投的票更高明，因为对所有的群体来说，它们的智力水平是一样的低。

如果按照那种流行的说法，只让有教养的和受过教育的人成为选民，那么最终的投票结果可能只会变得更糟。

人的智力来源是个神奇的东西，对社会问题的清醒认识也不可能人人具备，一个人绝对不会因为通晓希腊语或数学，因为是个建筑师、兽医、医生或大律师，就掌握了特殊的智力或



社会问题。

比如说，我们的政治学家、经济学家，几乎全都是受过高等教育的，他们也大都是教授或学者，然而，这些人何曾就哪一个普遍性问题取得过一致的意见呢？贸易保护的问题讨论了几百年，完全看不出有得出结论的迹象。金本位制还是银本位制孰优孰劣的话题一被抛出，学者们就已经吵得不可开交，最后竟然用金银双本位制的办法相互妥协。

之所以会有这样的局面，原因就在于这些学者和专家对社会问题一无所知，他们所谓的学问，只不过是在我们普遍无知的基础上，加上了那么两三本专业著作。在社会问题上，由于未知的因素实在太多，很难覆盖到他们的专业领域，因此从本质上说，他们的学问，和民众的无知也没有什么两样。

正因为如此，完全由掌握各种学问的人组成的选民，他们的投票结果不会比现在的情况好多少。

时间一长，这些学者将仍然主要受自己的感情和党派精神的支配。对于那些我们现在必须对付的困难，他们还是一个也解决不了，甚至还会因为自己的身份而产生优越感，集合起来形成身份团体，在民众的头上加上一层新的暴政。

## 8. 民族精神的深层作用

说到底，废除还是保留普选制度，对于一个民族来说，并没什么要紧。

不论是限制群众的选举权，还是把选举权不加甄别地广播出去。

不论民众的选举权是在共和制下行使，还是在君主制下行使。

更不论是在法国，还是在德国，或者是在葡萄牙、西班牙、比利时，选举制度的效果都是一样的。

说一千道一万，民众的选举结果，所要表达的只不过是一个民族潜意识的向往与需要。

假如民众未曾呼唤一个统一而强大的法国，拿破仑即使具备再大的威力，也不可能在短短的时间内就成为法兰西民族的领袖。

假如民众未曾向往从宗教和贵族的羽翼下面解脱，被记入1789年史册的就将是几个匪徒的阴谋暴乱，而非一场旷日持久的大革命浪潮。

由于法兰西民族的性格特征，使得它的民众绝不可能忍受任何刺激，只要对他们稍加拨弄，他们就会陷入极端。罗伯斯庇尔也好，拿破仑也罢，甚至远到德国的俾斯麦、意大利的加富尔，他们所做的事情，也都是民众急切渴望的事情。

所以说，在任何一个国家，任何一个当选领袖的意见，都会反映这个民族的禀性，而我们看到，这种禀性从一代人到另一代人，世代地流传下去，从来都不会出现显著的变化。

在这里，我们再一次遇到了民族这个基本概念。在前面的研究中，我们也曾多次遇到它，现在我们一定已经有了最新的认识。那就是各种制度和政府对一个民族的生活来说，只能产生很小的影响，它主要受种族的禀性支配。换句话说，我们世代都要受着某些遗传品质的支配，而所谓的禀性，正是这些品质的总和。

因此，无论情况多么错综复杂，种族和我们日常所需这两架枷锁，才是决定着我们的命运的神秘主因。

## 第五章 议会

### 1. 没有明智的议会

同前面的群体不同，议会是我们研究的第一个有名称的异质性群体。不过，这种区别也仅限于名称而已。

尽管议会成员的选举方式随着时代的变迁而变化，各国间也有所不同，不过这些议会之间都有着十分相似的特征。在这种场合下，人们会感到种族的影响削弱了，因为各国的议会看上去都是一个样子，不过这并不妨碍他们的表现。

很多大不相同的国家，如希腊、意大利、葡萄牙、西班牙、法国和美国，它们的议会在辩论和投票上却表现出极大的相似性，均使各自的政府面对着同样的困难。

然而，议会制度却是一切现代文明民族的理想。这种制度是一种观念的反映，人们往往会认为，在某个问题上，一大群人要比一小撮人更有可能做出明智而独立的决定。一个五百人组成的议会，肯定要比十几个人组成的内阁要高明。

从我们的群众心理学角度分析，这种观念肯定是彻底错误的，但是至今为止，却得到了普遍的赞同。

我们必须下一个结论，在这个世界上，绝不存在一个明智的议会，除非这个议会只有一名议员。我们可以在议会中看到群体的普遍特征，比如头脑简单、情绪善变、容易受暗示、喜欢夸大感情以及少数领导人物的主导作用。

可以说，议会具备了群体的普遍特征，也就连带着会犯群体犯过的大部分错误。

不过，因为议会成员的特殊构成，使得它也会有一些独特的表现，下面，我们就来做一个简单的说明。

## 2. 议会的特征

议会最重要的一条特征，就是他们总是将意见简单化。

在所有的党派中，尤其是在拉丁民族的党派中，无一例外地存在着一种倾向。就是根据适用于一切情况的最简单的抽象原则和普遍规律来解决最复杂的社会问题。

换句话说，这些党派总是把问题想得过于简单，常常认为有一种方法能够包治百病。当然，每一个党派都有自己的原则，但是仅仅因为个人是群体的一部分这个事实，他们便总是倾向于夸大自己原则的价值，一定要把它贯彻到底不可。由此产生的结果是，议会更严重地代表着各种极端意见。

议会总是有着特别天真的想法，在这方面，法国大革命时期的雅各宾党人为此提供了一个最完美的典型。他们往往用教条和逻辑对人，头脑里充满各种含糊不清的普遍观念，喜欢忙不迭地贯彻死板的原则，却不去关心事实如何。

在谈到他们时，人们普遍会认为，他们经历了一场革命，但却并没有看清这场革命的实质。

在那些十分简单的教条的引导下，这些人以为自己能把这个社会从上到下重新改造一遍。结果适得其反，让一个高度精致的文明倒退回社会进化更早期的阶段。他们为实现自己的梦想采用的办法，与那些极端质朴的人有着同样的特点。

实际上，他们不过是把拦在他们道路上的一切统统毁掉。不管他们是吉伦特派、山岳派还是热月派，全都受着同样精神的激励。

### 3. 议而不决的议会

议会之所以叫作议会，很大程度上是因为它只会展开议论，却很难拿出一个决定。

事实上，这样的情况早在16世纪就已经存在。在负责选举教皇的红衣主教团中，总会爆发各种各样的争执，选举教皇的工作也因此被无限期地拖延。

后来，为了解决这个问题，红衣主教们隐没在一个封闭的住处。他们不允许离开，直到做出决定，甚至连窗户都被封了起来，只允许食物进入秘密会议室。

一段时间过去后，封闭的室内温度上升，闷热的气氛和需要换洗的衣服更有益于他们尽快争吵出一个结果。当议程变得更加深入时，食物的质量和数量被削减了，数十位与会的肥胖的红衣主教们穿着恶臭的红色袍服，食物降至每日一餐，与严格的修道院里的见习修士的饮食标准相差无几。即使在这样的情况下，主教们也要经过相当长一段时间的争吵。

之所以会出现这样的局面，是因为议会中的成员，总是会受到暗示的影响。

议会中的群体很容易受到暗示的影响，而且像所有群体一样，这种暗示均来自那些享有名望的领袖。不过议会群体这种容易受暗示的特点，又有着很明确的界限，指出这一点十分重要。

比如，在有关地方或地区的一切问题上，议会中的每个成员都持有牢固而无法改变的意见，任何论证都无法使其动摇。因为这些问题总是和有势力选民的利益有关，像贸易保护或酿酒业特权这类问题，即使一个人有着天才演说家的口才，也难以改变一位众议员的投票。

类似这样的问题，这些选民在投票期到来之前就会发出暗示，其力量足以压倒来自其他方面的一切反对建议，使意见的绝对稳定得到维护。

不过，这仅仅是议会的一个方面。每当涉及一般性问题，比如说推翻一届内阁、开征一种新税等等，议会就不再有任何固定的意见了。

尽管领袖的建议能够发挥影响，不过却与普通群体中的方式有所不同。因为每个政党都有自己的领袖，他们的势力有时旗鼓相当。

这种对峙的结果是，一个众议员有时发现自己被夹在两种对立的建议之间，因此难免迟疑不决。

这就解释了为什么我们经常会看到他在一刻钟内做出相反的表决，或为一项法案增加一条使其失效的条款，例如剥夺雇主选择和解雇工人的权利，然后又来上一条几乎废除这一措施的修正案。

出于同样的理由，在每届议会之中，都会有一些非常稳定的意见，也存在着一些十分易变的意见。大体上说，议会需要讨论的一般性问题数量更多，因此，在议会中议而不决的现象司空见惯。之所以议而不决，是因为领袖永远存在着对选民的担心，从他们那里收到的建议总是姗姗来迟，而这有可能制约领袖的影响力。

#### 4. 议会中领袖的影响力

尽管议会总是吵来吵去，看上去总是以乌合之众的形式存在，但我们还是无法忽视领袖的作用。

在无数次的辩论中，每当涉及一个问题，议员们又没有强

烈的先见之明时，处在主导地位的人依然是那些领袖。

在一些人看来，议会是体现民主精神的地方，是现代文明民族的理想，因此绝不应该存在领袖或者强势人物。然而我们要说，这种观点是完全错误的。

在议会，这些领袖的必要性是显而易见的，因为在每个国家的议会中，都可以看到他们以团体首领的名义存在着，他们是议会的真正统治者。根据我们的理论，群体绝没有远见，因此，组成群体的人没了领头羊便一事无成。

正因为如此，我们也可以说，议会中的表决通常只代表极少数人的意见。然而虽然是这样，议会还是与普通群体有着不同的地方，领袖的作用也远没有普通群体那么强大。

议会领袖的影响力程度总是很小，因为他们提出的论题，在很大程度上来自于他们的名望。对这一点最好的证明是，一旦他们不知道因为什么情况威信扫地时，他们的影响力也随之消失。

这些政治领袖的名望只属于他们个人的魅力，与头衔或名声无关。关于这个事实，我们有着非常具体的例子。

在1848年国民议会的大人物中，路易·拿破仑在两个月之前还无所不能，转瞬之间却变得无足轻重。

著名作家维克多·雨果也是议会成员，此人机智幽默，极富口才，人们听他讲话如同观看喜剧表演一样，但是他并不能博得多少掌声。议员们不喜欢他的那些想法，尽管他们承认他是法国最了不起的作家、最伟大的演说家，尽管他聪明过人、智力超凡，却丝毫不受人尊敬。在召开议会之前，他还有些名气，但是在议会里他籍籍无名。

对才华横溢者无动于衷的地方，莫过于政治集会。政治集会所留心的只是那些与时间地点相宜、有利于党派的滔滔辩才，人们不在乎它是否对国家有利。

如果一个人想享有1848年的拉马丁以及1871年的梯也尔得到的那种崇敬，那么就必须要有一切急迫且不可动摇的利益刺激才成。一旦危险消失，议会就会立刻忘记它的感激和受到的惊吓。

我们知道，群体一旦效忠于领袖，不管是党的领袖还是国家的领袖，它便立刻失去了自己的个性。服从领袖的群体是处在他的名望的影响之下，并且这种服从不受利益或感激之情的支配。

因此，享有足够名望的领袖几乎掌握着绝对权力。一位著名的众议员X先生在多年时间里因其名望而拥有巨大的影响力，在上次大选中由于某些金融问题而被击败，此事广为人知。然而他只消做个手势，内阁便倒台了。

这位X先生，我们要为他付出三倍于我们通常付出的代价。主要是因为，这个人让法国在马达加斯加的地位长期岌岌可危，又在南尼日尔被骗走了一个帝国，法国人甚至失去了在埃及的优势。X先生的谬论让法国丢失的领土，比拿破仑一世的灾难有过之而无不及。

然而对于这种领袖，我们却不必要过于苛责。不错，他使我们损失惨重，然而他的大部分影响力都是因为他顺应了民意，而这种民意在殖民地事务上，目前还远没有超越过去的水平。

从这里我们可以看出，领袖很少超前于民意，他所做的一切几乎总是在顺应民意，因此也会助长其中的所有错误。

## 5. 如何影响议会（上）



我们知道，一个人的名望是一种很奇妙的东西，它不仅体现在对群体的影响力方面。

它可能是与生俱来的，不用费力就能够得到，就像拿破仑一样，总是能用自身的名望去压制、去感染他人。当然，如果一个人不具备这样的名望，它也可能在后天得到它，只是这个过程可能极短，也可能长得遥遥无期。

正因为如此，当一位领袖试图对群体进行说服的时候，除了用到他们的名望外，还应当掌握一些我们多次提到过的因素。

领袖若想巧妙地利用这些手段，他必须做到对群体心理了然于胸，至少也要无意识地做到这一点。

他还必须知道如何对他们说话，要善于以激烈的排比句式、反问句式营造振聋发聩的效果。

他尤其应当了解各种词汇、套话和形象的神奇力量。他应当具备特殊的辩才，这其中包括信誓旦旦的断言、排除掉一切理性的思考，以及生动鲜明的形象，并伴之以十分笼统的论证。

这样的演说家在世界各国的议会中都可以看到，即使是英国议会也不例外，虽然它是所有议会中最严肃的一家。

我们在英国众议院的争吵中可以经常看到，整个辩论不过是些软弱无力的大话和盛怒个人之间的交锋罢了。

尽管这种形式可能让我们觉得很荒唐，但让群众接受用惊人之语表达出来的笼统的断言，从来就不是什么难事，即使它从未得到过证实，大概也不可能得到证实。

假如想要影响议会的成员，就要故作惊人之语，不管说得多么离谱也不算过分。在前面的研究中，我们多次谈到词语和套话的特殊力量。

因此，在措辞的选择上，必须以能够唤起生动的形象为准。下面这段话摘自我们一位议会领袖的演说，它为我们提供了一个极好的范例：

“这艘船的目的地，正是坐落着我们监狱的那片热病肆虐的土地，把名声可疑的政客和目无政府的杀人犯关在一起。这对难兄难弟可以促膝谈心，视彼此为一种社会状态中互助互利的两派！”

如此唤起的形象极为鲜活，演说者的所有对手都会觉得自己受着他的威胁。他们的脑海里浮现出两幅画面：一片热病肆虐的国土，一艘可以把他们送走的船。而他们只要表示反对，不是也有可能被放在那些定义不明确的可怕政客中间吗？

在这种演说中，议员们体验到的恐惧，与当年罗伯斯庇尔用断头台发出威胁的演说给国民公会的人的感觉是一样的。在恐惧的影响下，任何人都不会向他投降。

假如你身为一名领袖，并且想要对议会施加影响，那么你要记住，只要喋喋不休地说些最离谱的大话，就会对你产生莫大的帮助。

比如说，上面提到的那位政治领袖，当他在议会中大放厥词，以最离谱的断言来结束他的演讲时，基本上没有遇到强烈的抗议。

有一次，这位政治领袖断言道，所有那些到处扔炸弹的革命者，都是金融家和神父们资助的。因此，大金融公司的总裁、那些身家亿万资本所有者，都应当和无政府主义者一起

被绞死。就是这种耸人听闻的鬼话，竟得到了最热烈的响应与赞赏。

你务必要记住，这种断言永远会在人群中产生作用。再激烈的断言、再可怕的声明也不算过分。要想吓唬住听众，没有比这种辩术更有效的办法。而在场的人绝对不敢表示反对，因为他们担心，如果他们这样做，就会被当成叛徒或其同伙打倒。

## 6. 如何影响议会（下）

类似危言耸听、大言不惭、信誓旦旦这样特殊的辩论术，在所有的集会中都极为有效。特别是在危难时刻，它的作用就更加明显了。

从这个角度看，那些街垒演说家在法国大革命时期各种集会上的讲话，读起来都是十分成功也十分有趣的，而他们的流程也好像经过同一个学校培训过一样。

每一次演讲开始，这些演说家都以一副沉痛欲绝的面孔走上讲台，然后以缓慢而清晰的语句逐条地谴责罪恶，弘扬美德。紧接着，再对暴君破口大骂，最后发誓不自由毋宁死。于是在场的人都会站起来热烈鼓掌，等冷静下来后，演说家再回到自己的座位上。

有人也许会问，难道所有的领袖，都是这样的信口胡言之徒吗？

不过，偶尔也有智力过人、受过高等教育的领袖，但是具备这种品质通常对他不但无益，反而有害。如果他想说明事情有多么复杂，同意做出解释和促进理解，他的智力就会使他变得宽宏大量，这会大大削弱使徒们必需的信念的强度与粗暴。

在所有的时代，尤其是大革命时期，伟大的民众领袖其头脑之狭隘，令人瞠目；但影响力最大的，肯定也是头脑最褊狭的人。

我们可以看到，在这些演说家中，罗伯斯庇尔算是他们的佼佼者了，然而即使是他的演说，也经常有令人吃惊的自相矛盾之处。只看这些演说实在搞不明白，这个大权在握的独裁者何以有如此大的影响？

原因只有一个，那就是群体只需要这样的东西。

## 7. 议会的名望崇拜

可以说，所有成功的煽动者，其演说的内容都不过是一些教学法式的常识和废话、糊弄孩子头脑的稀松平常的拉丁文化，即使在攻击和辩护的时候，所采用的观点也不过是些小学生的歪理。

它们的演讲中没有思想，也没有令人愉快的措辞上的变化，更没有切中要害的讥讽，只有令我们生厌的疯狂断言。只要是稍微具备理性的人，在经历过这样一次毫无乐趣的阅读之后，总会不免长叹一声。

一个极端狭隘的头脑，再加上坚定不移的强烈信念，是一个人获得权力最基本的条件。一个人要想无视各种障碍，表现出极高的意志力，就必须满足这些最起码的条件。因为群体本能地在精力旺盛、信仰坚定的人中间寻找自己的主子，他们永远需要这样的人物。

然而，即使一个人具备了这两点因素，还是不能够保证他会取得成功。因为在议会中，一次演说要想取得成功，根本不取决于演说者提出的论证，而几乎完全依靠他所具有的名望。

这方面最好的证明是，如果一个演说者因为这样或那样的原因失去名望，他同时也就失去了一切影响，即他根据自己的意志影响表决的能力。

当一个籍籍无名的演说者拿着一篇论证充分的讲稿出场时，如果只有论证，他充其量也只是让人听听。在1890年的议会中，曾经有这样一位缺乏名望的众议员，他的一次演讲经历，就是这方面的最好例证。

这个众议员走上讲台后，从公文包里拿出一份讲稿，煞有介事地摆在自己面前，十分自信地开始发言。

他一而再再而三地吹捧自己的论证，对那些数字和证据信心十足，坚信自己能够说服听众，认为面对他所引用的证据，任何反对都没用。

于是他一厢情愿地开讲，相信其他议员们的眼力和判断力，认为他们理所当然地只会赞同真理。

然而当他一开口，就惊异地发现大厅里并不安静，窸窣窸窣的噪音从四面八方的角落里传出，这让他多少有些恼怒。

这个众议员一定在想：“这些人为何不能保持安静呢？为何这么不留意他的发言呢？对于我正在讲的话，那些众议员又在想些什么？有什么要紧的事情让这个或那个众议员离开了自己的座位呢？”

带着这样的想法，他的脸上掠过一丝不安。于是他皱着眉头停了下来，在议长的鼓励下，他又提高嗓门开始发言，他加重语气，做出各种手势，然而周围的噪声越来越大，以至于他连自己讲的话都听不见了。

于是他又停了下来，最后，因为担心自己的沉默会招来其

他议员的哄笑，他才又开始说了起来，然而只要他一开口，喧闹声就立即变得难以忍受。最后，这位议员不得不急急忙忙地结束了自己的演讲，仓皇狼狈地回到自己的座位上去。

从这个例子上我们可以看出，这位议员实在缺乏演讲方面的技巧，然而如果他拥有相当的名望，情形就会有极大的不同。

我们看到，当罗伯斯庇尔丧失了他的全部威信与名望后，他便不再有机会出来表现他的口才。议员们不等他吐出一个字，就怒吼着将他的声音淹没，而且不留任何机会让他提出指控。在大会主席的欣然同意下，一个又一个的演说者登上讲台。罗伯斯庇尔刚要为自己辩护，声音就被一阵阵的狂呼给压了下去。

600名受到压制的胆小议员，将几个星期、几个月里积累的一切怒火、一切委屈统统地集中起来，向这个人劈头盖脸地砸了过去，而在此之前的时间里，他们甚至一见这个人就浑身发抖。

几个小时之后，事情终于有了结果，罗伯斯庇尔被剥夺了法国公民权，并被投入了监狱。24小时后，这位昔日法兰西政坛上风头最劲的演说家，最有权势与名望的独裁者，已经被人打烂下巴，横躺在国民公会前厅的两条长凳上面，鲜血染透了他的衣服。

我们看到了名望的巨大作用，罗伯斯庇尔政治生涯的起伏就很好地说明了这一点。与这点联系在一起的，则是议会群体起起落落的情绪，关于这个问题，我们将在下面的研究中谈到它。

## 8. 游走在情感的两极

群体容易陷入极端情绪之中，这一点已经在前面的研究中得到了证实。现在我们要说的是，在绝大多数的时间里，议会也具备群体的该项特征。

当议会因为某种原因的刺激而变得极度兴奋时，它也会变得和普通的异质性群体没什么两样，这时它的感情就会表现出爱走极端的特点。

每当议会陷入极端情绪之中，我们就可以看到它或是做出最伟大的英雄主义举动，或是犯下最恶劣的过失。那些议员们，也将不再是他自己，他会完全失去自我，投票赞成最不符合他本人利益的措施。

从法国大革命的历史事件中我们可以看到，议会是怎样严重地丧失了自我意识的，又是怎样让那些与自己的利益截然对立的建议牵着鼻子走的。

比如说，贵族放弃自己不纳税、不当兵、可直接担任公职等方面的特权，无疑是个巨大的牺牲。但是在国民公会大会那个著名的夜晚，他们却毫不犹豫地这样做了。

又比如说，议会成员们放弃了自己人身不可侵犯的权利，便使自己永远处在死亡的威胁之下，而他们却迈出了这一步；这些议员们似乎并不害怕在自己的阶层中滥杀无辜，虽然他们很清楚，今天他们把自己的同伙送上断头台，明天就有可能他们自己。

之所以会出现这样的事情，是因为他们已经进入了一个完全不由自主的状态，任何想法都无法阻止他们赞成那些已经把他们冲昏了头脑的建议。

这种无意识状态的到来，往往是极突然的，议员们前一天还在极力谴责的东西，很可能第二天就被通过了。造成这种状

况的是他们的混沌头脑，再也没有其他的原因了。

我们可以看到，在所有情绪激昂的议会上，都会出现同样的无意识现象，其中尤其以大革命时期的革命党人最为严重。

这些革命党人组成的议会，批准并下令执行一些他们引以为荣的措施。而那些措施不只愚蠢透顶，简直就是犯罪。

他们杀害无辜，杀害他们的朋友。在右派的支持下，左派全体一致，在热烈的掌声中提议将丹东定性为人民公敌，于是这位革命党人的天然首领，这场革命的伟大发动者和领袖，就这样被送上了断头台。

在左派的支持下，右派又全部一致，在最响亮的掌声中表决通过了革命政府最恶劣的法令。议会全体一致，在一片热烈的赞扬声中，在对德布瓦、库车和罗伯斯庇尔等人热烈的赞扬声中，一再举行改选，使杀人成性的政府留在台上，让罗伯斯庇尔这样的刽子手主导法兰西民族的命运。

在牧月22日，整个议会通过决议，由刽子手来对议会进行“全面的清洗”。

在热月8日，在罗伯斯庇尔的最后一次发言结束后，议会又抛弃了他，将这位新时代的暴君送上了断头台。

这个画面看起来昏天黑地，但它却十分准确地描画了当时的历史场面。议会若是兴奋和头脑发昏到一定程度，就会表现出极端的特点。它会变成不稳定的流体，受制于一切刺激。

1848年，议会再一次向我们展示了它的极端多变性，一刻不停地从一种感情转向另一种截然相反的感情。

我们可以看到，在这一次次的动荡中，议会多次因为自己



的分裂、嫉妒和猜疑，也因为它的盲信和无节制的愿望而坠入地狱。

当议员们聚集在一起，议会的质朴、天真和它的普遍怀疑不相上下。与毫无法律意识、不知纪律为何物的表现相伴的，是放肆的恐怖和幻想。在这些方面，即使是乡下人和孩子也比他们强。

他们的冷酷和他们的缺乏耐心一样严重，他们的残暴与驯顺不相上下。这种状态是性格不成熟以及缺乏教养的自然结果。没有什么事情能让这种人吃惊，但任何事情都会让他们慌乱。出于恐惧或大无畏的英雄气概，他们既能赴汤蹈火，也会胆小如鼠。他们不管前因后果，不在乎事物之间的关系。他们忽而灰心丧气，忽而斗志昂扬。他们很容易受惊慌情绪的影响，不是过于紧张就是过于沮丧，从来不会处在环境所要求的心境或状态中。他们甚至比流水还易变，头脑混乱、行为无常。像这样的议会，我们又能指望他们提供什么样的政府基础呢？

幸运的是，上述这些在议会中看到的特点，并非经常出现。议会只是在某些时刻才会成为一个群体，在大多数情况下，组成议会的个人仍保持着自己的个性，这解释了议会为何能够制定出十分出色的法律。

其实，这些作者都是极富学识的专家，他们是在自己安静的书房里拟订草稿的。因此，表决通过的法律，其实是个人而不是集体的产物，于是这些法律当然就代表着最好、最健全的法律。只有当一系列修正案把它们变成集体努力的产物时，它们才有可能产生灾难性的后果。

群体的产品不管性质如何，与孤立的个人产品相比，总是品质低劣的。专家阻止着议会通过一些考虑不周全或行不通的

政策。因此，在这种情况下，专家是群体暂时的领袖，议会影响不到他，他却可以影响到议会。

## 9. 议会的两大险情（上）

现在我们就面临着一个重大的问题——既然我们了解到议会是如此地愚蠢，那么它是否还有存在的必要呢？

我们的答案是肯定的，议会必须存在，而且要永远地存在下去。

尽管议会的运作要面对所有这些困难，但它仍然是人类迄今为止发现的最佳统治方式，尤其是人类已经找到的摆脱个人专制的最佳方式。不管是对于哲学家、思想家、作家、艺术家还是有教养的人，一句话，对于所有构成文明主流的人，议会无疑是理想的统治。

不过，在现实中，我们的议会制度极有可能导致两大严重的危险，这都是拜群体的特性所赐。我们需要在这里将它们指出来。

第一大危险是不可避免的财政浪费。它是各种紧迫问题和当选群体缺少远见的必然产物。

假设有个议员提出一项显然符合民主理念的政策，比如，在议案中建议保证使所有的工人得到养老津贴，或建议为所有级别的国家雇员加薪，那么，会出现怎样的状况呢？

于是我们就会看到，其他众议员因为害怕失去自己的选民，就立即会成为这一提议的牺牲品，他们绝不敢无视后者的利益，反对提议中的政策。虽然他们清楚这是在为预算增加新的负担，必然造成新税种的设立。但他们不可能在投票时迟疑不决，因为增加开支的后果属于遥远的未来，不会给他们自己

带来不利的结果，如果投了反对票，当他们为连选连任露面时，其后果就会清楚地展现在他们面前。

除了第一个扩大开支的原因外，还有一个原因同样具有强制性，即必须投票赞成一切为了地方目的的补助金。一名众议员没办法反对这种补助，因为它们同样反映着选民的迫切需要，也因为每个众议员只有同意自己同僚的类似要求，才有条件为自己的选民争取到这种补助金。

## 10. 议会的两大险情（下）

议会将会导致的第二大危险，是对个人自由不断增加的限制。

这方面看起来不那么明显，但却是十分真实的。议会总是认为自己有义务表决通过，但是由于眼光短浅，它在很大程度上对结果茫然无知。

这种危险其实是不可避免的，因为即使在英国这个提供了最通行的议会体制、议员对其选民保持了最大独立性的国家，也没能逃脱这种危险。

我们必须指出一点：表面自由的增加必然伴随着真正自由的减少。

首先，每年都有大量的法律被制定出来，对一些过去公民行为完全自由的事务进行限制，强迫他做一些过去他可做可不做的事情。

同时，日益沉重的公共负担，尤其是地方公共负担，通过减少他可以自由支配的收益份额，增加公共权力，进一步限制了他的自由。

这种对个人自由日益增加的限制，在每个国家都存在着不同而具体的表现形式。正是这些大量的限制性法令的通过，才大大增加了负责实施它们的公务员的数量、权力和影响。

我们可以设想一下，每增加一条限制性法令，就需要增加一批公务员负责执行它，或是让那些从前的公务员权力更大。议会不断地增加限制法令，就意味着对公务员势力的不断培养。

沿着这个方向走下去，这些公务员就会成为一个新兴的贵族阶层，最终有可能成为文明国家的真正主人。

这样的前景殊为可怖，即使是一场革命，也很难动摇公务员的力量，因为在政府不断更换的过程中，只有他们不会受到这种变化的触动，只有他们不承担责任，也不需要个性，因此能够永久地存在，永远地保存着他们手中的权力。

当一个人既不需要承担责任，也不需要个性，还能保有永远的权力时，他和那些实施压迫性专制的皇帝，又有何区别呢？不幸的是，就目前的形势来看，我们的公务员阶层，正在成为这样的专制力量。

如果议会不断制定一些限制性法规，用最复杂的条条框框把最微不足道的生活行为包围起来，那么就意味着公民自由活动的空间越来越小，公民的自由越来越被压缩，整个国家又将重回旧日的死气沉沉之中。

在世界各国的政界与学界看来，保障自由、平等的最好办法就是多多地制定法律，因此它们每天都在批准进行一些越来越让人难以忍受的束缚。

它们已经习惯于给人上套，很快便会达到需要奴才的地步，失去一切自发精神与活力。那时他们不过是些虚幻的人

影，消极、顺从、有气无力的行尸走肉。

如果到了这样的地步，那么个人注定要去寻求那种他身上已经找不到的外在力量。政府的各部门必然与公民的麻木和无望同步增长。

因此它们必须表现出私人所没有的主动性、首创性和指导精神。这迫使它们要承担一切，领导一切，把一切都纳入自己的保护之下。于是，国家最后就变成了全能的上帝。而经验告诉我们，这种上帝既难以持久，也不十分强大。

在很多民族中，所有的自由都受到越来越多的限制，尽管表面上的许可使它们产生一种幻觉，以为自己还拥有这些自由。它们的衰老在造成这种状况上所起的作用，和一切具体的制度一样大。这是直到今天，任何文明都无法逃脱的衰落期的不祥先兆。

## 结束章 民族存亡的关头

### 1. 历史的发展规律（上）

我们必须在这里下一断言，那就是我们的民族，正面临着前所未有的生死关头。

根据历史的教训，以及各方面都触目惊心的那些先兆判断，我们的一些现代文明已经出现了衰败期前夕。这个阶段在历史上出现过许多次，而所有的民族似乎都不可避免地要经历同样的生存阶段，因为看起来历史是在不断地重复它的过程。

如果我们查看历史，根据它的主要线索，对我们之前那些文明的伟大与衰败的原因加以评价，我们会发现什么呢？

首先，在文明诞生之初，一群来源不同的人，因为移民、入侵或占领等原因聚集在一起。他们血缘不同，语言和信仰也不同。使这些人结为整体的唯一且共同的纽带，是没有完全得到某个头领承认的法律。

这些混乱的人群有着十分突出的群体特征。他们有短暂的团结，既表现出英雄主义，也有种种弱点，易冲动而性情猖狂，没有什么东西能把他们牢固地联系在一起。毫无疑问，他们是最野蛮的原始人。

随后，漫长的岁月开始造就自己的作品，环境的一致、种族间不断出现的通婚和共同生活的必要性发挥着它的作用。

许多不同的小群体开始融合成一个整体，形成了一个种族，即一个有着共同特征和感情的群体，它们在遗传的作用下日益稳固。这群人变成了一个民族，这个民族有能力摆脱它的野蛮状态。

但是，只有在经过长期的努力、必然不断重复的斗争以及无数次的反复，从而使它获得某种理想后，它才能够完全形成一个民族。这个理想具有什么性质并不十分重要，不管是对罗马的崇拜、雅典的强盛还是真主安拉的胜利，都足以让一个种族中的每个人在感情和思想上形成完全的统一。

随着民族的形成，一种包含着各种制度、信念和艺术的新文明便诞生了。

这个民族在追求自己理想的过程中，会逐渐得到某些它建立丰功伟业所不可缺少的素质。然而我们必须要说，在许多时候，它仍然是乌合之众，但是在它变幻不定的特征的背后，会

形成一个稳定的基础，即一个种族的禀性，它决定着一个民族在狭小的范围内变化，支配着机遇的作用。

比如说，曾经持续了几代人的十字军东征，所有这些战争到底有什么作用呢？

我们看到，一小撮喧闹不已的骑士，断断续续地占领了巴勒斯坦大约一百年，整个欧洲为此付出了无数的财富和两百多万生命的代价。为了这样一丁点所谓的权利，却付出了这样高昂的代价，实在是不值得。

不过，虽然十字军做了那么多蠢事，却也不能说它一无是处，正如我们所说，这是一个追求理想的过程，并且由于和更先进的亚洲文明相接触，欧洲的封建诸侯们开始变得更加理智，民众也因此获得了一些权利。

更重要的是，惨痛的经历与代价，让民众在一定程度上摆脱了愚昧，从罗马教廷的长期禁锢之中醒悟过来，开始孕育文艺复兴与宗教改革的种子。

这再一次验证了我们的观点，神圣的自然规律总是如此，它让民众得以从坏事中得到教训。

## 2. 历史的发展规律（下）

当时间做完它的创造性工作后，便开始了破坏的过程，不管是神仙还是人，一概无法逃出它的掌心。一个文明在达到一定的强盛和复杂程度之后，便会止步不前，而一旦止步不前，它注定会进入衰落的过程。这时，它的老年期便降临了。

这是一个不可避免的时刻，总是以作为种族支柱的理想的衰弱为特点。同这种理想的衰弱相对应，在它的激励下建立起的宗教、政治和社会结构也开始发生动摇。

随着这个种族的理想不断消亡，它也日益失去使自己团结强盛的品质。个人的个性和智力可以增长，但是这个种族集体的自我意识却会被个人自我意识的过度发展所取代，同时伴随着性格的弱化和行动能力的减少。

本来是一个民族、一个联合体、一个整体的人群，最终变成一群缺乏凝聚力的个人，他们在一段时间里，仅仅因为传统和制度而被人为地聚集在一起。

正是在这个阶段，被个人利益和愿望搞得四分五裂的人，失去了治理自己的能力，因此在最微不足道的事情上也需要领导，于是国家开始发挥引人注目的影响。

随着古老理想的丧失，这个种族的才华也完全消失了。它仅仅是一群独立的个人，因而回到了自己的原始状态——即一群乌合之众。

这群乌合之众既缺乏统一性，也没有未来，只有乌合之众那些一时的特性。它的文明现在已经失去了稳定性，只能随波逐流。民众就是至上的权力，野蛮风气盛行。文明也许仍然华丽，因为久远的历史赋予它的外表尚存，其实它已成了一座岌岌可危的大厦，它没有任何支撑，下次风暴一来，它便会立刻倾覆。

我们可以看到，人们在追求理想的过程中，从野蛮状态发展到文明状态，然后，当这个理想失去优点时，便走向衰落和死亡，这就是一个民族的生命循环过程。



# **THE CROWD: study of the popular Mind**

# **BOOK I THE MIND OF CROWDS**

## **CHAPTER I GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CROWDS-PSYCHOLOGICAL LAW OF THEIR MENTAL UNITY**

What constitutes a crowd from the psychological point of view—A numerically strong agglomeration of individuals does not suffice to form a crowd—Special characteristics of psychological crowds—The turning in a fixed direction of the ideas and sentiments of individuals composing such a crowd, and the disappearance of their personality—The crowd is always dominated by considerations of which it is unconscious—The disappearance of brain activity and the predominance of medullar activity—The lowering of the intelligence and the complete transformation of the sentiments—The transformed sentiments may be better or worse than those of the individuals of which the crowd is composed—A crowd is as easily heroic as criminal.

In its ordinary sense the word “crowd” means a gathering of individuals of whatever nationality, profession, or sex, and whatever be the chances that have brought them together. From the psychological point of view the expression “crowd” assumes quite a different signification. Under certain given circumstances, and only under those circumstances, an agglomeration of men presents new characteristics very different from those of the individuals composing it. The sentiments and ideas of all the persons in the gathering take one and the same direction, and their conscious personality vanishes. A collective mind is formed, doubtless transitory, but presenting very clearly defined characteristics. The gathering has thus become what, in the absence of a better expression, I will call an organised crowd, or, if the term is considered preferable, a psychological crowd. It forms a single being,

and is subjected to the law of the mental unity of crowds.

It is evident that it is not by the mere fact of a number of individuals finding themselves accidentally side by side that they acquire the character of an organised crowd. A thousand individuals accidentally gathered in a public place without any determined object in no way constitute a crowd from the psychological point of view. To acquire the special characteristics of such a crowd, the influence is necessary of certain predisposing causes of which we shall have to determine the nature.

The disappearance of conscious personality and the turning of feelings and thoughts in a definite direction, which are the primary characteristics of a crowd about to become organised, do not always involve the simultaneous presence of a number of individuals on one spot. Thousands of isolated individuals may acquire at certain moments, and under the influence of certain violent emotions—such, for example, as a great national event—the characteristics of a psychological crowd. It will be sufficient in that case that a mere chance should bring them together for their acts to at once assume the characteristics peculiar to the acts of a crowd. At certain moments half a dozen men might constitute a psychological crowd, which may not happen in the case of hundreds of men gathered together by accident. On the other hand, an entire nation, though there may be no visible agglomeration, may become a crowd under the action of certain influences.

A psychological crowd once constituted, it acquires certain provisional but determinable general characteristics. To these general characteristics there are adjoined particular characteristics which vary according to the elements of which the crowd is composed, and may modify its mental constitution. Psychological crowds, then, are susceptible of classification; and when we come to occupy ourselves with this matter, we shall see that a heterogeneous crowd—that is, a crowd composed of dissimilar elements—presents certain characteristics in common with homogeneous crowds—that is, with crowds composed of elements more or less akin (sects, castes, and classes)—and side by side with these common characteristics particularities which permit of the two kinds of crowds being differentiated. But before occupying ourselves with the different categories of crowds, we must first of all examine the

characteristics common to them all. We shall set to work like the naturalist, who begins by describing the general characteristics common to all the members of a family before concerning himself with the particular characteristics which allow the differentiation of the genera and species that the family includes.

It is not easy to describe the mind of crowds with exactness, because its organisation varies not only according to race and composition, but also according to the nature and intensity of the exciting causes to which crowds are subjected. The same difficulty, however, presents itself in the psychological study of an individual. It is only in novels that individuals are found to traverse their whole life with an unvarying character. It is only the uniformity of the environment that creates the apparent uniformity of characters. I have shown elsewhere that all mental constitutions contain possibilities of character which may be manifested in consequence of a sudden change of environment. This explains how it was that among the most savage members of the French Convention were to be found inoffensive citizens who, under ordinary circumstances, would have been peaceable notaries or virtuous magistrates. The storm past, they resumed their normal character of quiet, law-abiding citizens. Napoleon found amongst them his most docile servants.

It being impossible to study here all the successive degrees of organisation of crowds, we shall concern ourselves more especially with such crowds as have attained to the phase of complete organisation. In this way we shall see what crowds may become, but not what they invariably are. It is only in this advanced phase of organisation that certain new and special characteristics are superposed on the unvarying and dominant character of the race; then takes place that turning already alluded to of all the feelings and thoughts of the collectivity in an identical direction. It is only under such circumstances, too, that what I have called above the psychological law of the mental unity of crowds comes into play.

Among the psychological characteristics of crowds there are some that they may present in common with isolated individuals, and others, on the contrary, which are absolutely peculiar to them and are only to be met with in

collectivities. It is these special characteristics that we shall study, first of all, in order to show their importance.

The most striking peculiarity presented by a psychological crowd is the following: Whoever be the individuals that compose it, however like or unlike be their mode of life, their occupations, their character, or their intelligence, the fact that they have been transformed into a crowd puts them in possession of a sort of collective mind which makes them feel, think and act in a manner quite different from that in which each individual of them would feel, think, and act were he in a state of isolation. There are certain ideas and feelings which do not come into being, or do not transform themselves into acts except in the case of individuals forming a crowd. The psychological crowd is a provisional being formed of heterogeneous elements, which for a moment are combined, exactly as the cells which constitute a living body form by their reunion a new being which displays characteristics very different from those possessed by each of the cells singly.

Contrary to an opinion which one is astonished to find coming from the pen of so acute a philosopher as Herbert Spencer, in the aggregate which constitutes a crowd there is in no sort a summing-up of or an average struck between its elements. What really takes place is a combination followed by the creation of new characteristics, just as in chemistry certain elements, when brought into contact-bases and acids, for example-combine to form a new body possessing properties quite different from those of the bodies that have served to form it. It is easy to prove how much the individual forming part of a crowd differs from the isolated individual, but it is less easy to discover the causes of this difference.

To obtain at any rate a glimpse of them it is necessary in the first place to call to mind the truth established by modern psychology, that unconscious phenomena play an altogether preponderating part not only in organic life, but also in the operations of the intelligence. The conscious life of the mind is of small importance in comparison with its unconscious life. The most subtle analyst, the most acute observer, is scarcely successful in discovering more than a very small number of the unconscious motives that determine his conduct. Our conscious acts are the outcome of an unconscious substratum

created in the mind in the main by hereditary influences. This substratum consists of the innumerable common characteristics handed down from generation to generation, which constitute the genius of a race. Behind the avowed causes of our acts there undoubtedly lie secret causes that we do not avow, but behind these secret causes there are many others more secret still which we ourselves ignore. The greater part of our daily actions is the result of hidden motives which escape our observation.

It is more especially with respect to those unconscious elements which constitute the genius of a race that all the individuals belonging to it resemble each other, while it is principally in respect to the conscious elements of their character—the fruit of education, and yet more of exceptional hereditary conditions—that they differ from each other. Men the most unlike in the matter of their intelligence possess instincts, passions, and feelings that are very similar. In the case of every thing that belongs to the realm of sentiment—religion, politics, morality, the affections and antipathies, most eminent men seldom surpass the standard of the most ordinary individuals. From the intellectual point of view an abyss may exist between a great mathematician and his boot maker, but from the point of view of character the difference is most often slight or nonexistent.

It is precisely these general qualities of character, governed by forces of which we are unconscious, and possessed by the majority of the normal individuals of a race in much the same degree—it is precisely these qualities, I say, that in crowds become common property. In the collective mind the intellectual aptitudes of the individuals, and in consequence their individuality, are weakened. The heterogeneous is swamped by the homogeneous, and the unconscious qualities obtain the upper hand.

This very fact that crowds possess in common ordinary qualities explains why they can never accomplish acts demanding a high degree of intelligence. The decisions affecting matters of general interest come to by an assembly of men of distinction, but specialists in different walks of life are not sensibly superior to the decisions that would be adopted by a gathering of imbeciles. The truth is, they can only bring to bear in common on the work in hand those mediocre qualities which are the birthright of every average individual.

In crowds it is stupidity and not mother-wit that is accumulated. It is not all the world, as is so often repeated, that has more wit than Voltaire, but assuredly Voltaire that has more wit than all the world, if by “all the world” crowds are to be understood.

If the individuals of a crowd confined themselves to putting in common the ordinary qualities of which each of them has his share, there would merely result the striking of an average, and not, as we have said is actually the case, the creation of new characteristics. How is it that these new characteristics are created? This is what we are now to investigate.

Different causes determine the appearance of these characteristics peculiar to crowds, and not possessed by isolated individuals. The first is that the individual forming part of a crowd acquires, solely from numerical considerations, a sentiment of invincible power which allows him to yield to instincts which, had he been alone, he would perforce have kept under restraint. He will be the less disposed to check himself from the consideration that, a crowd being anonymous, and in consequence irresponsible, the sentiment of responsibility which always controls individuals disappears entirely.

The second cause, which is contagion, also intervenes to determine the manifestation in crowds of their special characteristics, and at the same time the trend they are to take. Contagion is a phenomenon of which it is easy to establish the presence, but that it is not easy to explain. It must be classed among those phenomena of a hypnotic order, which we shall shortly study. In a crowd every sentiment and act is contagious, and contagious to such a degree that an individual readily sacrifices his personal interest to the collective interest. This is an aptitude very contrary to his nature, and of which a man is scarcely capable, except when he makes part of a crowd.

A third cause, and by far the most important, determines in the individuals of a crowd special characteristics which are quite contrary at times to those presented by the isolated individual. I allude to that suggestibility of which, moreover, the contagion mentioned above is neither more nor less than an effect.

To understand this phenomenon it is necessary to bear in mind certain recent physiological discoveries. We know today that by various processes an individual may be brought into such a condition that, having entirely lost his conscious personality, he obeys all the suggestions of the operator who has deprived him of it, and commits acts in utter contradiction with his character and habits. The most careful observations seem to prove that an individual immersed for some length of time in a crowd in action soon finds himself—either in consequence of the magnetic influence given out by the crowd, or from some other cause of which we are ignorant—in a special state, which much resembles the state of fascination in which the hypnotized individual finds himself in the hands of the hypnotizer. The activity of the brain being paralyzed in the case of the hypnotized subject, the latter becomes the slave of all the unconscious activities of his spinal cord, which the hypnotizer directs at will. The conscious personality has entirely vanished; will and discernment are lost. All feelings and thoughts are bent in the direction determined by the hypnotizer.

Such also is approximately the state of the individual forming part of a psychological crowd. He is no longer conscious of his acts. In his case, as in the case of the hypnotised subject, at the same time that certain faculties are destroyed, others may be brought to a high degree of exaltation. Under the influence of a suggestion, he will undertake the accomplishment of certain acts with irresistible impetuosity. This impetuosity is the more irresistible in the case of crowds than in that of the hypnotised subject, from the fact that, the suggestion being the same for all the individuals of the crowd, it gains in strength by reciprocity. The individualities in the crowd who might possess a personality sufficiently strong to resist the suggestion are too few in number to struggle against the current. At the utmost, they may be able to attempt a diversion by means of different suggestions. It is in this way, for instance, that a happy expression, an image opportunely evoked, has occasionally deterred crowds from the most bloodthirsty acts.

We see, then, that the disappearance of the conscious personality, the predominance of the unconscious personality, the turning by means of suggestion and contagion of feelings and ideas in an identical direction, the tendency to immediately transform the suggested ideas into acts; these, we



see, are the principal characteristics of the individual forming part of a crowd. He is no longer himself, but has become an automaton who has ceased to be guided by his will.

Moreover, by the mere fact that he forms part of an organised crowd, a man descends several rungs in the ladder of civilisation. Isolated, he may be a cultivated individual; in a crowd, he is a barbarian—that is, a creature acting by instinct. He possesses the spontaneity, the violence, the ferocity, and also the enthusiasm and heroism of primitive beings, whom he further tends to resemble by the facility with which he allows himself to be impressed by words and images—which would be entirely without action on each of the isolated individuals composing the crowd—and to be induced to commit acts contrary to his most obvious interests and his best-known habits. An individual in a crowd is a grain of sand amid other grains of sand, which the wind stirs up at will.

It is for these reasons that juries are seen to deliver verdicts of which each individual juror would disapprove, that parliamentary assemblies adopt laws and measures of which each of their members would disapprove in his own person. Taken separately, the men of the Convention were enlightened citizens of peaceful habits. United in a crowd, they did not hesitate to give their adhesion to the most savage proposals, to guillotine individuals most clearly innocent, and, contrary to their interests, to renounce their inviolability and to decimate themselves.

It is not only by his acts that the individual in a crowd differs essentially from himself. Even before he has entirely lost his independence, his ideas and feelings have undergone a transformation, and the transformation is so profound as to change the miser into a spendthrift, the skeptic into a believer, the honest man into a criminal, and the coward into a hero. The renunciation of all its privileges which the nobility voted in a moment of enthusiasm during the celebrated night of August 4, 1789, would certainly never have been consented to by any of its members taken singly. The conclusion to be drawn from what precedes is that the crowd is always intellectually inferior to the isolated individual, but that, from the point of view of feelings and of the acts these feelings provoke, the crowd may, according to circumstances, be

better or worse than the individual. All depends on the nature of the suggestion to which the crowd is exposed. This is the point that has been completely misunderstood by writers who have only studied crowds from the criminal point of view. Doubtless a crowd is often criminal, but also it is often heroic. It is crowds rather than isolated individuals that may be induced to run the risk of death to secure the triumph of a creed or an idea, that may be fired with enthusiasm for glory and honor, that are led on—almost without bread and without arms, as in the age of the Crusades—to deliver the tomb of Christ from the infidel, or, as in '93, to defend the fatherland. Such heroism is without doubt somewhat unconscious, but it is of such heroism that history is made. Were peoples only to be credited with the great actions performed in cold blood, the annals of the world would register but few of them.

## **CHAPTER II THE SENTIMENTS AND MORALITY OF CROWDS**

### **§1. Impulsiveness, mobility, and irritability of crowds.**

The crowd is at the mercy of all exterior exciting causes, and reflects their incessant variations—The impulses which the crowd obeys are so imperious as to annihilate the feeling of personal interest—Premeditation is absent from crowds—Racial influence.

### **§2. Crowds are credulous and readily influenced by suggestion.**

The obedience of crowds to suggestions—The images evoked in the mind of crowds are accepted by them as realities—Why these images are identical for all the individuals composing a crowd—The equality of the educated and the ignorant man in a crowd—Various examples of the illusions to which the individuals in a crowd are subject—The impossibility of according belief to the testimony of crowds—The unanimity of numerous witnesses is one of the

worst proofs that can be invoked to establish a fact—The slight value of works of history.

### §3. The exaggeration and ingenuousness of the sentiments of crowds.

Crowds do not admit doubt or uncertainty, and always go to extremes—Their sentiments are always excessive.

### §4. The intolerance, dictatorialness, and conservatism of crowds.

The reasons of these sentiments—The servility of crowds in the face of a strong authority—The momentary revolutionary instincts of crowds do not prevent them from being extremely conservative—Crowds instinctively hostile to changes and progress.

### §5. The morality of crowds.

The morality of crowds, according to the suggestions under which they act, may be much lower or much higher than that of the individuals composing them—Explanation and examples—Crowds rarely guided by those considerations of interest which are most often the exclusive motives of the isolated individual—The moralizing role of crowds.

Having indicated in a general way the principal characteristics of crowds, it remains to study these characteristics in detail.

It will be remarked that among the special characteristics of crowds there are several—such as impulsiveness, irritability, incapacity to reason, the absence of judgment and of the critical spirit, the exaggeration of the sentiments, and others besides—which are almost always observed in beings belonging to inferior forms of evolution—in women, savages, and children, for instance. However, I merely indicate this analogy in passing; its demonstration is outside the scope of this work. It would, moreover, be useless for persons acquainted with the psychology of primitive beings, and would scarcely carry conviction to those in ignorance of this matter.

I now proceed to the successive consideration of the different characteristics that may be observed in the majority of crowds.

### §1. Impulsiveness, mobility, and irritability of crowds.

When studying the fundamental characteristics of a crowd we stated that it is guided almost exclusively by unconscious motives. Its acts are far more under the influence of the spinal cord than of the brain. In this respect a crowd is closely akin to quite primitive beings. The acts performed may be perfect so far as their execution is concerned, but as they are not directed by the brain, the individual conducts himself according as the exciting causes to which he is submitted may happen to decide. A crowd is at the mercy of all external exciting causes, and reflects their incessant variations. It is the slave of the impulses which it receives. The isolated individual may be submitted to the same exciting causes as the man in a crowd, but as his brain shows him the inadvisability of yielding to them, he refrains from yielding. This truth may be physiologically expressed by saying that the isolated individual possesses the capacity of dominating his reflex actions, while a crowd is devoid of this capacity.

The varying impulses to which crowds obey may be, according to their exciting causes, generous or cruel, heroic or cowardly, but they will always be so imperious that the interest of the individual, even the interest of self-preservation, will not dominate them. The exciting causes that may act on crowds being so varied, and crowds always obeying them, crowds are in consequence extremely mobile. This explains how it is that we see them pass in a moment from the most bloodthirsty ferocity to the most extreme generosity and heroism. A crowd may easily enact the part of an executioner, but not less easily that of a martyr. It is crowds that have furnished the torrents of blood requisite for the triumph of every belief. It is not necessary to go back to the heroic ages to see what crowds are capable of in this latter direction. They are never sparing of their life in an insurrection, and not long since a general,<sup>①</sup> becoming suddenly popular, might easily have found a hundred thousand men ready to sacrifice their lives for his cause had he

demanded it.

### ① General Boulanger.

Any display of premeditation by crowds is in consequence out of the question. They may be animated in succession by the most contrary sentiments, but they will always be under the influence of the exciting causes of the moment. They are like the leaves which a tempest whirls up and scatters in every direction and then allows falling. When studying later on certain revolutionary crowds we shall give some examples of the variability of their sentiments.

This mobility of crowds renders them very difficult to govern, especially when a measure of public authority has fallen into their hands. Did not the necessities of everyday life constitute a sort of invisible regulator of existence, it would scarcely be possible for democracies to last. Still, though the wishes of crowds are frenzied they are not durable. Crowds are as incapable of willing as of thinking for any length of time.

A crowd is not merely impulsive and mobile. Like a savage, it is not prepared to admit that anything can come between its desire and the realisation of its desire. It is the less capable of understanding such an intervention, in consequence of the feeling of irresistible power given it by its numerical strength. The notion of impossibility disappears for the individual in a crowd. An isolated individual knows well enough that alone he cannot set fire to a palace or loot a shop, and should he be tempted to do so, he will easily resist the temptation. Making part of a crowd, he is conscious of the power given him by number, and it is sufficient to suggest to him ideas of murder or pillage for him to yield immediately to temptation. An unexpected obstacle will be destroyed with frenzied rage. Did the human organism allow of the

perpetuity of furious passion, it might be said that the normal condition of a crowd baulked in its wishes is just such a state of furious passion.

The fundamental characteristics of the race, which constitute the unvarying source from which all our sentiments spring, always exert an influence on the irritability of crowds, their impulsiveness and their mobility, as on all the popular sentiments we shall have to study. All crowds are doubtless always irritable and impulsive, but with great variations of degree. For instance, the difference between a Latin and an Anglo-Saxon crowd is striking. The most recent facts in French history throw a vivid light on this point. The mere publication, twenty-five years ago, of a telegram, relating an insult supposed to have been offered an ambassador, was sufficient to determine an explosion of fury, whence followed immediately a terrible war. Some years later the telegraphic announcement of an insignificant reverse at Langson provoked a fresh explosion which brought about the instantaneous overthrow of the government. At the same moment a much more serious reverse undergone by the English expedition to Khartoum produced only a slight emotion in England, and no ministry was overturned. Crowds are everywhere distinguished by feminine characteristics, but Latin crowds are the most feminine of all. Whoever trusts in them may rapidly attain a lofty destiny, but to do so is to be perpetually skirting the brink of a Tarpeian rock, with the certainty of one day being precipitated from it.

## §2. The suggestibility and credulity of crowds.

When defining crowds, we said that one of their general characteristics was an excessive suggestibility, and we have shown to what an extent suggestions are contagious in every human agglomeration; a fact which explains the rapid turning of the sentiments of a crowd in a definite direction. However indifferent it may be supposed, a crowd, as a rule, is in a state of expectant attention, which renders suggestion easy. The first suggestion formulated which arises implants itself immediately by a process of contagion in the brains of all assembled, and the identical bent of the sentiments of the crowd is immediately an accomplished fact.

As is the case with all persons under the influence of suggestion, the idea which has entered the brain tends to transform itself into an act. Whether the act is that of setting fire to a palace, or involves self-sacrifice, a crowd lends itself to it with equal facility. All will depend on the nature of the exciting cause, and no longer, as in the case of the isolated individual, on the relations existing between the act suggested and the sum total of the reasons which may be urged against its realisation.

In consequence, a crowd perpetually hovering on the borderland of unconsciousness, readily yielding to all suggestions, having all the violence of feeling peculiar to beings who cannot appeal to the influence of reason, deprived of all critical faculty, cannot be otherwise than excessively credulous. The improbable does not exist for a crowd, and it is necessary to bear this circumstance well in mind to understand the facility with which are created and propagated the most improbable legends and stories.<sup>①</sup>

① Persons who went through the siege of Paris saw numerous examples of this credulity of crowds. A candle alight in an upper story was immediately looked upon as a signal given the besiegers, although it was evident, after a moment of reflection, that it was utterly impossible to catch sight of the light of the candle at a distance of several miles.

The creation of the legends which so easily obtain circulation in crowds is not solely the consequence of their extreme credulity. It is also the result of the prodigious perversions that events undergo in the imagination of a throng. The simplest event that comes under the observation of a crowd is soon totally transformed. A crowd thinks in images, and the image itself immediately calls up a series of other images, having no logical connection with the first. We can easily conceive this state by thinking of the fantastic

succession of ideas to which we are sometimes led by calling up in our minds any fact. Our reason shows us the incoherence there is in these images, but a crowd is almost blind to this truth, and confuses with the real event what the deforming action of its imagination has superimposed thereon. A crowd scarcely distinguishes between the subjective and the objective. It accepts as real the images evoked in its mind, though they most often have only a very distant relation with the observed fact.

The ways in which a crowd perverts any event of which it is a witness ought, it would seem, to be innumerable and unlike each other, since the individuals composing the gathering are of very different temperaments. But this is not the case. As the result of contagion the perversions are of the same kind, and take the same shape in the case of all the assembled individuals.

The first perversion of the truth affected by one of the individuals of the gathering is the starting point of the contagious suggestion. Before St. George appeared on the walls of Jerusalem to all the Crusaders he was certainly perceived in the first instance by one of those present. By dint of suggestion and contagion the miracle signaled by a single person was immediately accepted by all.

Such is always the mechanism of the collective hallucinations so frequent in history—hallucinations which seem to have all the recognized characteristics of authenticity, since they are phenomena observed by thousands of persons.

To combat what precedes, the mental quality of the individuals composing a crowd must not be brought into consideration. This quality is without importance. From the moment that they form part of a crowd the learned man and the ignoramus are equally incapable of observation.

This thesis may seem paradoxical. To demonstrate it beyond doubt it would be necessary to investigate a great number of historical facts, and several volumes would be insufficient for the purpose.

Still, as I do not wish to leave the reader under the impression of unproved assertions, I shall give him some examples taken at hazard from the immense number of those that might be quoted.



The following fact is one of the most typical, because chosen from among collective hallucinations of which a crowd is the victim, in which are to be found individuals of every kind, from the most ignorant to the most highly educated. It is related incidentally by Julian Felix, a naval lieutenant, in his book on "Sea Currents," and has been previously cited by the *Revue Scientifique*.

The frigate, the *Belle Poule*, was cruising in the open sea for the purpose of finding the cruiser *Le Berceau*, from which she had been separated by a violent storm. It was broad daylight and in full sunshine. Suddenly the watch signaled a disabled vessel; the crew looked in the direction signalled, and every one, officers and sailors, clearly perceived a raft covered with men towed by boats which were displaying signals of distress. Yet this was nothing more than a collective hallucination. Admiral Desfosses lowered a boat to go to the rescue of the wrecked sailors. On nearing the object sighted, the sailors and officers on board the boat saw "masses of men in motion, stretching out their hands, and heard the dull and confused noise of a great number of voices." When the object was reached those in the boat found themselves simply and solely in the presence of a few branches of trees covered with leaves that had been swept out from the neighbouring coast. Before evidence so palpable the hallucination vanished.

The mechanism of a collective hallucination of the kind we have explained is clearly seen at work in this example. On the one hand we have a crowd in a state of expectant attention, on the other a suggestion made by the watch signaling a disabled vessel at sea, a suggestion which, by a process of contagion, was accepted by all those present, both officers and sailors.

It is not necessary that a crowd should be numerous for the faculty of seeing what is taking place before its eyes to be destroyed and for the real facts to be replaced by hallucinations unrelated to them. As soon as a few individuals are gathered together they constitute a crowd, and, though they should be distinguished men of learning, they assume all the characteristics of crowds with regard to matters outside their specialty. The faculty of observation and the critical spirit possessed by each of them individually at once disappears.

An ingenious psychologist, Mr. Davey, supplies us with a very curious example in point, recently cited in the *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, and deserving of relation here. Mr. Davey, having convoked a gathering of distinguished observers, among them one of the most prominent of English scientific men, Mr. Wallace, executed in their presence, and after having allowed them to examine the objects and to place seals where they wished, all the regulation spiritualistic phenomena, the materialisation of spirits, writing on slates,

Having subsequently obtained from these distinguished observers written reports admitting that the phenomena observed could only have been obtained by supernatural means, he revealed to them that they were the result of very simple tricks. "The most astonishing feature of Monsieur Davey's investigation," writes the author of this account, "is not the marvellousness of the tricks themselves, but the extreme weakness of the reports made with respect to them by the non-initiated witnesses. It is clear, then," he says, "that witnesses even in number may give circumstantial relations which are completely erroneous, but whose result is THAT, IF THEIR DESCRIPTIONS ARE ACCEPTED AS EXACT, the phenomena they describe are inexplicable by trickery. The methods invented by Mr. Davey were so simple that one is astonished that he should have had the boldness to employ them; but he had such a power over the mind of the crowd that he could persuade it that it saw what it did not see." Here, as always, we have the power of the hypnotizer over the hypnotised. Moreover, when this power is seen in action on minds of a superior order and previously invited to be suspicious, it is understandable how easy it is to deceive ordinary crowds.

Analogous examples are innumerable. As I write these lines the papers are full of the story of two little girls found drowned in the Seine. These children, to begin with, were recognized in the most unmistakable manner by half a dozen witnesses. All the affirmations were in such entire concordance that no doubt remained in the mind of the juge d'instruction. He had the certificate of death drawn up, but just as the burial of the children was to have been proceeded with, a mere chance brought about the discovery that the supposed victims were alive, and had, moreover, but a remote resemblance to the drowned girls. As in several of the examples previously cited, the affirmation

of the first witness, himself a victim of illusion, had sufficed to influence the other witnesses.

In parallel cases the starting point of the suggestion is always the illusion produced in an individual by more or less vague reminiscences, contagion following as the result of the affirmation of this initial illusion. If the first observer be very impressionable, it will often be sufficient that the corpse he believes he recognizes should present- apart from all real resemblance-some peculiarity, a scar, or some detail of toilet which may evoke the idea of another person. The idea evoked may then become the nucleus of a sort of crystallisation which invades the understanding and paralyses all critical faculties. What the observer then sees is no longer the object itself, but the image evoked in his mind. In this way are to be explained erroneous recognitions of the dead bodies of children by their own mother, as occurred in the following case, already old, but which has been recently recalled by the newspapers. In it are to be traced precisely the two kinds of suggestion of which I have just pointed out the mechanism.

“The child was recognized by another child, who was mistaken. The series of unwarranted recognitions then began.”

“An extraordinary thing occurred. The day after a schoolboy had recognized the corpse a woman exclaimed, ‘Good Heavens, it is my child!’”

“She was taken up to the corpse; she examined the clothing, and noted a scar on the forehead. ‘It is certainly,’ she said, ‘my son who disappeared last July. He has been stolen from me and murdered.’”

“The woman was concierge in the Rue du Four; her name was Chavandret. Her brother-in-law was summoned, and when questioned he said, ‘That is the little Filibert.’ Several persons living in the street recognized the child found at La Villette as Filibert Chavandret, among them being the boy’s schoolmaster, who based his opinion on a medal worn by the lad.

“Nevertheless, the neighbours, the brother-in-law, the schoolmaster, and the

mother were mistaken. Six weeks later the identity of the child was established. The boy, belonging to Bordeaux, had been murdered there and brought by a carrying company to Paris.”<sup>①</sup>

<sup>①</sup> L’Eclair, April 21, 1895.

It will be remarked that these recognitions are most often made by women and children—that is to say, by precisely the most impressionable persons. They show us at the same time what is the worth in law courts of such witnesses. As far as children, more especially, are concerned, their statements ought never to be invoked. Magistrates are in the habit of repeating that children do not lie. Did they possess a psychological culture a little less rudimentary than is the case they would know that, on the contrary, children invariably lie; the lie is doubtless innocent, but it is none the less a lie. It would be better to decide the fate of an accused person by the toss of a coin than, as has been so often done, by the evidence of a child.

To return to the faculty of observation possessed by crowds, our conclusion is that their collective observations are as erroneous as possible, and that most often they merely represent the illusion of an individual who, by a process of contagion, has suggested his fellows. Facts proving that the most utter mistrust of the evidence of crowds is advisable might be multiplied to any extent. Thousands of men were present twenty-five years ago at the celebrated cavalry charge during the battle of Sedan, and yet it is impossible, in the face of the most contradictory ocular testimony, to decide by whom it was commanded. The English general, Lord Wolseley, has proved in a recent book that up to now the gravest errors of fact have been committed with regard to the most important incidents of the battle of Waterloo—facts that hundreds of witnesses had nevertheless attested.<sup>①</sup>

① Do we know in the case of one single battle exactly how it took place? I am very doubtful on the point. We know who were the conquerors and the conquered, but this is probably all. What M. D'Harcourt has said with respect to the battle of Solferino, which he witnessed and in which he was personally engaged, may be applied to all battles—"The generals (informed, of course, by the evidence of hundreds of witnesses) forward their official reports; the orderly officers modify these documents and draw up a definite narrative; the chief of the staff raises objections and rewrites the whole on a fresh basis. It is carried to the Marshal, who exclaims, "You are entirely in error," and he substitutes a fresh edition. Scarcely anything remains of the original report." M. D'Harcourt relates this fact as proof of the impossibility of establishing the truth in connection with the most striking, the best observed events.

Such facts show us what is the value of the testimony of crowds. Treatises on logic include the unanimity of numerous witnesses in the category of the strongest proofs that can be invoked in support of the exactness of a fact. Yet what we know of the psychology of crowds shows that treatises on logic need on this point to be rewritten. The events with regard to which there exists the most doubt are certainly those which have been observed by the greatest number of persons. To say that a fact has been simultaneously verified by thousands of witnesses is to say, as a rule, that the real fact is very different from the accepted account of it.

It clearly results from what precedes that works of history must be considered as works of pure imagination. They are fanciful accounts of ill-observed facts, accompanied by explanations the result of reflection. To write such books is the most absolute waste of time. Had not the past left us its literary,

artistic, and monumental works, we should know absolutely nothing in reality with regard to bygone times. Are we in possession of a single word of truth concerning the lives of the great men who have played preponderating parts in the history of humanity—men such as Hercules, Buddha, or Mahomet? In all probability we are not. In point of fact, moreover, their real lives are of slight importance to us. Our interest is to know what our great men were as they are presented by popular legend. It is legendary heroes, and not for a moment real heroes, who have impressed the minds of crowds.

Unfortunately, legends—even although they have been definitely put on record by books—have in themselves no stability. The imagination of the crowd continually transforms them as the result of the lapse of time and especially in consequence of racial causes. There is a great gulf fixed between the sanguinary Jehovah of the Old Testament and the God of Love of Sainte Therese, and the Buddha worshipped in China has no traits in common with that venerated in India.

It is not even necessary that heroes should be separated from us by centuries for their legend to be transformed by the imagination of the crowd. The transformation occasionally takes place within a few years. In our own day we have seen the legend of one of the greatest heroes of history modified several times in less than fifty years. Under the Bourbons Napoleon became a sort of idyllic and liberal philanthropist, a friend of the humble who, according to the poets, was destined to be long remembered in the cottage. Thirty years afterwards this easy-going hero had become a sanguinary despot, who, after having usurped power and destroyed liberty, caused the slaughter of three million men solely to satisfy his ambition. At present we are witnessing a fresh transformation of the legend. When it has undergone the influence of some dozens of centuries the learned men of the future, face to face with these contradictory accounts, will perhaps doubt the very existence of the hero, as some of them now doubt that of Buddha, and will see in him nothing more than a solar myth or a development of the legend of Hercules. They will doubtless console themselves easily for this uncertainty, for, better initiated than we are today in the characteristics and psychology of crowds, they will know that history is scarcely capable of preserving the memory of anything except myths.

### §3. The exaggeration and ingenuousness of the sentiments of crowds.

Whether the feelings exhibited by a crowd be good or bad, they present the double character of being very simple and very exaggerated. On this point, as on so many others, an individual in a crowd resembles primitive beings. Inaccessible to fine distinctions, he sees things as a whole, and is blind to their intermediate phases. The exaggeration of the sentiments of a crowd is heightened by the fact that any feeling when once it is exhibited communicating itself very quickly by a process of suggestion and contagion, the evident approbation of which it is the object considerably increases its force.

The simplicity and exaggeration of the sentiments of crowds have for result that a throng knows neither doubt nor uncertainty. Like women, it goes at once to extremes. A suspicion transforms itself as soon as announced into incontrovertible evidence. A commencement of antipathy or disapprobation, which in the case of an isolated individual would not gain strength, becomes at once furious hatred in the case of an individual in a crowd.

The violence of the feelings of crowds is also increased, especially in heterogeneous crowds, by the absence of all sense of responsibility. The certainty of impunity, a certainty the stronger as the crowd is more numerous, and the notion of a considerable momentary force due to number, make possible in the case of crowds sentiments and acts impossible for the isolated individual. In crowds the foolish, ignorant, and envious persons are freed from the sense of their insignificance and powerlessness, and are possessed instead by the notion of brutal and temporary but immense strength.

Unfortunately, this tendency of crowds towards exaggeration is often brought to bear upon bad sentiments. These sentiments are atavistic residuum of the instincts of the primitive man, which the fear of punishment obliges the isolated and responsible individual to curb. Thus it is that crowds are so easily led into the worst excesses.

Still this does not mean that crowds, skillfully influenced, are not capable of

heroism and devotion and of evincing the loftiest virtues; they are even more capable of showing these qualities than the isolated individual. We shall soon have occasion to revert to this point when we come to study the morality of crowds.

Given to exaggeration in its feelings, a crowd is only impressed by excessive sentiments. An orator wishing to move a crowd must make an abusive use of violent affirmations. To exaggerate, to affirm, to resort to repetitions, and never to attempt to prove anything by reasoning are methods of argument well known to speakers at public meetings. Moreover, a crowd exacts a like exaggeration in the sentiments of its heroes. Their apparent qualities and virtues must always be amplified. It has been justly remarked that on the stage a crowd demands from the hero of the piece a degree of courage, morality, and virtue that is never to be found in real life.

Quite rightly importance has been laid on the special standpoint from which matters are viewed in the theatre. Such a standpoint exists no doubt, but its rules for the most part have nothing to do with common sense and logic. The art of appealing to crowds is no doubt of an inferior order, but it demands quite special aptitudes. It is often impossible on reading plays to explain their success. Managers of theatres when accepting pieces are themselves, as a rule, very uncertain of their success, because to judge the matter it would be necessary that they should be able to transform themselves into a crowd.<sup>①</sup>

① It is understandable for this reason why it sometimes happens that pieces refused by all theatrical managers obtain a prodigious success when by a stroke of chance they are put on the stage. The recent success of Francois Coppee's play "Pour la Couronne" is well known, and yet, in spite of the name of its author, it was refused during ten years by the managers of the principal Parisian theatres.



“Charley’s Aunt,” refused at every theatre, and finally staged at the expense of a stockbroker, has had two hundred representations in France, and more than a thousand in London. Without the explanation given above of the impossibility for theatrical managers to mentally substitute themselves for a crowd, such mistakes in judgment on the part of competent individuals, who are most interested not to commit such grave blunders, would be inexplicable. This is a subject that I cannot deal with here, but it might worthily tempt the pen of a writer acquainted with theatrical matters, and at the same time a subtle psychologist—of such a writer, for instance, as M. Francisque Sarcey.

Here, once more, were we able to embark on more extensive explanations, we should show the preponderating influence of racial considerations. A play which provokes the enthusiasm of the crowd in one country has sometimes no success in another, or has only a partial and conventional success, because it does not put in operation influences capable of working on an altered public.

I need not add that the tendency to exaggeration in crowds is only present in the case of sentiments and not at all in the matter of intelligence. I have already shown that, by the mere fact that an individual forms part of a crowd, his intellectual standard is immediately and considerably lowered. A learned magistrate, M. Tarde, has also verified this fact in his researches on the crimes of crowds. It is only, then, with respect to sentiment that crowds can rise to a very high or, on the contrary, descend to a very low level.

#### §4. The intolerance, dictatorialness and conservatism of crowds.

Crowds are only cognisant of simple and extreme sentiments; the opinions, ideas, and beliefs suggested to them are accepted or rejected as a whole, and considered as absolute truths or as not less absolute errors. This is always the

case with beliefs induced by a process of suggestion instead of engendered by reasoning. Every one is aware of the intolerance that accompanies religious beliefs, and of the despotic empire they exercise on men's minds.

Being in doubt as to what constitute truth or error, and having, on the other hand, a clear notion of its strength, a crowd is as disposed to give authoritative effect to its inspirations as it is intolerant. An individual may accept contradiction and discussion; a crowd will never do so. At public meetings the slightest contradiction on the part of an orator is immediately received with howls of fury and violent invective, soon followed by blows, and expulsion should the orator stick to his point. Without the restraining presence of the representatives of authority the contradictor, indeed, would often be done to death.

Dictatorialness and intolerance are common to all categories of crowds, but they are met with in a varying degree of intensity. Here, once more, reappears that fundamental notion of race which dominates all the feelings and all the thoughts of men. It is more especially in Latin crowds that authoritativeness and intolerance are found developed in the highest measure. In fact, their development is such in crowds of Latin origin that they have entirely destroyed that sentiment of the independence of the individual so powerful in the Anglo-Saxon. Latin crowds are only concerned with the collective independence of the sect to which they belong, and the characteristic feature of their conception of independence is the need they experience of bringing those who are in disagreement with themselves into immediate and violent subjection to their beliefs. Among the Latin races the Jacobins of every epoch, from those of the Inquisition downwards, have never been able to attain to a different conception of liberty.

Authoritativeness and intolerance are sentiments of which crowds have a very clear notion, which they easily conceive and which they entertain as readily as they put them in practice when once they are imposed upon them. Crowds exhibit a docile respect for force, and are but slightly impressed by kindness, which for them is scarcely other than a form of weakness. Their sympathies have never been bestowed on easy-going masters, but on tyrants who vigorously oppressed them. It is to these latter that they always erect the

loftiest statues. It is true that they willingly trample on the despot whom they have stripped of his power, but it is because, having lost his strength, he has resumed his place among the feeble, who are to be despised because they are not to be feared. The type of hero dear to crowds will always have the semblance of a Caesar. His insignia attracts them, his authority overawes them, and his sword instills them with fear.

A crowd is always ready to revolt against a feeble, and to bow down servilely before a strong authority. Should the strength of an authority be intermittent, the crowd, always obedient to its extreme sentiments, passes alternately from anarchy to servitude, and from servitude to anarchy.

However, to believe in the predominance among crowds of revolutionary instincts would be to entirely misconstrue their psychology. It is merely their tendency to violence that deceives us on this point. Their rebellious and destructive outbursts are always very transitory. Crowds are too much governed by unconscious considerations and too much subject in consequence to secular hereditary influences not to be extremely conservative. Abandoned to themselves, they soon weary of disorder, and instinctively turn to servitude. It was the proudest and most untractable of the Jacobins who acclaimed Bonaparte with greatest energy when he suppressed all liberty and made his hand of iron severely felt.

It is difficult to understand history and popular revolutions in particular, if one does not take sufficiently into account the profoundly conservative instincts of crowds. They may be desirous, it is true, of changing the names of their institutions, and to obtain these changes they accomplish at times even violent revolutions, but the essence of these institutions is too much the expression of the hereditary needs of the race for them not invariably to abide by it. Their incessant mobility only exerts its influence on quite superficial matters. In fact they possess conservative instincts as indestructible as those of all primitive beings. Their fetish? like respect for all traditions is absolute; their unconscious horror of all novelty capable of changing the essential conditions of their existence is very deeply rooted. Had democracies possessed the power they wield today at the time of the invention of mechanical looms or of the introduction of steam power and of railways, the

realisation of these inventions would have been impossible, or would have been achieved at the cost of revolutions and repeated massacres. It is fortunate for the progress of civilisation that the power of crowds only began to exist when the great discoveries of science and industry had already been affected.

## §5. The morality of crowds.

Taking the word “morality” to mean constant respect for certain social conventions, and the permanent repression of selfish impulses, it is quite evident that crowds are too impulsive and too mobile to be moral. If, however, we include in the term morality the transitory display of certain qualities such as abnegation, self-sacrifice, disinterestedness, devotion, and the need of equity, we may say, on the contrary, that crowds may exhibit at times a very lofty morality.

The few psychologists who have studied crowds have only considered them from the point of view of their criminal acts, and noticing how frequent these acts are, they have come to the conclusion that the moral standard of crowds is very low. Doubtless this is often the case; but why? Simply because our savage, destructive instincts are the inheritance left dormant in all of us from the primitive ages. In the life of the isolated individual it would be dangerous for him to gratify these instincts, while his absorption in an irresponsible crowd, in which in consequence he is assured of impunity, gives him entire liberty to follow them. Being unable, in the ordinary course of events, to exercise these destructive instincts on our fellow-men, we confine ourselves to exercising them on animals. The passion, so widespread, for the chase and the acts of ferocity of crowds proceed from one and the same source. A crowd which slowly slaughters a defenceless victim displays a very cowardly ferocity; but for the philosopher this ferocity is very closely related to that of the huntsmen who gather in dozens for the pleasure of taking part in the pursuit and killing of a luckless stag by their hounds.

A crowd may be guilty of murder, incendiarism, and every kind of crime, but

it is also capable of very lofty acts of devotion, sacrifice, and disinterestedness, of acts much loftier indeed than those of which the isolated individual is capable. Appeals to sentiments of glory, honour, and patriotism are particularly likely to influence the individual forming part of a crowd, and often to the extent of obtaining from him the sacrifice of his life. History is rich in examples analogous to those furnished by the Crusaders and the volunteers of 1793. Collectivities alone are capable of great disinterestedness and great devotion. How numerous are the crowds that have heroically faced death for beliefs, ideas, and phrases that they scarcely understood! The crowds that go on strike do so far more in obedience to an order than to obtain an increase of the slender salary with which they make shift. Personal interest is very rarely a powerful motive force with crowds, while it is almost the exclusive motive of the conduct of the isolated individual. It is assuredly not self-interest that has guided crowds in so many wars, incomprehensible as a rule to their intelligence—wars in which they have allowed themselves to be massacred as easily as the larks hypnotised by the mirror of the hunter.

Even in the case of absolute scoundrels it often happens that the mere fact of their being in a crowd endows them for the moment with very strict principles of morality. Taine calls attention to the fact that the perpetrators of the September massacres deposited on the table of the committees the pocketbooks and jewels they had found on their victims, and with which they could easily have been able to make away. The howling, swarming, ragged crowd which invaded the Tuileries during the revolution of 1848 did not lay hands on any of the objects that excited its astonishment, and one of which would have meant bread for many days.

This moralisation of the individual by the crowd is not certainly a constant rule, but it is a rule frequently observed. It is even observed in circumstances much less grave than those I have just cited. I have remarked that in the theatre a crowd exacts from the hero of the piece exaggerated virtues, and it is a commonplace observation that an assembly, even though composed of inferior elements, shows itself as a rule very prudish. The debauchee, the souteneur, the rough often breaks out into murmurs at a slightly risky scene or expression, though they be very harmless in comparison with their customary conversation.

If, then, crowds often abandon themselves to low instincts, they also set the example at times of acts of lofty morality. If disinterestedness, resignation, and absolute devotion to a real or chimerical ideal are moral virtues, it may be said that crowds often possess these virtues to a degree rarely attained by the wisest philosophers. Doubtless they practise them unconsciously, but that is of small import. We should not complain too much that crowds are more especially guided by unconscious considerations and are not given to reasoning. Had they, in certain cases, reasoned and consulted their immediate interests, it is possible that no civilisation would have grown up on our planet and humanity would have had no history.

## **CHAPTER III THE IDEAS, REASONING POWER, AND IMAGINATION OF CROWDS**

### **§1. The ideas of crowds.**

Fundamental and accessory ideas—How contradictory ideas may exist simultaneously—The transformation that must be undergone by lofty ideas before they are accessible to crowds—The social influence of ideas is independent of the degree of truth they may contain.

### **§2. The reasoning power of crowds.**

Crowds are not to be influenced by reasoning—The reasoning of crowds is always of a very inferior order—There is only the appearance of analogy or succession in the ideas they associate.

### **§3. The imagination of crowds.**

Strength of the imagination of crowds—Crowds think in images, and these images succeed each other without any connecting link—Crowds are especially impressed by the marvellous—Legends and the marvellous are the

real pillars of civilisation—The popular imagination has always been the basis of the power of statesmen—The manner in which facts capable of striking the imagination of crowds present themselves for observation.

## §1. The ideas of crowds

When studying in a preceding work the part played by ideas in the evolution of nations, we showed that every civilisation is the outcome of a small number of fundamental ideas that are very rarely renewed. We showed how these ideas are implanted in the minds of crowds, with what difficulty the process is effected, and the power possessed by the ideas in question when once it has been accomplished. Finally we saw that great historical perturbations are the result, as a rule, of changes in these fundamental ideas.

Having treated this subject at sufficient length, I shall not return to it now, but shall confine myself to saying a few words on the subject of such ideas as are accessible to crowds, and of the forms under which they conceive them.

They may be divided into two classes. In one we shall place accidental and passing ideas created by the influences of the moment, infatuation for an individual or a doctrine, for instance. In the other will be classed the fundamental ideas, to which the environment, the laws of heredity and public opinion give a very great stability; such ideas are the religious beliefs of the past and the social and democratic ideas of today.

These fundamental ideas resemble the volume of the water of a stream slowly pursuing its course; the transitory ideas are like the small waves, for ever changing, which agitate its surface, and are more visible than the progress of the stream itself although without real importance.

At the present day the great fundamental ideas which were the mainstay of our fathers are tottering more and more. They have lost all solidity, and at the same time the institutions resting upon them are severely shaken. Every day there are formed a great many of those transitory minor ideas of which I have just been speaking; but very few of them to all appearance seem endowed

with vitality and destined to acquire a preponderating influence.

Whatever be the ideas suggested to crowds they can only exercise effective influence on condition that they assume a very absolute, uncompromising, and simple shape. They present themselves then in the guise of images, and are only accessible to the masses under this form. These image-like ideas are not connected by any logical bond of analogy or succession, and may take each other's place like the slides of a magic lantern which the operator withdraws from the groove in which they were placed one above the other. This explains how it is that the most contradictory ideas may be seen to be simultaneously current in crowds. According to the chances of the moment, a crowd will come under the influence of one of the various ideas stored up in its understanding, and is capable, in consequence, of committing the most dissimilar acts. Its complete lack of the critical spirit does not allow of its perceiving these contradictions.

This phenomenon is not peculiar to crowds. It is to be observed in many isolated individuals, not only among primitive beings, but in the case of all those-the fervent sectaries of a religious faith, for instance-who by one side or another of their intelligence are akin to primitive beings. I have observed its presence to a curious extent in the case of educated Hindus brought up at our European universities and having taken their degree. A number of Western ideas had been superposed on their unchangeable and fundamental hereditary or social ideas. According to the chances of the moment, the one or the other set of ideas showed themselves each with their special accompaniment of acts or utterances, the same individual presenting in this way the most flagrant contradictions. These contradictions are more apparent than real, for it is only hereditary ideas that have sufficient influence over the isolated individual to become motives of conduct. It is only when, as the result of the intermingling of different races, a man is placed between different hereditary tendencies that his acts from one moment to another may be really entirely contradictory. It would be useless to insist here on these phenomena, although their psychological importance is capital. I am of opinion that at least ten years of travel and observation would be necessary to arrive at a comprehension of them.



Ideas being only accessible to crowds after having assumed a very simple shape must often undergo the most thoroughgoing transformations to become popular. It is especially when we are dealing with somewhat lofty philosophic or scientific ideas that we see how far-reaching the modifications are they require in order to lower them to the level of the intelligence of crowds. These modifications are dependent on the nature of the crowds, or of the race to which the crowds belong, but their tendency is always belittling and in the direction of simplification. This explains the fact that, from the social point of view, there is in reality scarcely any such thing as a hierarchy of ideas-that is to say, as ideas of greater or less elevation. However great or true an idea may have been to begin with, it is deprived of almost all that which constituted its elevation and its greatness by the mere fact that it has come within the intellectual range of crowds and exerts an influence upon them.

Moreover, from the social point of view the hierarchical value of an idea, its intrinsic worth, is without importance. The necessary point to consider is the effects it produces. The Christian ideas of the Middle Ages, the democratic ideas of the last century, or the social ideas of today are assuredly not very elevated. Philosophically considered, they can only be regarded as somewhat sorry errors, and yet their power has been and will be immense, and they will count for a long time to come among the most essential factors that determine the conduct of States.

Even when an idea has undergone the transformations which render it accessible to crowds, it only exerts influence when, by various processes which we shall examine elsewhere, it has entered the domain of the unconscious, when indeed it has become a sentiment, for which much time is required. For it must not be supposed that merely because the justness of an idea has been proved it can be productive of effective action even on cultivated minds. This fact may be quickly appreciated by noting how slight the influence of the clearest demonstration on the majority of men is. Evidence, if it be very plain, may be accepted by an educated person, but the convert will be quickly brought back by his unconscious self to his original conceptions. See him again after the lapse of a few days and he will put forward afresh his old arguments in exactly the same terms. He is in reality

under the influence of anterior ideas, that have become sentiments, and it is such ideas alone that influence the more recondite motives of our acts and utterances. It cannot be otherwise in the case of crowds.

When by various processes an idea has ended by penetrating into the minds of crowds, it possesses an irresistible power, and brings about a series of effects, opposition to which is bootless. The philosophical ideas which resulted in the French Revolution took nearly a century to implant themselves in the mind of the crowd. Their irresistible force, when once they had taken root, is known. The striving of an entire nation towards the conquest of social equality, and the realisation of abstract rights and ideal liberties, caused the tottering of all thrones and profoundly disturbed the Western world. During twenty years the nations were engaged in internecine conflict, and Europe witnessed hecatombs that would have terrified Ghengis Khan and Tamerlane. The world had never seen on such a scale what may result from the promulgation of an idea.

A long time is necessary for ideas to establish themselves in the minds of crowds, but just as long a time is needed for them to be eradicated. For this reason crowds, as far as ideas are concerned, are always several generations behind learned men and philosophers. All statesmen are well aware today of the admixture of error contained in the fundamental ideas I referred to a short while back, but as the influence of these ideas is still very powerful they are obliged to govern in accordance with principles in the truth of which they have ceased to believe.

## §2. The reasoning power of crowds

It cannot absolutely be said that crowds do not reason and are not to be influenced by reasoning.

However, the arguments they employ and those which are capable of influencing them are, from a logical point of view, of such an inferior kind that it is only by way of analogy that they can be described as reasoning.

The inferior reasoning of crowds is based, just as is reasoning of a high order, on the association of ideas, but between the ideas associated by crowds there are only apparent bonds of analogy or succession. The mode of reasoning of crowds resembles that of the Esquimaux who, knowing from experience that ice, a transparent body, melts in the mouth, concludes that glass, also a transparent body, should also melt in the mouth; or that of the savage who imagines that by eating the heart of a courageous foe he acquires his bravery; or of the workman who, having been exploited by one employer of labour, immediately concludes that all employers exploit their men.

The characteristics of the reasoning of crowds are the association of dissimilar things possessing a merely apparent connection between each other, and the immediate generalisation of particular cases. It is arguments of this kind that are always presented to crowds by those who know how to manage them. They are the only arguments by which crowds are to be influenced. A chain of logical argumentation is totally incomprehensible to crowds, and for this reason it is permissible to say that they do not reason or that they reason falsely and are not to be influenced by reasoning. Astonishment is felt at times on reading certain speeches at their weakness, and yet they had an enormous influence on the crowds which listened to them, but it is forgotten that they were intended to persuade collectivities and not to be read by philosophers. An orator in intimate communication with a crowd can evoke images by which it will be seduced. If he is successful his object has been attained, and twenty volumes of harangues—always the outcome of reflection—are not worth the few phrases which appealed to the brains it was required to convince.

It would be superfluous to add that the powerlessness of crowds to reason a right prevents them displaying any trace of the critical spirit, prevents them, that is, from being capable of discerning truth from error, or of forming a precise judgment on any matter. Judgments accepted by crowds are merely judgments forced upon them and never judgments adopted after discussion. In regard to this matter the individuals who do not rise above the level of a crowd are numerous. The ease with which certain opinions obtain general acceptance results more especially from the impossibility experienced by the majority of men of forming an opinion peculiar to themselves and based on

reasoning of their own.

### §3. The imagination of crowds

Just as is the case with respect to persons in whom the reasoning power is absent, the figurative imagination of crowds is very powerful, very active and very susceptible of being keenly impressed. The images evoked in their mind by a personage, an event, an accident, are almost as lifelike as the reality. Crowds are to some extent in the position of the sleeper whose reason, suspended for the time being, allows the arousing in his mind of images of extreme intensity which would quickly be dissipated could they be submitted to the action of reflection. Crowds, being incapable both of reflection and of reasoning, are devoid of the notion of improbability; and it is to be noted that in a general way it is the most improbable things that are the most striking.

This is why it happens that it is always the marvellous and legendary side of events that more specially strike crowds. When a civilisation is analysed it is seen that, in reality, it is the marvellous and the legendary that are its true supports. Appearances have always played a much more important part than reality in history, where the unreal is always of greater moment than the real.

Crowds being only capable of thinking in images are only to be impressed by images. It is only images that terrify or attract them and become motives of action.

For this reason, theatrical representations, in which the image is shown in its most clearly visible shape, always have an enormous influence on crowds. Bread and spectacular shows constituted for the plebeians of ancient Rome the ideal of happiness, and they asked for nothing more. Throughout the successive ages this ideal has scarcely varied. Nothing has a greater effect on the imagination of crowds of every category than theatrical representations. The entire audience experiences at the same time the same emotions, and if these emotions are not at once transformed into acts, it is because the most unconscious spectator cannot ignore that he is the victim of illusions, and that he has laughed or wept over imaginary adventures. Sometimes, however, the

sentiments suggested by the images are so strong that they tend, like habitual suggestions, to transform themselves into acts. The story has often been told of the manager of a popular theatre who, in consequence of his only playing sombre dramas, was obliged to have the actor who took the part of the traitor protected on his leaving the theatre, to defend him against the violence of the spectators, indignant at the crimes, imaginary though they were, which the traitor had committed. We have here, in my opinion, one of the most remarkable indications of the mental state of crowds, and especially of the facility with which they are suggested. The unreal has almost as much influence on them as the real. They have an evident tendency not to distinguish between the two.

The power of conquerors and the strength of States is based on the popular imagination. It is more particularly by working upon this imagination that crowds are led. All great historical facts, the rise of Buddhism, of Christianity, of Islamism, the Reformation, the French Revolution, and, in our own time, the threatening invasion of Socialism are the direct or indirect consequences of strong impressions produced on the imagination of the crowd.

Moreover, all the great statesmen of every age and every country, including the most absolute despots, have regarded the popular imagination as the basis of their power, and they have never attempted to govern in opposition to it "It was by becoming a Catholic," said Napoleon to the Council of State, "that I terminated the Vendean war. By becoming a Mussulman that I obtained a footing in Egypt. By becoming an Ultramontane that I won over the Italian priests, and had I to govern a nation of Jews I would rebuild Solomon's temple." Never perhaps since Alexander and Caesar has any great man better understood how the imagination of the crowd should be impressed. His constant preoccupation was to strike it. He bore it in mind in his victories, in his harangues, in his speeches, in all his acts. On his deathbed it was still in his thoughts.

How is the imagination of crowds to be impressed? We shall soon see. Let us confine ourselves for the moment to saying that the feat is never to be achieved by attempting to work upon the intelligence or reasoning faculty,

that is to say, by way of demonstration. It was not by means of cunning rhetoric that Antony succeeded in making the populace rise against the murderers of Caesar; it was by reading his will to the multitude and pointing to his corpse.

Whatever strikes the imagination of crowds presents itself under the shape of a startling and very clear image, freed from all accessory explanation, or merely having as accompaniment a few marvellous or mysterious facts: examples in point are a great victory, a great miracle, a great crime, or a great hope. Things must be laid before the crowd as a whole, and their genesis must never be indicated. A hundred petty crimes or petty accidents will not strike the imagination of crowds in the least, whereas a single great crime or a single great accident will profoundly impress them, even though the results be infinitely less disastrous than those of the hundred small accidents put together. The epidemic of influenza, which caused the death but a few years ago of five thousand persons in Paris alone, made very little impression on the popular imagination. The reason was that this veritable hecatomb was not embodied in any visible image, but was only learnt from statistical information furnished weekly. An accident which should have caused the death of only five hundred instead of five thousand persons, but on the same day and in public, as the outcome of an accident appealing strongly to the eye, by the fall, for instance, of the Eiffel Tower, would have produced, on the contrary, an immense impression on the imagination of the crowd. The probable loss of a transatlantic steamer that was supposed, in the absence of news, to have gone down in mid-ocean profoundly impressed the imagination of the crowd for a whole week. Yet official statistics show that 850 sailing vessels and 203 steamers were lost in the year 1894 alone. The crowd, however, was never for a moment concerned by these successive losses, much more important though they were as far as regards the destruction of life and property, than the loss of the Atlantic liner in question could possibly have been.

It is not, then, the facts in themselves that strike the popular imagination, but the way in which they take place and are brought under notice. It is necessary that by their condensation, if I may thus express myself, they should produce a startling image which fills and besets the mind. To know the art of

impressing the imagination of crowds is to know at the same time the art of governing them.

## **CHAPTER IV A RELIGIOUS SHAPE ASSUMED BY ALL THE CONVICTIONS OF CROWDS**

What is meant by the religious sentiment—It is independent of the worship of a divinity—Its characteristics—The strength of convictions assuming a religious shape—Various examples—Popular gods have never disappeared—New forms under which they are revived—Religious forms of atheism—Importance of these notions from the historical point of view— The Reformation, Saint Bartholomew, the Terror, and all analogous events are the result of the religious sentiments of crowds and not of the will of isolated individuals.

We have shown that crowds do not reason, that they accept or reject ideas as a whole, that they tolerate neither discussion nor contradiction, and that the suggestions brought to bear on them invade the entire field of their understanding and tend at once to transform themselves into acts. We have shown that crowds suitably influenced are ready to sacrifice themselves for the ideal with which they have been inspired. We have also seen that they only entertain violent and extreme sentiments, that in their case sympathy quickly becomes adoration, and antipathy almost as soon as it is aroused is transformed into hatred. These general indications furnish us already with a presentiment of the nature of the convictions of crowds.

When these convictions are closely examined, whether at epochs marked by fervent religious faith, or by great political upheavals such as those of the last century, it is apparent that they always assume a peculiar form which I cannot better define than by giving it the name of a religious sentiment.

This sentiment has very simple characteristics, such as worship of a being supposed superior, fear of the power with which the being is credited, blind submission to its commands, inability to discuss its dogmas, the desire to spread them, and a tendency to consider as enemies all by whom they are not accepted. Whether such a sentiment apply to an invisible God, to a wooden or stone idol, to a hero or to a political conception, provided that it presents the preceding characteristics, its essence always remains religious. The supernatural and the miraculous are found to be present to the same extent. Crowds unconsciously accord a mysterious power to the political formula or the victorious leader that for the moment arouses their enthusiasm.

A person is not religious solely when he worships a divinity, but when he puts all the resources of his mind, the complete submission of his will, and the whole-souled ardour of fanaticism at the service of a cause or an individual who becomes the goal and guide of his thoughts and actions.

Intolerance and fanaticism are the necessary accompaniments of the religious sentiment. They are inevitably displayed by those who believe themselves in the possession of the secret of earthly or eternal happiness. These two characteristics are to be found in all men grouped together when they are inspired by a conviction of any kind. The Jacobins of the Reign of Terror were at bottom as religious as the Catholics of the Inquisition, and their cruel ardour proceeded from the same source.

The convictions of crowds assume those characteristics of blind submission, fierce intolerance, and the need of violent propaganda which are inherent in the religious sentiment, and it is for this reason that it may be said that all their beliefs have a religious form. The hero acclaimed by a crowd is a veritable god for that crowd. Napoleon was such a god for fifteen years, and a divinity never had more fervent worshippers or sent men to their death with greater ease. The Christian and Pagan Gods never exercised a more absolute empire over the minds that had fallen under their sway.

All founders of religious or political creeds have established them solely because they were successful in inspiring crowds with those fanatical sentiments which have as result that men find their happiness in worship and



obedience and are ready to lay down their lives for their idol. This has been the case at all epochs. Fustel de Coulanges, in his excellent work on Roman Gaul, justly remarks that the Roman Empire was in no wise maintained by force, but by the religious admiration it inspired. "It would be without a parallel in the history of the world," he observes rightly, "that a form of government held in popular detestation should have lasted for five centuries. . . It would be inexplicable that the thirty legions of the Empire should have constrained a hundred million men to obedience." The reason of their obedience was that the Emperor, who personified the greatness of Rome, was worshipped like a divinity by unanimous consent. There were altars in honour of the Emperor in the smallest townships of his realm. "From one end of the Empire to the other a new religion was seen to arise in those days which had for its divinities the emperors themselves. Some years before the Christian era the whole of Gaul, represented by sixty cities, built in common a temple near the town of Lyons in honour of Augustus. . . Its priests, elected by the united Gallic cities, were the principal personages in their country. . . It is impossible to attribute all this to fear and servility. Whole nations are not servile, and especially for three centuries. It was not the courtiers who worshipped the prince, it was Rome, and it was not Rome merely, but it was Gaul, it was Spain, it was Greece and Asia."

Today the majority of the great men who have swayed men's minds no longer have altars, but they have statues, or their portraits are in the hands of their admirers, and the cult of which they are the object is not notably different from that accorded to their predecessors. An understanding of the philosophy of history is only to be got by a thorough appreciation of this fundamental point of the psychology of crowds. The crowd demands a god before everything else.

It must not be supposed that these are the superstitions of a bygone age which reason has definitely banished. Sentiment has never been vanquished in its eternal conflict with reason. Crowds will hear no more of the words divinity and religion, in whose name they were so long enslaved; but they have never possessed so many fetishes as in the last hundred years, and the old divinities have never had so many statues and altars raised in their honour. Those who in recent years have studied the popular movement known under the name of

Boulangism have been able to see with what ease the religious instincts of crowds are ready to revive. There was not a country inn that did not possess the hero's portrait. He was credited with the power of remedying all injustices and all evils, and thousands of men would have given their lives for him. Great might have been his place in history had his character been at all on a level with his legendary reputation.

It is thus a very useless commonplace to assert that a religion is necessary for the masses, because all political, divine, and social creeds only take root among them on the condition of always assuming the religious shape—a shape which obviates the danger of discussion. Were it possible to induce the masses to adopt atheism, this belief would exhibit all the intolerant ardour of a religious sentiment and in its exterior forms would soon become a cult. The evolution of the small Positivist sect furnishes us a curious proof in point. What happened to the Nihilist whose story is related by that profound thinker Dostoyevsky has quickly happened to the Positivists. Illumined one day by the light of reason he broke the images of divinities and saints that adorned the altar of a chapel, extinguished the candles, and, without losing a moment, replaced the destroyed objects by the works of atheistic philosophers such as Buchner and Moleschott, after which he piously relighted the candles. The object of his religious beliefs had been transformed, but can it be truthfully said that his religious sentiments had changed?

Certain historical events—and they are precisely the most important—I again repeat, are not to be understood unless one has attained to an appreciation of the religious form which the convictions of crowds always assume in the long run. There are social phenomena that need to be studied far more from the point of view of the psychologist than from that of the naturalist. The great historian Taine has only studied the Revolution as a naturalist, and on this account the real genesis of events has often escaped him. He has perfectly observed the facts, but from want of having studied the psychology of crowds he has not always been able to trace their causes. The facts having appalled him by their bloodthirsty, anarchic, and ferocious side, he has scarcely seen in the heroes of the great drama anything more than a horde of epileptic savages abandoning themselves without restraint to their instincts. The violence of the Revolution, its massacres, its need of propaganda, its

declarations of war upon all things, are only to be properly explained by reflecting that the Revolution was merely the establishment of a new religious belief in the mind of the masses. The Reformation, the massacre of Saint Bartholomew, the French religious wars, the Inquisition, the Reign of Terror are phenomena of an identical kind, brought about by crowds animated by those religious sentiments which necessarily lead those imbued with them to pitilessly extirpate by fire and sword whoever is opposed to the establishment of the new faith. The methods of the Inquisition are those of all whose convictions are genuine and sturdy. Their convictions would not deserve these epithets did they resort to other methods.

Upheavals analogous to those I have just cited are only possible when it is the soul of the masses that brings them about. The most absolute despots could not cause them. When historians tell us that the massacre of Saint Bartholomew was the work of a king, they show themselves as ignorant of the psychology of crowds as of that of sovereigns. Manifestations of this order can only proceed from the soul of crowds. The most absolute power of the most despotic monarch can scarcely do more than hasten or retard the moment of their apparition. The massacre of Saint Bartholomew or the religious wars were no more the work of kings than the Reign of Terror was the work of Robespierre, Danton, or Saint Just. At the bottom of such events is always to be found the working of the soul of the masses, and never the power of potentates.



# **BOOK II THE OPINIONS AND BELIEFS OF CROWDS**

## **CHAPTER I REMOTE FACTORS OF THE OPINIONS AND BELIEFS OF CROWDS**

Preparatory factors of the beliefs of crowds—The origin of the beliefs of crowds is the consequence of a preliminary process of elaboration- Study of the different factors of these beliefs.

### **§1. Race.**

The predominating influence it exercises—It represents the suggestions of ancestors.

### **§2. Traditions.**

They are the synthesis of the soul of the race-Social importance of traditions—How, after having been necessary they become harmful—Crowds are the most obstinate maintainers of traditional ideas.

### **§3. Time.**

It prepares in succession the establishment of beliefs and then their destruction. It is by the aid of this factor that order may proceed from chaos.

### **§4. Political and social institutions.**

Erroneous idea of their part—Their influence extremely weak—They are effects, not causes—Nations are incapable of choosing what appear to them the best institutions—Institutions are labels which shelter the most dissimilar things under the same title—How institutions may come to be created—Certain institutions theoretically bad, such as centralisation obligatory for

certain nations.

## §5. Institutions and education.

Falsity of prevalent ideas as to the influence of instruction on crowds—  
Statistical indications—Demoralising effect of Latin system of education—  
Part instruction might play—Examples furnished by various peoples.

Having studied the mental constitution of crowds and become acquainted with their modes of feeling, thinking, and reasoning, we shall now proceed to examine how their opinions and beliefs arise and become established.

The factors which determine these opinions and beliefs are of two kinds: remote factors and immediate factors.

The remote factors are those which render crowds capable of adopting certain convictions and absolutely refractory to the acceptance of others. These factors prepare the ground in which are suddenly seen to germinate certain new ideas whose force and consequences are a cause of astonishment, though they are only spontaneous in appearance. The outburst and putting in practice of certain ideas among crowds present at times a startling suddenness. This is only a superficial effect, behind which must be sought a preliminary and preparatory action of long duration.

The immediate factors are those which, coming on the top of this long, preparatory working, in whose absence they would remain without effect, serve as the source of active persuasion on crowds; that is, they are the factors which cause the idea to take shape and set it loose with all its consequences. The resolutions by which collectivities are suddenly carried away arise out of these immediate factors; it is due to them that a riot breaks out or a strike is decided upon, and to them that enormous majorities invest one man with power to overthrow a government.

The successive action of these two kinds of factors is to be traced in all great historical events. The French Revolution—to cite but one of the most striking of such events—had among its remote factors the writings of the philosophers, the exactions of the nobility, and the progress of scientific

thought. The mind of the masses, thus prepared, was then easily roused by such immediate factors as the speeches of orators, and the resistance of the court party to insignificant reforms.

Among the remote factors there are some of a general nature, which are found to underlie all the beliefs and opinions of crowds. They are race, traditions, time, institutions, and education.

We now proceed to study the influence of these different factors.

## 1. Race

This factor, race, must be placed in the first rank, for in itself it far surpasses in importance all the others. We have sufficiently studied it in another work; it is therefore needless to deal with it again. We showed, in a previous volume, what an historical race is, and how, its character once formed, it possesses, as the result of the laws of heredity such power that its beliefs, institutions, and arts—in a word, all the elements of its civilisation—are merely the outward expression of its genius. We showed that the power of the race is such that no element can pass from one people to another without undergoing the most profound transformations.<sup>①</sup>

<sup>①</sup> The novelty of this proposition being still considerable and history being quite unintelligible without it, I devoted four chapters to its demonstration in my last book (“The Psychological Laws of the Evolution of Peoples”). From it the reader will see that, in spite of fallacious appearances, neither language, religion, arts, or, in a word, any element of civilisation, can pass, intact, from one people to another.

Environment, circumstances, and events represent the social suggestions of the moment. They may have a considerable influence, but this influence is always momentary if it be contrary to the suggestions of the race; that is, to those which are inherited by a nation from the entire series of its ancestors.

We shall have occasion in several of the chapters of this work to touch again upon racial influence, and to show that this influence is so great that it dominates the characteristics peculiar to the genius of crowds. It follows from this fact that the crowds of different countries offer very considerable differences of beliefs and conduct and are not to be influenced in the same manner.

## §2. Traditions

Traditions represent the ideas, the needs, and the sentiments of the past. They are the synthesis of the race, and weigh upon us with immense force.

The biological sciences have been transformed since embryology has shown the immense influence of the past on the evolution of living beings; and the historical sciences will not undergo a less change when this conception has become more widespread. As yet it is not sufficiently general, and many statesmen are still no further advanced than the theorists of the last century, who believed that a society could break off with its past and be entirely recast on lines suggested solely by the light of reason.

A people is an organism created by the past, and, like every other organism, it can only be modified by slow hereditary accumulations.

It is tradition that guides men, and more especially so when they are in a crowd. The changes they can effect in their traditions with any ease, merely bear, as I have often repeated, upon names and outward forms.

This circumstance is not to be regretted. Neither a national genius nor



civilisation would be possible without traditions. In consequence man's two great concerns since he has existed have been to create a network of traditions which he afterwards endeavours to destroy when their beneficial effects have worn themselves out. Civilisation is impossible without traditions, and progress impossible without the destruction of those traditions. The difficulty, and it is an immense difficulty, is to find a proper equilibrium between stability and variability. Should a people allow its customs to become too firmly rooted, it can no longer change, and becomes, like China, incapable of improvement. Violent revolutions are in this case of no avail; for what happens is that either the broken fragments of the chain are pieced together again and the past resumes its empire without change, or the fragments remain apart and decadence soon succeeds anarchy.

The ideal for a people is in consequence to preserve the institutions of the past, merely changing them insensibly and little by little. This ideal is difficult to realise. The Romans in ancient and the English in modern times are almost alone in having realised it.

It is precisely crowds that cling the most tenaciously to traditional ideas and oppose their being changed with the most obstinacy. This is notably the case with the category of crowds constituting castes. I have already insisted upon the conservative spirit of crowds, and shown that the most violent rebellions merely end in a changing of words and terms. At the end of the last century, in the presence of destroyed churches, of priests expelled the country or guillotined, it might have been thought that the old religious ideas had lost all their strength, and yet a few years had barely lapsed before the abolished system of public worship had to be Re-established in deference to universal demands.<sup>①</sup>

<sup>①</sup> The report of the ex-Conventionist, Fourcroy, quoted by Taine, is very clear on this point.

“What is everywhere seen with respect to the keeping of Sunday and attendance at the churches proves that the majority of Frenchmen desire to return to their old usages and that it is no longer opportune to resist this natural tendency. . . . The great majority of men stand in need of religion, public worship, and priests. It is an error of some modern philosophers, by which I myself have been led away, to believe in the possibility of instruction being so general as to destroy religious prejudices, which for a great number of unfortunate persons are a source of consolation. . . . The mass of the people, then, must be allowed its priests, its altars, and its public worship.”

Blotted out for a moment, the old traditions had resumed their sway.

No example could better display the power of tradition on the mind of crowds. The most redoubtable idols do not dwell in temples, nor the most despotic tyrants in palaces; both the one and the other can be broken in an instant. But the invisible masters that reign in our innermost selves are safe from every effort at revolt, and only yield to the slow wearing away of centuries.

### §3. Time

In social as in biological problems time is one of the most energetic factors. It is the sole real creator and the sole great destroyer. It is time that has made mountains with grains of sand and raised the obscure cell of geological eras to human dignity. The action of centuries is sufficient to transform any given phenomenon. It has been justly observed that an ant with enough time at its disposal could level Mount Blanc. A being possessed of the magical force of varying time at his will would have the power attributed by believers to God.

In this place, however, we have only to concern ourselves with the influence of time on the genesis of the opinions of crowds. Its action from this point of view is still immense. Dependent upon it are the great forces such as race, which cannot form themselves without it. It causes the birth, the growth, and

the death of all beliefs. It is by the aid of time that they acquire their strength and also by its aid that they lose it.

It is time in particular that prepares the opinions and beliefs of crowds, or at least the soil on which they will germinate. This is why certain ideas are realisable at one epoch and not at another. It is time that accumulates that immense detritus of beliefs and thoughts on which the ideas of a given period spring up. They do not grow at hazard and by chance; the roots of each of them strike down into a long past. When they blossom it is time that has prepared their blooming; and to arrive at a notion of their genesis it is always back in the past that it is necessary to search. They are the daughters of the past and the mothers of the future, but throughout the slaves of time.

Time, in consequence, is our veritable master, and it suffices to leave it free to act to see all things transformed. At the present day we are very uneasy with regard to the threatening aspirations of the masses and the destructions and upheavals foreboded thereby. Time, without other aid, will see to the restoration of equilibrium. "No form of government," M. Lavissee very properly writes, "was founded in a day. Political and social organizations are works that demand centuries. The feudal system existed for centuries in a shapeless, chaotic state before it found its laws; absolute monarchy also existed for centuries before arriving at regular methods of government, and these periods of expectancy were extremely troubled."

#### §4. Political and social institutions

The idea that institutions can remedy the defects of societies, that national progress is the consequence of the improvement of institutions and governments, and that social changes can be effected by decrees- this idea, I say, is still generally accepted. It was the starting-point of the French Revolution, and the social theories of the present day are based upon it.

The most continuous experience has been unsuccessful in shaking this grave delusion. Philosophers and historians have endeavored in vain to prove its absurdity, but yet they have had no difficulty in demonstrating that

institutions are the outcome of ideas, sentiments, and customs, and that ideas, sentiments, and customs are not to be recast by recasting legislative codes. A nation does not choose its institutions at will any more than it chooses the colour of its hair or its eyes. Institutions and governments are the product of the race. They are not the creators of an epoch, but are created by it. Peoples are not governed in accordance with their caprices of the moment, but as their character determines that they shall be governed. Centuries are required to form a political system and centuries needed to change it. Institutions have no intrinsic virtue; in themselves they are neither good nor bad. Those which are good at a given moment for a given people may be harmful in the extreme for another nation.

Moreover, it is in no way in the power of a people to really change its institutions. Undoubtedly, at the cost of violent revolutions, it can change their name, but in their essence they remain unmodified. The names are mere futile labels with which an historian who goes to the bottom of things need scarcely concern himself. It is in this way, for instance, that England,<sup>①</sup> the most democratic country in the world, lives, nevertheless, under a monarchical regime, whereas the countries in which the most oppressive despotism is rampant are the Spanish?American Republics, in spite of their republican constitutions. The destinies of peoples are determined by their character and not by their government. I have endeavored to establish this view in my previous volume by setting forth categorical examples.

① The most advanced republicans, even of the United States, recognise this fact. The American magazine, The Forum, recently gave categorical expression to the opinion in terms which I reproduce here from the Review of Reviews for December, 1894:

“It should never be forgotten, even by the most ardent enemies of an aristocracy, that England is today the most democratic country of the

universe, the country in which the rights of the individual are most respected, and in which the individual possesses the most liberty.”

To lose time in the manufacture of cut-and-dried constitutions is, in consequence, a puerile task, the useless labour of an ignorant rhetorician. Necessity and time undertake the charge of elaborating constitutions when we are wise enough to allow these two factors to act. This is the plan the Anglo-Saxons have adopted, as their great historian, Macaulay, teaches us in a passage that the politicians of all Latin countries ought to learn by heart. After having shown all the good that can be accomplished by laws which appear from the point of view of pure reason a chaos of absurdities and contradictions, he compares the scores of constitutions that have been engulfed in the convulsions of the Latin peoples with that of England, and points out that the latter has only been very slowly changed part by part, under the influence of immediate necessities and never of speculative reasoning.

“To think nothing of symmetry and much of convenience; never to remove an anomaly merely because it is an anomaly; never to innovate except when some grievance is felt; never to innovate except so far as to get rid of the grievance; never to lay down any proposition of wider extent than the particular case for which it is necessary to provide; these are the rules which have, from the age of John to the age of Victoria, generally guided the deliberations of our two hundred and fifty Parliaments.”

It would be necessary to take one by one the laws and institutions of each people to show to what extent they are the expression of the needs of each race and are incapable, for that reason, of being violently transformed. It is possible, for, instance, to indulge in philosophical dissertations on the advantages and disadvantages of centralisation; but when we see a people composed of very different races devote a thousand years of efforts to attaining to this centralisation; when we observe that a great revolution, having for object the destruction of all the institutions of the past, has been forced to respect this centralisation, and has even strengthened it; under these

circumstances we should admit that it is the outcome of imperious needs, that it is a condition of the existence of the nation in question, and we should pity the poor mental range of politicians who talk of destroying it. Could they by chance succeed in this attempt, their success would at once be the signal for a frightful civil war,<sup>①</sup> which, moreover, would immediately bring back a new system of centralisation much more oppressive than the old.

① If a comparison be made between the profound religious and political dissensions which separate the various parties in France, and are more especially the result of social questions, and the separatist tendencies which were manifested at the time of the Revolution, and began to again display themselves towards the close of the Franco-German war, it will be seen that the different races represented in France are still far from being completely blended. The vigorous centralisation of the Revolution and the creation of artificial departments destined to bring about the fusion of the ancient provinces was certainly its most useful work. Were it possible to bring about the decentralisation which is to-day preoccupying minds lacking in foresight, the achievement would promptly have for consequence the most sanguinary disorders. To overlook this fact is to leave out of account the entire history of France.

The conclusion to be drawn from what precedes is, that it is not in institutions that the means is to be sought of profoundly influencing the genius of the masses. When we see certain countries, such as the United States, reach a high degree of prosperity under democratic institutions, while others, such as the Spanish-American Republics, are found existing in a pitiable state of anarchy under absolutely similar institutions, we should admit that these institutions are as foreign to the greatness of the one as to the decadence of

the others. Peoples are governed by their character, and all institutions which are not intimately modelled on that character merely represent a borrowed garment, a transitory disguise. No doubt sanguinary wars and violent revolutions have been undertaken, and will continue to be undertaken, to impose institutions to which is attributed, as to the relics of saints, the supernatural power of creating welfare. It may be said, then, in one sense, that institutions react on the mind of the crowd inasmuch as they engender such upheavals. But in reality it is not the institutions that react in this manner, since we know that, whether triumphant or vanquished, they possess in themselves no virtue. It is illusions and words that have influenced the mind of the crowd, and especially words—words which are as powerful as they are chimerical, and whose astonishing sway we shall shortly demonstrate.

## §5. Instruction and education

Foremost among the dominant ideas of the present epoch is to be found the notion that instruction is capable of considerably changing men, and has for its unfailing consequence to improve them and even to make them equal. By the mere fact of its being constantly repeated, this assertion has ended by becoming one of the most steadfast democratic dogmas. It would be as difficult now to attack it as it would have been formerly to have attacked the dogmas of the Church.

On this point, however, as on many others, democratic ideas are in profound disagreement with the results of psychology and experience. Many eminent philosophers, among them Herbert Spencer, have had no difficulty in showing that instruction neither renders a man more moral nor happier, that it changes neither his instincts nor his hereditary passions, and that at times—for this to happen it need only be badly directed—it is much more pernicious than useful. Statisticians have brought confirmation of these views by telling us that criminality increases with the generalisation of instruction, or at any rate of a certain kind of instruction, and that the worst enemies of society, the anarchists, are recruited among the prize-winners of schools; while in a recent

work a distinguished magistrate, M. Adolphe Guillot, made the observation that at present 3,000 educated criminals are met with for every 1,000 illiterate delinquents, and that in fifty years the criminal percentage of the population has passed from 227 to 552 for every 100,000 inhabitants, an increase of 133 percent. He has also noted in common with his colleagues that criminality is particularly on the increase among young persons, for whom, as is known, gratuitous and obligatory schooling has—in France—replaced apprenticeship.

It is not assuredly—and nobody has ever maintained this proposition—that well-directed instruction may not give very useful practical results, if not in the sense of raising the standard of morality, at least in that of developing professional capacity. Unfortunately the Latin peoples, especially in the last twenty-five years, have based their systems of instruction on very erroneous principles, and in spite of the observations of the most eminent minds, such as Breal, Fustel de Coulanges, Taine, and many others, they persist in their lamentable mistakes. I have myself shown, in a work published some time ago, that the French system of education transforms the majority of those who have undergone it into enemies of society, and recruits numerous disciples for the worst forms of socialism.

The primary danger of this system of education—very properly qualified as Latin—consists in the fact that it is based on the fundamental psychological error that the intelligence is developed by the learning by heart of text-books. Adopting this view, the endeavour has been made to enforce a knowledge of as many hand-books as possible. From the primary school till he leaves the university a young man does nothing but acquire books by heart without his judgment or personal initiative being ever called into play. Education consists for him in reciting by heart and obeying.

“Learning lessons, knowing by heart a grammar or a compendium, repeating well and imitating well—that,” writes a former Minister of Public Instruction, M. Jules Simon, “is a ludicrous form of education whose every effort is an act of faith tacitly admitting the infallibility of the master, and whose only results are a belittling of ourselves and a rendering of us impotent.”



Were this education merely useless, one might confine one's self to expressing compassion for the unhappy children who, instead of making needful studies at the primary school, are instructed in the genealogy of the sons of Clotaire, the conflicts between Neustria and Austrasia, or zoological classifications. But the system presents a far more serious danger. It gives those who have been submitted to it a violent dislike to the state of life in which they were born, and an intense desire to escape from it. The working man no longer wishes to remain a working man, or the peasant to continue a peasant, while the most humble members of the middle classes admit of no possible career for their sons except that of State-paid functionaries. Instead of preparing men for life French schools solely prepare them to occupy public functions, in which success can be attained without any necessity for self-direction or the exhibition of the least glimmer of personal initiative. At the bottom of the social ladder the system creates an army of proletarians discontented with their lot and always ready to revolt, while at the summit it brings into being a frivolous bourgeoisie, at once sceptical and credulous, having a superstitious confidence in the State, whom it regards as a sort of Providence, but without forgetting to display towards it a ceaseless hostility, always laying its own faults to the door of the Government, and incapable of the least enterprise without the intervention of the authorities.

The State, which manufactures by dint of textbooks all these persons possessing diplomas, can only utilise a small number of them, and is forced to leave the others without employment. It is obliged in consequence to resign itself to feeding the first mentioned and to having the others as its enemies. From the top to the bottom of the social pyramid, from the humblest clerk to the professor and the prefect, the immense mass of persons boasting diplomas besiege the professions. While a business man has the greatest difficulty in finding an agent to represent him in the colonies, thousands of candidates solicit the most modest official posts. There are 20,000 schoolmasters and mistresses without employment in the department of the Seine alone, all of them persons who, disdaining the fields or the workshops, look to the State for their livelihood. The number of the chosen being restricted that of the discontented is perforce immense. The latter are ready for any revolution, whoever be its chiefs and whatever the goal they aim at. The acquisition of knowledge for which no use can be found is a sure method

of driving a man to revolt.①

① This phenomenon, moreover, is not peculiar to the Latin peoples. It is also to be observed in China, which is also a country in the hands of a solid hierarchy of mandarins or functionaries, and where a function is obtained, as in France, by competitive examination, in which the only test is the imperturbable recitation of bulky manuals. The army of educated persons without employment is considered in China at the present day as a veritable national calamity. It is the same in India where, since the English have opened schools, not for educating purposes, as is the case in England itself, but simply to furnish the indigenous inhabitants with instruction, there has been formed a special class of educated persons, the Baboos, who, when they do not obtain employment, become the irreconcilable enemies of the English rule. In the case of all the Baboos, whether provided with employment or not, the first effect of their instruction has been to lower their standard of morality. This is a fact on which I have insisted at length in my book, “The Civilisations of India”——a fact, too, which has been observed by all authors who have visited the great peninsula.

It is evidently too late to retrace our steps. Experience alone, that supreme educator of peoples, will be at pains to show us our mistake. It alone will be powerful enough to prove the necessity of replacing our odious text-books and our pitiable examinations by industrial instruction capable of inducing our young men to return to the fields, to the workshop, and to the colonial enterprise which they avoid today at all costs.

The professional instruction which all enlightened minds are now demanding was the instruction received in the past by our forefathers. It is still in vigour at the present day among the nations who rule the world by their force of will, their initiative, and their spirit of enterprise. In a series of remarkable pages, whose principal passages I reproduce further on, a great thinker, M. Taine, has clearly shown that our former system of education was approximately that in vogue today in England and America, and in a remarkable parallel between the Latin and Anglo-Saxon systems he has plainly pointed out the consequences of the two methods.

One might consent, perhaps, at a pinch, to continue to accept all the disadvantages of our classical education, although it produced nothing but discontented men, and men unfitted for their station in life, did the superficial acquisition of so much knowledge, the faultless repeating by heart of so many text-books, raise the level of intelligence. But does it really raise this level? Alas, no! The conditions of success in life are the possession of judgment, experience, initiative, and character—qualities which are not bestowed by books. Books are dictionaries, which it is useful to consult, but of which it is perfectly useless to have lengthy portions in one's head.

How is it possible for professional instruction to develop the intelligence in a measure quite beyond the reach of classical instruction? This has been well shown by M. Taine.

“Ideas, he says, are only formed in their natural and normal surroundings; the promotion of the growth is effected by the innumerable impressions appealing to the senses which a young man receives daily in the workshop, the mine, the law court, the study, the builder's yard, the hospital; at the sight of tools, materials, and operations; in the presence of customers, workers, and labour, of work well or ill done, costly or lucrative. In such a way are obtained those trifling perceptions of detail of the eyes, the ear, the hands, and even the sense of smell, which, picked up involuntarily, and silently elaborated, take shape within the learner, and suggest to him sooner or, later this or that new combination, simplification, economy, improvement, or invention. The young Frenchman is deprived, and precisely at the age when they are most fruitful, of all these precious contacts, of all these indispensable

elements of assimilation. For seven or eight years on end he is shut up in a school, and is cut off from that direct personal experience which would give him a keen and exact notion of men and things and of the various ways of handling them.”

“ . . . At least nine out of ten have wasted their time and pains during several years of their life—telling, important, even decisive years. Among such are to be counted, first of all, the half or two-thirds of those who present themselves for examination—I refer to those who are rejected; and then among those who are successful, who obtain a degree, a certificate, a diploma, there is still a half or two-thirds—I refer to the overworked. Too much has been demanded of them by exacting that on a given day, on a chair or before a board, they should, for two hours in succession, and with respect to a group of sciences, be living repertoires of all human knowledge. In point of fact they were that, or nearly so, for two hours on that particular day, but a month later they are so no longer. They could not go through the examination again. Their too numerous and too burdensome acquisitions slip incessantly from their mind, and are not replaced. Their mental vigour has declined, their fertile capacity for growth has dried up, the fully-developed man appears, and he is often a used-up man. Settled down, married, resigned to turning in a circle, and indefinitely in the same circle, he shuts himself up in his confined function, which he fulfils adequately, but nothing more. Such is the average yield: assuredly the receipts do not balance the expenditure. In England or America, where, as in France previous to 1789, the contrary proceeding is adopted, the outcome obtained is equal or superior.”

The illustrious psychologist subsequently shows us the difference between our system and that of the Anglo-Saxons. The latter do not possess our innumerable special schools. With them instruction is not based on book-learning, but on object lessons. The engineer, for example, is trained in a workshop, and never at a school; a method which allows of each individual reaching the level his intelligence permits of. He becomes a workman or a foreman if he can get no further, an engineer if his aptitudes take him as far. This manner of proceeding is much more democratic and of much greater

benefit to society than that of making the whole career of an individual depend on an examination, lasting a few hours, and undergone at the age of nineteen or twenty.

“In the hospital, the mine, the factory, in the architect’s or the lawyer’s office, the student, who makes a start while very young, goes through his apprenticeship, stage by stage, much as does with us a law clerk in his office, or an artist in his studio. Previously, and before making a practical beginning, he has had an opportunity of following some general and summary course of instruction, so as to have a framework ready prepared in which to store the observations he is shortly to make. Furthermore, he is able, as a rule, to avail himself of sundry technical courses which he can follow in his leisure hours, so as to co-ordinate step by step the daily experience he is gathering. Under such a system the practical capabilities increase and develop of themselves in exact proportion to the faculties of the student, and in the direction requisite for his future task and the special work for which from now onwards he desires to fit himself. By this means in England or the United States a young man is quickly in a position to develop his capacity to the utmost. At twenty-five years of age, and much sooner if the material and the parts are there, he is not merely a useful performer, he is capable also of spontaneous enterprise; he is not only a part of a machine, but also a motor. In France, where the contrary system prevails—in France, which with each succeeding generation is falling more and more into line with China—the sum total of the wasted forces is enormous.”

The great philosopher arrives at the following conclusion with respect to the growing incongruity between our Latin system of education and the requirements of practical life:

“In the three stages of instruction, those of childhood, adolescence and youth, the theoretical and pedagogic preparation by books on the school benches has lengthened out and become overcharged in view of the examination, the degree, the diploma, and the certificate, and solely in this view, and by the worst methods, by the application of an unnatural and anti-social regime, by

the excessive postponement of the practical apprenticeship, by our boarding-school system, by artificial training and mechanical cramming, by overwork, without thought for the time that is to follow, for the adult age and the functions of the man, without regard for the real world on which the young man will shortly be thrown, for the society in which we move and to which he must be adapted or be taught to resign himself in advance, for the struggle in which humanity is engaged, and in which to defend himself and to keep his footing he ought previously to have been equipped, armed, trained, and hardened. This indispensable equipment, this acquisition of more importance than any other, this sturdy common sense and nerve and will-power our schools do not procure the young Frenchman; on the contrary, far from qualifying him for his approaching and definite state, they disqualify him. In consequence, his entry into the world and his first steps in the field of action are most often merely a succession of painful falls, whose effect is that he long remains wounded and bruised, and sometimes disabled for life. The test is severe and dangerous. In the course of it the mental and moral equilibrium is affected, and runs the risk of not being re-established. Too sudden and complete disillusion has supervened. The deceptions have been too great, the disappointments too keen.” ①

① Taine, “Le Regime moderne,” vol. ii., 1894. These pages are almost the last that Taine wrote. They resume admirably the results of the great philosopher’s long experience. Unfortunately they are in my opinion totally incomprehensible for such of our university professors who have not lived abroad. Education is the only means at our disposal of influencing to some extent the mind of a nation, and it is profoundly saddening to have to think that there is scarcely any one in France who can arrive at understanding that our present system of teaching is a grave cause of rapid decadence, which instead of elevating our youth, lowers and perverts it.

A useful comparison may be made between Taine's pages and the observations on American education recently made by M. Paul Bourget in his excellent book, "Outre-Mer." He, too, after having noted that our education merely produces narrow-minded bourgeois, lacking in initiative and will-power, or anarchists—"those two equally harmful types of the civilized man, who degenerates into impotent platitude or insane destructiveness"—he too, I say, draws a comparison that cannot be the object of too much reflection between our French lycees (public schools), those factories of degeneration, and the American schools, which prepare a man admirably for life. The gulf existing between truly democratic nations and those who have democracy in their speeches, but in no wise in their thoughts, is clearly brought out in this comparison.

Have we digressed in what precedes from the psychology of crowds? Assuredly not. If we desire to understand the ideas and beliefs that are germinating today in the masses, and will spring up tomorrow, it is necessary to know how the ground has been prepared. The instruction given the youth of a country allows of a knowledge of what that country will one day be. The education accorded the present generation justifies the gloomiest previsions. It is in part by instruction and education that the mind of the masses is improved or deteriorated. It was necessary in consequence to show how this mind has been fashioned by the system in vogue, and how the mass of the indifferent and the neutral has become progressively an army of the discontented ready to obey all the suggestions of utopians and rhetoricians. It is in the schoolroom that socialists and anarchists are found nowadays, and that the way is being paved for the approaching period of decadence for the Latin peoples.

## **CHAPTER II THE IMMEDIATE FACTORS OF THE OPINIONS OF CROWDS**

### §1. Images, words, and formulae.

The magical power of words and formulae—The power of words bound up with the images they evoke, and independent of their real sense—These images vary from age to age, and from race to race—The wear and tear of words—Examples of the considerable variations of sense of much-used words—The political utility of baptizing old things with new names when the words by which they were designated produced an unfavourable impression on the masses—variations of the sense of words in consequence of race differences—The different meanings of the word “democracy” in Europe and America.

### §2. Illusions.

Their importance—They are to be found at the root of all civilisations—The social necessity of illusions—Crowds always prefer them to truths.

### §3. Experience.

Experience alone can fix in the mind of crowds truths become necessary and destroy illusions grown dangerous—Experience is only effective on the condition that it be frequently repeated—The cost of the experiences requisite to persuade crowds.

### §4. Reason.

The nullity of its influence on crowds—Crowds only to be influenced by their unconscious sentiments—The role of logic in history—The secret causes of improbable events.

We have just investigated the remote and preparatory factors which give the mind of crowds a special receptivity, and make possible therein the growth of certain sentiments and certain ideas. It now remains for us to study the factors



capable of acting in a direct manner. We shall see in a forthcoming chapter how these factors should be put in force in order that they may produce their full effect.

In the first part of this work we studied the sentiments, ideas, and methods of reasoning of collective bodies, and from the knowledge thus acquired it would evidently be possible to deduce in a general way the means of making an impression on their mind. We already know what strikes the imagination of crowds, and are acquainted with the power and contagiousness of suggestions, of those especially that are presented under the form of images. However, as suggestions may proceed from very different sources, the factors capable of acting on the minds of crowds may differ considerably. It is necessary, then, to study them separately. This is not a useless study. Crowds are somewhat like the sphinx of ancient fable, it is necessary to arrive at a solution of the problems offered by their psychology or to resign ourselves to being devoured by them.

## §1. Images, words, and formulas

When studying the imagination of crowds we saw that it is particularly open to the impressions produced by images. These images do not always lie ready to hand, but it is possible to evoke them by the judicious employment of words and formulas. Handled with art, they possess in sober truth the mysterious power formerly attributed to them by the adepts of magic. They cause the birth in the minds of crowds of the most formidable tempests, which in turn they are capable of stilling. A pyramid far loftier than that of old Cheops could be raised merely with the bones of men who have been victims of the power of words and formulas.

The power of words is bound up with the images they evoke, and is quite independent of their real significance. Words whose sense is the most ill-defined are sometimes those that possess the most influence. Such, for example, are the terms democracy, socialism, equality, liberty, whose meaning is so vague that bulky volumes do not suffice to precisely fix it. Yet

it is certain that a truly magical power is attached to those short syllables, as if they contained the solution of all problems. They synthesize the most diverse unconscious aspirations and the hope of their realisation.

Reason and arguments are incapable of combating certain words and formulas. They are uttered with solemnity in the presence of crowds, and as soon as they have been pronounced, an expression of respect is visible on every countenance, and all heads are bowed. By many they are considered as natural forces, as supernatural powers. They evoke grandiose and vague images in men's minds, but this very vagueness that wraps them in obscurity augments their mysterious power. They are the mysterious divinities hidden behind the tabernacle which the devout only approach in fear and trembling.

The images evoked by words being independent of their sense, they vary from age to age and from people to people, the formulas remaining identical. Certain transitory images are attached to certain words; the word is merely as it were the button of an electric bell that calls them up.

All words and all formulas do not possess the power of evoking images, while there are some which have once had this power, but lose it in the course of use, and cease to waken any response in the mind. They then become vain sounds, whose principal utility is to relieve the person who employs them of the obligation of thinking. Armed with a small stock of formulas and commonplaces learnt while we are young, we possess all that is needed to traverse life without the tiring necessity of having to reflect on anything whatever.

If any particular language be studied, it is seen that the words of which it is composed change rather slowly in the course of ages, while the images these words evoke or the meaning attached to them changes ceaselessly. This is the reason why, in another work, I have arrived at the conclusion that the absolute translation of a language, especially of a dead language, is totally impossible. What do we do in reality when we substitute a French for a Latin, Greek, or Sanscrit expression, or even when we endeavour to understand a book written in our own tongue two or three centuries back? We merely put the images and ideas with which modern life has endowed our intelligence in

the place of absolutely distinct notions and images which ancient life had brought into being in the mind of races submitted to conditions of existence having no analogy with our own. When the men of the Revolution imagined they were copying the Greeks and Romans, what were they doing except giving to ancient words a sense the latter had never had? What resemblance can possibly exist between the institutions of the Greeks and those designated today by corresponding words? A republic at that epoch was an essentially aristocratic institution, formed of a reunion of petty despots ruling over a crowd of slaves kept in the most absolute subjection. These communal aristocracies, based on slavery, could not have existed for a moment without it. The word “liberty,” again, what signification could it have in any way resembling that we attribute to it today at a period when the possibility of the liberty of thought was not even suspected, and when there was no greater and more exceptional crime than that of discussing the gods, the laws and the customs of the city? What did such a word as “fatherland” signify to an Athenian or Spartan unless it were the cult of Athens or Sparta, and in no wise that of Greece, composed of rival cities always at war with each other? What meaning had the same word “fatherland” among the ancient Gauls, divided into rival tribes and races, and possessing different languages and religions, and who were easily vanquished by Caesar because he always found allies among them? It was Rome that made a country of Gaul by endowing it with political and religious unity. Without going back so far, scarcely two centuries ago, is it to be believed that this same notion of a fatherland was conceived to have the same meaning as at present by French princes like the great Conde, who allied themselves with the foreigner against their sovereign? And yet again, the same word had it not a sense very different from the modern for the French royalist emigrants, who thought they obeyed the laws of honour in fighting against France, and who from their point of view did indeed obey them, since the feudal law bound the vassal to the lord and not to the soil, so that where the sovereign was there was the true fatherland?

Numerous are the words whose meaning has thus profoundly changed from age to age—words which we can only arrive at understanding in the sense in which they were formerly understood after a long effort. It has been said with truth that much study is necessary merely to arrive at conceiving what was

signified to our great grandfathers by such words as the “king” and the “royal family.” What, then, is likely to be the case with terms still more complex?

Words, then, have only mobile and transitory significations which change from age to age and people to people; and when we desire to exert an influence by their means on the crowd what it is requisite to know is the meaning given them by the crowd at a given moment, and not the meaning which they formerly had or may yet have for individuals of a different mental constitution.

Thus, when crowds have come, as the result of political upheavals or changes of belief, to acquire a profound antipathy for the images evoked by certain words, the first duty of the true statesman is to change the words without, of course, laying hands on the things themselves, the latter being too intimately bound up with the inherited constitution to be transformed. The judicious Tocqueville long ago made the remark that the work of the consulate and the empire consisted more particularly in the clothing with new words of the greater part of the institutions of the past—that is to say, in replacing words evoking disagreeable images in the imagination of the crowd by other words of which the novelty prevented such evocations. The “taille” or tallage has become the land tax; the “gabelle,” the tax on salt; the “aids,” the indirect contributions and the consolidated duties; the tax on trade companies and guilds, the license, etc.

One of the most essential functions of statesmen consists, then, in baptizing with popular or, at any rate, indifferent words things the crowd cannot endure under their old names. The power of words is so great that it suffices to designate in well-chosen terms the most odious things to make them acceptable to crowds. Taine justly observes that it was by invoking liberty and fraternity—words very popular at the time—that the Jacobins were able “to install a despotism worthy of Dahomey, a tribunal similar to that of the Inquisition, and to accomplish human hecatombs akin to those of ancient Mexico.” The art of those who govern, as is the case with the art of advocates, consists above all in the science of employing words. One of the greatest difficulties of this art is, that in one and the same society the same words most often have very different meanings for the different social

classes, who employ in appearance the same words, but never speak the same language.

In the preceding examples it is especially time that has been made to intervene as the principal factor in the changing of the meaning of words. If, however, we also make race intervene, we shall then see that, at the same period, among peoples equally civilized but of different race, the same words very often correspond to extremely dissimilar ideas. It is impossible to understand these differences without having travelled much, and for this reason I shall not insist upon them. I shall confine myself to observing that it is precisely the words most often employed by the masses which among different peoples possess the most different meanings. Such is the case, for instance, with the words “democracy” and “socialism” in such frequent use nowadays.

In reality they correspond to quite contrary ideas and images in the Latin and Anglo-Saxon mind. For the Latin peoples the word “democracy” signifies more especially the subordination of the will and the initiative of the individual to the will and the initiative of the community represented by the State. It is the State that is charged, to a greater and greater degree, with the direction of everything, the centralisation, the monopolisation, and the manufacture of everything. To the State it is that all parties without exception, radicals, socialists, or monarchists, constantly appeal. Among the Anglo-Saxons and notably in America this same word “democracy” signifies, on the contrary, the intense development of the will of the individual, and as complete a subordination as possible of the State, which, with the exception of the police, the army, and diplomatic relations, is not allowed the direction of anything, not even of public instruction. It is seen, then, that the same word which signifies for one people the subordination of the will and the initiative of the individual and the preponderance of the State, signifies for another the excessive development of the will and the initiative of the individual and the complete subordination of the State.①

① In my book, “The Psychological Laws of the Evolution of Peoples,” I have insisted at length on the differences which distinguish the Latin democratic ideal from the Anglo-Saxon democratic ideal. Independently, and as the result of his travels, M. Paul Bourget has arrived, in his quite recent book, “Outre-Mer,” at conclusions almost identical with mine.

## §2. Illusions

From the dawn of civilisation onwards crowds have always undergone the influence of illusions. It is to the creators of illusions that they have raised more temples, statues, and altars than to any other class of men. Whether it be the religious illusions of the past or the philosophic and social illusions of the present, these formidable sovereign powers are always found at the head of all the civilisations that have successively flourished on our planet. It is in their name that were built the temples of Chaldea and Egypt and the religious edifices of the Middle Ages, and that a vast upheaval shook the whole of Europe a century ago, and there is not one of our political, artistic, or social conceptions that is free from their powerful impress. Occasionally, at the cost of terrible disturbances, man overthrows them, but he seems condemned to always set them up again. Without them he would never have emerged from his primitive barbarian state, and without them again he would soon return to it. Doubtless they are futile shadows; but these children of our dreams have forced the nations to create whatever the arts may boast of splendour or civilisation of greatness.

“If one destroyed in museums and libraries, if one hurled down on the flagstones before the churches all the works and all the monuments of art that religions have inspired, what would remain of the great dreams of humanity? To give to men that portion of hope and illusion without which they cannot live, such is the reason for the existence of gods, heroes, and poets. During fifty years science appeared to undertake this task. But science has been

compromised in hearts hungering after the ideal, because it does not dare to be lavish enough of promises, because it cannot lie.” ①

① Daniel Lesueur.

The philosophers of the last century devoted themselves with fervour to the destruction of the religious, political, and social illusions on which our forefathers had lived for a long tale of centuries. By destroying them they have dried up the springs of hope and resignation. Behind the immolated chimeras they came face to face with the blind and silent forces of nature, which are inexorable to weakness and ignore pity.

Notwithstanding all its progress, philosophy has been unable as yet to offer the masses any ideal that can charm them; but, as they must have their illusions at all cost, they turn instinctively, as the insect seeks the light, to the rhetoricians who accord them what they want. Not truth, but error has always been the chief factor in the evolution of nations, and the reason why socialism is so powerful today is that it constitutes the last illusion that is still vital. In spite of all scientific demonstrations it continues on the increase. Its principal strength lies in the fact that it is championed by minds sufficiently ignorant of things as they are in reality to venture boldly to promise mankind happiness. The social illusion reigns today upon all the heaped-up ruins of the past, and to it belongs the future. The masses have never thirsted after truth. They turn aside from evidence that is not to their taste, preferring to deify error, if error seduces them. Whoever can supply them with illusions is easily their master; whoever attempts to destroy their illusions is always their victim.

### §3. Experience

Experience constitutes almost the only effective process by which a truth may be solidly established in the mind of the masses, and illusions grown too dangerous be destroyed. To this end, however, it is necessary that the experience should take place on a very large scale, and be very frequently repeated. The experiences undergone by one generation are useless, as a rule, for the generation that follows, which is the reason why historical facts, cited with a view to demonstration, serve no purpose. Their only utility is to prove to what an extent experiences need to be repeated from age to age to exert any influence, or to be successful in merely shaking an erroneous opinion when it is solidly implanted in the mind of the masses.

Our century and that which preceded it will doubtless be alluded to by historians as an era of curious experiments, which in no other age have been tried in such number.

The most gigantic of these experiments was the French Revolution. To find out that a society is not to be refashioned from top to bottom in accordance with the dictates of pure reason, it was necessary that several millions of men should be massacred and that Europe should be profoundly disturbed for a period of twenty years. To prove to us experimentally that dictators cost the nations who acclaim them dear, two ruinous experiences have been required in fifty years, and in spite of their clearness they do not seem to have been sufficiently convincing. The first, nevertheless, cost three millions of men and an invasion, the second involved a loss of territory, and carried in its wake the necessity for permanent armies. A third was almost attempted not long since, and will assuredly be attempted one day. To bring an entire nation to admit that the huge German army was not, as was currently alleged thirty years ago, a sort of harmless national guard,<sup>①</sup> the terrible war which cost us so dear had to take place. To bring about the recognition that Protection ruins the nations who adopt it, at least twenty years of disastrous experience will be needful. These examples might be indefinitely multiplied.



① The opinion of the crowd was formed in this case by those rough-and-ready associations of dissimilar things, the mechanism of which I have previously explained. The French national guard of that period, being composed of peaceable shopkeepers, utterly lacking in discipline and quite incapable of being taken seriously, whatever bore a similar name, evoked the same conception and was considered in consequence as harmless. The error of the crowd was shared at the time by its leaders, as happens so often in connection with opinions dealing with generalisations. In a speech made in the Chamber on the 31st of December, 1867, and quoted in a book by M. E. Ollivier that has appeared recently, a statesman who often followed the opinion of the crowd but was never in advance of it—I allude to M. Thiers—declared that Prussia only possessed a national guard analogous to that of France, and in consequence without importance, in addition to a regular army about equal to the French regular army; assertions about as accurate as the predictions of the same statesman as to the insignificant future reserved for railways.

#### §4. Reason

In enumerating the factors capable of making an impression on the minds of crowds all mention of reason might be dispensed with, were it not necessary to point out the negative value of its influence.

We have already shown that crowds are not to be influenced by reasoning, and can only comprehend rough-and-ready associations of ideas. The orators who know how to make an impression upon them always appeal in consequence to their sentiments and never to their reason. The laws of logic have no action on crowds.① To bring home conviction to crowds it is necessary first of all to thoroughly comprehend the sentiments by which they are animated, to pretend to share these sentiments, then to endeavour to

modify them by calling up, by means of rudimentary associations, certain eminently suggestive notions, to be capable, if need be, of going back to the point of view from which a start was made, and, above all, to divine from instant to instant the sentiments to which one's discourse is giving birth. This necessity of ceaselessly varying one's language in accordance with the effect produced at the moment of speaking deprives from the outset a prepared and studied harangue of all efficaciousness. In such a speech the orator follows his own line of thought, not that of his hearers, and from this fact alone his influence is annihilated.

① My first observations with regard to the art of impressing crowds and touching the slight assistance to be derived in this connection from the rules of logic date back to the siege of Paris, to the day when I saw conducted to the Louvre, where the Government was then sitting, Marshal V—, whom a furious crowd asserted they had surprised in the act of taking the plans of the fortifications to sell them to the Prussians. A member of the Government (G. P—), a very celebrated orator, came out to harangue the crowd, which was demanding the immediate execution of the prisoner. I had expected that the speaker would point out the absurdity of the accusation by remarking that the accused Marshal was positively one of those who had constructed the fortifications, the plan of which, moreover, was on sale at every booksellers. To my immense stupefaction—I was very young then—the speech was on quite different lines. “Justice shall be done,” exclaimed the orator, advancing towards the prisoner, “and pitiless justice. Let the Government of the National Defence conclude your inquiry. In the meantime we will keep the prisoner in custody.” At once calmed by this apparent concession, the crowd broke up, and a quarter of an hour later the Marshal was able to return home. He would infallibly have been torn in pieces had the speaker treated the infuriated crowd

to the logical arguments that my extreme youth induced me to consider as very convincing.

Logical minds, accustomed to be convinced by a chain of somewhat close reasoning, cannot avoid having recourse to this mode of persuasion when addressing crowds, and the inability of their arguments always surprises them. “The usual mathematical consequences based on the syllogism—that is, on associations of identities—are imperative . . .” writes a logician. “This imperativeness would enforce the assent even of an inorganic mass were it capable of following associations of identities.” This is doubtless true, but a crowd is no more capable than an inorganic mass of following such associations, nor even of understanding them. If the attempt be made to convince by reasoning primitive minds—savages or children, for instance—the slight value possessed by this method of arguing will be understood.

It is not even necessary to descend so low as primitive beings to obtain an insight into the utter powerlessness of reasoning when it has to fight against sentiment. Let us merely call to mind how tenacious, for centuries long, have been religious superstitions in contradiction with the simplest logic. For nearly two thousand years the most luminous geniuses have bowed before their laws, and modern times have to be reached for their veracity to be merely contested. The Middle Ages and the Renaissance possessed many enlightened men, but not a single man who attained by reasoning to an appreciation of the childish side of his superstitions, or who promulgated even a slight doubt as to the misdeeds of the devil or the necessity of burning sorcerers.

Should it be regretted that crowds are never guided by reason? We would not venture to affirm it. Without a doubt human reason would not have availed to spur humanity along the path of civilisation with the ardour and hardihood its illusions have done. These illusions, the offspring of those unconscious forces by which we are led, were doubtless necessary. Every race carries in its mental constitution the laws of its destiny, and it is, perhaps, these laws

that it obeys with a resistless impulse, even in the case of those of its impulses which apparently are the most unreasoned. It seems at times as if nations were submitted to secret forces analogous to those which compel the acorn to transform itself into an oak or a comet to follow its orbit.

What little insight we can get into these forces must be sought for in the general course of the evolution of a people, and not in the isolated facts from which this evolution appears at times to proceed. Were these facts alone to be taken into consideration, history would seem to be the result of a series of improbable chances. It was improbable that a Galilean carpenter should become for two thousand years an all-powerful God in whose name the most important civilisations were founded; improbable, too, that a few bands of Arabs, emerging from their deserts, should conquer the greater part of the old Graco-Roman world, and establish an empire greater than that of Alexander; improbable, again, that in Europe, at an advanced period of its development, and when authority throughout it had been systematically hierarchised, an obscure lieutenant of artillery should have succeeded in reigning over a multitude of peoples and kings.

Let us leave reason, then, to philosophers, and not insist too strongly on its intervention in the governing of men. It is not by reason, but most often in spite of it, that are created those sentiments that are the mainsprings of all civilisation—sentiments such as honour, self-sacrifice, religious faith, patriotism, and the love of glory.

## **CHAPTER III THE LEADERS OF CROWDS AND THEIR MEANS OF PERSUASION**

### **§1. The leaders of crowds.**

The instinctive need of all beings forming a crowd to obey a leader—The

psychology of the leaders of crowds—They alone can endow crowds with faith and organise them—The leaders forcibly despotic—Classification of the leaders—The part played by the will.

## §2. The means of action of the leaders.

Affirmation, repetition, contagion—The respective part of these different factors—The way in which contagion may spread from the lower to the upper classes in a society—A popular opinion soon becomes a general opinion.

## §3. Prestige.

Definition of prestige and classification of its different kinds—Acquired prestige and personal prestige—Various examples—The way in which prestige is destroyed.

We are now acquainted with the mental constitution of crowds, and we also know what are the motives capable of making an impression on their mind. It remains to investigate how these motives may be set in action, and by whom they may usefully be turned to practical account.

## §1. The leaders of crowds.

As soon as a certain number of living beings are gathered together, whether they be animals or men, they place themselves instinctively under the authority of a chief.

In the case of human crowds the chief is often nothing more than a ringleader or agitator, but as such he plays a considerable part. His will is the nucleus around which the opinions of the crowd are grouped and attain to identity. He constitutes the first element towards the organisation of heterogeneous crowds, and paves the way for their organisation in sects; in the meantime he directs them. A crowd is a servile flock that is incapable of ever doing

without a master.

The leader has most often started as one of the led. He has himself been hypnotised by the idea, whose apostle he has since become. It has taken possession of him to such a degree that everything outside it vanishes, and that every contrary opinion appears to him an error or a superstition. An example in point is Robespierre, hypnotised by the philosophical ideas of Rousseau, and employing the methods of the Inquisition to propagate them.

The leaders we speak of are more frequently men of action than thinkers. They are not gifted with keen foresight, nor could they be, as this quality generally conduces to doubt and inactivity. They are especially recruited from the ranks of those morbidly nervous, excitable, half-deranged persons who are bordering on madness. However absurd may be the idea they uphold or the goal they pursue, their convictions are so strong that all reasoning is lost upon them. Contempt and persecution do not affect them, or only serve to excite them the more. They sacrifice their personal interest, their family—everything. The very instinct of self-preservation is entirely obliterated in them, and so much so that often the only recompense they solicit is that of martyrdom. The intensity of their faith gives great power of suggestion to their words. The multitude is always ready to listen to the strong-willed man, who knows how to impose himself upon it. Men gathered in a crowd lose all force of will, and turn instinctively to the person who possesses the quality they lack.

Nations have never lacked leaders, but all of the latter have by no means been animated by those strong convictions proper to apostles. These leaders are often subtle rhetoricians, seeking only their own personal interest, and endeavouring to persuade by flattering base instincts. The influence they can assert in this manner may be very great, but it is always ephemeral. The men of ardent convictions who have stirred the soul of crowds, the Peter the Hermits, the Luthers, the Savonarolas, the men of the French Revolution, have only exercised their fascination after having been themselves fascinated first of all by a creed. They are then able to call up in the souls of their fellows that formidable force known as faith, which renders a man the absolute slave of his dream.

The arousing of faith—whether religious, political, or social, whether faith in a work, in a person, or an idea—has always been the function of the great leaders of crowds, and it is on this account that their influence is always very great. Of all the forces at the disposal of humanity, faith has always been one of the most tremendous, and the gospel rightly attributes to it the power of moving mountains. To endow a man with faith is to multiply his strength tenfold. The great events of history have been brought about by obscure believers, who have had little beyond their faith in their favour. It is not by the aid of the learned or of philosophers, and still less of skeptics, that have been built up the great religions which have swayed the world, or the vast empires which have spread from one hemisphere to the other.

In the cases just cited, however, we are dealing with great leaders, and they are so few in number that history can easily reckon them up. They form the summit of a continuous series, which extends from these powerful masters of men down to the workman who, in the smoky atmosphere of an inn, slowly fascinates his comrades by ceaselessly drumming into their ears a few set phrases, whose purport he scarcely comprehends, but the application of which, according to him, must surely bring about the realisation of all dreams and of every hope.

In every social sphere, from the highest to the lowest, as soon as a man ceases to be isolated he speedily falls under the influence of a leader. The majority of men, especially among the masses, do not possess clear and reasoned ideas on any subject whatever outside their own speciality. The leader serves them as guide. It is just possible that he may be replaced, though very inefficiently, by the periodical publications which manufacture opinions for their readers and supply them with ready-made phrases which dispense them of the trouble of reasoning.

The leaders of crowds wield a very despotic authority, and this despotism indeed is a condition of their obtaining a following. It has often been remarked how easily they extort obedience, although without any means of backing up their authority, from the most turbulent section of the working classes. They fix the hours of labour and the rate of wages, and they decree strikes, which are begun and ended at the hour they ordain.

At the present day these leaders and agitators tend more and more to usurp the place of the public authorities in proportion as the latter allow themselves to be called in question and shorn of their strength. The tyranny of these new masters has for result that the crowds obey them much more docilely than they have obeyed any government. If in consequence of some accident or other the leaders should be removed from the scene the crowd returns to its original state of a collectivity without cohesion or force of resistance. During the last strike of the Parisian omnibus employees, the arrest of the two leaders who were directing it was at once sufficient to bring it to an end. It is the need not of liberty but of servitude that is always predominant in the soul of crowds. They are so bent on obedience that they instinctively submit to whoever declares himself their master.

These ringleaders and agitators may be divided into two clearly defined classes. The one includes the men who are energetic and possess, but only intermittently, much strength of will, the other the men, far rarer than the preceding, whose strength of will is enduring. The first mentioned are violent, brave, and audacious. They are more especially useful to direct a violent enterprise suddenly decided on, to carry the masses with them in spite of danger, and to transform into heroes the men who but yesterday were recruits. Men of this kind were Ney and Murat under the First Empire, and such a man in our own time was Garibaldi, a talentless but energetic adventurer who succeeded with a handful of men in laying hands on the ancient kingdom of Naples, defended though it was by a disciplined army.

Still, though the energy of leaders of this class is a force to be reckoned with, it is transitory, and scarcely outlasts the exciting cause that has brought it into play. When they have returned to their ordinary course of life the heroes animated by energy of this description often evince, as was the case with those I have just cited, the most astonishing weakness of character. They seem incapable of reflection and of conducting themselves under the simplest circumstances, although they had been able to lead others. These men are leaders who cannot exercise their function except on the condition that they be led themselves and continually stimulated, that they have always as their beacon a man or an idea, that they follow a line of conduct clearly traced. The second category of leaders, that of men of enduring strength of will, have, in



spite of a less brilliant aspect, a much more considerable influence. In this category are to be found the true founders of religions and great undertakings: St. Paul, Mahomet, Christopher Columbus, and de Lesseps, for example. Whether they are intelligent or narrow-minded is of no importance: the world belongs to them. The persistent will-force they possess is an immensely rare and immensely powerful faculty to which everything yields. What a strong and continuous will is capable of is not always properly appreciated. Nothing resists it, neither nature, gods, nor man.

The most recent example of what can be effected by a strong and continuous will is afforded us by the illustrious man who separated the Eastern and Western worlds, and accomplished a task that during three thousand years had been attempted in vain by the greatest sovereigns. He failed later in an identical enterprise, but then had intervened old age, to which everything, even the will, succumbs. When it is desired to show what may be done by mere strength of will, all that is necessary is to relate in detail the history of the difficulties that had to be surmounted in connection with the cutting of the Suez Canal. An ocular witness, Dr. Cazalis, has summed up in a few striking lines the entire story of this great work, recounted by its immortal author.

“From day to day, episode by episode, he told the stupendous story of the canal. He told of all he had had to vanquish, of the impossible he had made possible, of all the opposition he encountered, of the coalition against him, and the disappointments, the reverses, the defeats which had been unavailing to discourage or depress him. He recalled how England had combatted him, attacking him without cessation, how Egypt and France had hesitated, how the French Consul had been foremost in his opposition to the early stages of the work, and the nature of the opposition he had met with, the attempt to force his workmen to desert from thirst by refusing them fresh water; how the Minister of Marine and the engineers, all responsible men of experienced and scientific training, had naturally all been hostile, were all certain on scientific grounds that disaster was at hand, had calculated its coming, foretelling it for such a day and hour as an eclipse is foretold.”

The book which relates the lives of all these great leaders would not contain many names, but these names have been bound up with the most important events in the history of civilisation.

§2. The means of action of the leaders:

### AFFIRMATION, REPETITION, CONTAGION

When it is wanted to stir up a crowd for a short space of time, to induce it to commit an act of any nature—to pillage a palace, or to die in defence of a stronghold or a barricade, for instance—the crowd must be acted upon by rapid suggestion, among which example is the most powerful in its effect. To attain this end, however, it is necessary that the crowd should have been that he who wishes to work upon it should possess the quality to be studied farther on, to which I give the name of prestige.

When, however, it is proposed to imbue the mind of a crowd with ideas and beliefs—with modern social theories, for instance—the leaders have recourse to different expedients. The principal of them are three in number and clearly defined—affirmation, repetition, and contagion. Their action is somewhat slow, but its effects, once produced, are very lasting.

Affirmation pure and simple, kept free of all reasoning and all proof, is one of the surest means of making an idea enter the mind of crowds. The more concise an affirmation is, the more destitute of every appearance of proof and demonstration, the more weight it carries. The religious books and the legal codes of all ages have always resorted to simple affirmation. Statesmen called upon to defend a political cause, and commercial men pushing the sale of their products by means of advertising are acquainted with the value of affirmation.

Affirmation, however, has no real influence unless it be constantly repeated, and so far as possible in the same terms. It was Napoleon, I believe, who said that there is only one figure in rhetoric of serious importance, namely, repetition. The thing affirmed comes by repetition to fix itself in the mind in

such a way that it is accepted in the end as a demonstrated truth.

The influence of repetition on crowds is comprehensible when the power is seen which it exercises on the most enlightened minds. This power is due to the fact that the repeated statement is embedded in the long run in those profound regions of our unconscious selves in which the motives of our actions are forged. At the end of a certain time we have forgotten who is the author of the repeated assertion, and we finish by believing it. To this circumstance is due the astonishing power of advertisements. When we have read a hundred, a thousand, times that X's chocolate is the best, we imagine we have heard it said in many quarters, and we end by acquiring the certitude that such is the fact. When we have read a thousand times that Y's flour has cured the most illustrious persons of the most obstinate maladies, we are tempted at last to try it when suffering from an illness of a similar kind. If we always read in the same papers that A is an arrant scamp and B a most honest man we finish by being convinced that this is the truth, unless, indeed, we are given to reading another paper of the contrary opinion, in which the two qualifications are reversed. Affirmation and repetition are alone powerful enough to combat each other.

When an affirmation has been sufficiently repeated and there is unanimity in this repetition—as has occurred in the case of certain famous financial undertakings rich enough to purchase every assistance—what is called a current of opinion is formed and the powerful mechanism of contagion intervenes. Ideas, sentiments, emotions, and beliefs possess in crowds a contagious power as intense as that of microbes. This phenomenon is very natural, since it is observed even in animals when they are together in number. Should a horse in a stable take to biting his manger the other horses in the stable will imitate him. A panic that has seized on a few sheep will soon extend to the whole flock. In the case of men collected in a crowd all emotions are very rapidly contagious, which explains the suddenness of panics. Brain disorders, like madness, are themselves contagious. The frequency of madness among doctors who are specialists for the mad is notorious. Indeed, forms of madness have recently been cited—agoraphobia, for instance—which are communicable from men to animals.

For individuals to succumb to contagion their simultaneous presence on the same spot is not indispensable. The action of contagion may be felt from a distance under the influence of events which give all minds an individual trend and the characteristics peculiar to crowds. This is especially the case when men's minds have been prepared to undergo the influence in question by those remote factors of which I have made a study above. An example in point is the revolutionary movement of 1848, which, after breaking out in Paris, spread rapidly over a great part of Europe and shook a number of thrones.

Imitation, to which so much influence is attributed in social phenomena, is in reality a mere effect of contagion. Having shown its influence elsewhere, I shall confine myself to reproducing what I said on the subject fifteen years ago. My remarks have since been developed by other writers in recent publications.

“Man, like animals, has a natural tendency to imitation. Imitation is a necessity for him, provided always that the imitation is quite easy. It is this necessity that makes the influence of what is called fashion so powerful. Whether in the matter of opinions, ideas, literary manifestations, or merely of dress, how many persons are bold enough to run counter to the fashion? It is by examples not by arguments that crowds are guided. At every period there exists a small number of individualities which react upon the remainder and are imitated by the unconscious mass. It is needful however, that these individualities should not be in too pronounced disagreement with received ideas. Were they so, to imitate them would be too difficult and their influence would be nil. For this very reason men who are too superior to their epoch are generally without influence upon it. The line of separation is too strongly marked. For the same reason too Europeans, in spite of all the advantages of their civilisation, have so insignificant an influence on Eastern people; they differ from them to too great an extent.

“The dual action of the past and of reciprocal imitation renders, in the long run, all the men of the same country and the same period so alike that even in the case of individuals who would seem destined to escape this double influence, such as philosophers, learned men, and men of letters, thought and

style have a family air which enables the age to which they belong to be immediately recognized. It is not necessary to talk for long with an individual to attain to a thorough knowledge of what he reads, of his habitual occupations, and of the surroundings amid which he lives.” ①

① Gustave le Bon, “L’Homme et les Societes,” vol. ii. p. 116. 1881.

Contagion is so powerful that it forces upon individuals not only certain opinions, but certain modes of feeling as well. Contagion is the cause of the contempt in which, at a given period, certain works are held—the example of “Tannhauser” may be cited—which, a few years later, for the same reason are admired by those who were foremost in criticising them.

The opinions and beliefs of crowds are specially propagated by contagion, but never by reasoning. The conceptions at present rife among the working classes have been acquired at the public-house as the result of affirmation, repetition, and contagion, and indeed the mode of creation of the beliefs of crowds of every age has scarcely been different. Renan justly institutes a comparison between the first founders of Christianity and “the socialist working men spreading their ideas from public-house to public-house”; while Voltaire had already observed in connection with the Christian religion that “for more than a hundred years it was only embraced by the vilest riff-raff.”

It will be noted that in cases analogous to those I have just cited, contagion, after having been at work among the popular classes, has spread to the higher classes of society. This is what we see happening at the present day with regard to the socialist doctrines which are beginning to be held by those who will yet be their first victims. Contagion is so powerful a force that even the sentiment of personal interest disappears under its action.

This is the explanation of the fact that every opinion adopted by the populace always ends in implanting itself with great vigour in the highest social strata, however obvious be the absurdity of the triumphant opinion. This reaction of the lower upon the higher social classes is the more curious, owing to the circumstance that the beliefs of the crowd always have their origin to a greater or less extent in some higher idea, which has often remained without influence in the sphere in which it was evolved. Leaders and agitators, subjugated by this higher idea, take hold of it, distort it and create a sect which distorts it afresh, and then propagates it amongst the masses, who carry the process of deformation still further. Become a popular truth the idea returns, as it were, to its source and exerts an influence on the upper classes of a nation. In the long run it is intelligence that shapes the destiny of the world, but very indirectly. The philosophers who evolve ideas have long since returned to dust, when, as the result of the process I have just described, the fruit of their reflection ends by triumphing.

### §3. Prestige

Great power is given to ideas propagated by affirmation, repetition, and contagion by the circumstance that they acquire in time that mysterious force known as prestige.

Whatever has been a ruling power in the world, whether it be ideas or men, has in the main enforced its authority by means of that irresistible force expressed by the word “prestige.” The term is one whose meaning is grasped by everybody, but the word is employed in ways too different for it to be easy to define it. Prestige may involve such sentiments as admiration or fear. Occasionally even these sentiments are its basis, but it can perfectly well exist without them. The greatest measure of prestige is possessed by the dead, by beings, that is, of whom we do not stand in fear—by Alexander, Caesar, Mahomet, and Buddha, for example. On the other hand, there are fictive beings whom we do not admire—the monstrous divinities of the subterranean temples of India, for instance—but who strike us nevertheless as endowed with a great prestige.

Prestige in reality is a sort of domination exercised on our mind by an individual, a work, or an idea. This domination entirely paralyses our critical faculty, and fills our soul with astonishment and respect. The sentiment provoked is inexplicable, like all sentiments, but it would appear to be of the same kind as the fascination to which a magnetized person is subjected. Prestige is the mainspring of all authority. Neither gods, kings, nor women have ever reigned without it.

The various kinds of prestige may be grouped under two principal heads: acquired prestige and personal prestige. Acquired prestige is that resulting from name, fortune, and reputation. It may be independent of personal prestige. Personal prestige, on the contrary, is something essentially peculiar to the individual; it may coexist with reputation, glory, and fortune, or be strengthened by them, but it is perfectly capable of existing in their absence.

Acquired or artificial prestige is much the most common. The mere fact that an individual occupies a certain position, possesses a certain fortune, or bears certain titles, endows him with prestige, however slight his own personal worth. A soldier in uniform, a judge in his robes, always enjoys prestige. Pascal has very properly noted the necessity for judges of robes and wigs. Without them they would be stripped of half their authority. The most unbending socialist is always somewhat impressed by the sight of a prince or a marquis; and the assumption of such titles makes the robbing of tradesmen an easy matter.<sup>①</sup>

① The influence of titles, decorations, and uniforms on crowds is to be traced in all countries, even in those in which the sentiment of personal independence is the most strongly developed. I quote in this connection a curious passage from a recent book of travel, on the prestige enjoyed in England by great persons.

“I had observed, under various circumstances, the peculiar sort of intoxication produced in the most reasonable Englishmen by the contact or sight of an English peer.

“Provided his fortune enables him to keep up his rank, he is sure of their affection in advance, and brought into contact with him they are so enchanted as to put up with anything at his hands. They may be seen to redden with pleasure at his approach, and if he speaks to them their suppressed joy increases their redness, and causes their eyes to gleam with unusual brilliance. Respect for nobility is in their blood, so to speak, as with Spaniards the love of dancing, with Germans that of music, and with Frenchmen the liking for revolutions. Their passion for horses and Shakespeare is less violent, the satisfaction and pride they derive from these sources a less integral part of their being. There is a considerable sale for books dealing with the peerage, and go where one will they are to be found, like the Bible, in all hands.”

The prestige of which I have just spoken is exercised by persons; side by side with it may be placed that exercised by opinions, literary and artistic works, Prestige of the latter kind is most often merely the result of accumulated repetitions. History, literary and artistic history especially, being nothing more than the repetition of identical judgments, which nobody endeavours to verify, every one ends by repeating what he learnt at school, till there come to be names and things which nobody would venture to meddle with. For a modern reader the perusal of Homer results incontestably in immense boredom; but who would venture to say so? The Parthenon, in its present state, is a wretched ruin, utterly destitute of interest, but it is endowed with such prestige that it does not appear to us as it really is, but with all its accompaniment of historic memories. The special characteristic of prestige is to prevent us seeing things as they are and to entirely paralyse our judgment. Crowds always, and individuals as a rule, stand in need of ready-made opinions on all subjects. The popularity of these opinions is independent of the measure of truth or error they contain, and is solely regulated by their prestige.



I now come to personal prestige. Its nature is very different from that of artificial or acquired prestige, with which I have just been concerned. It is a faculty independent of all titles, of all authority, and possessed by a small number of persons whom it enables to exercise a veritably magnetic fascination on those around them, although they are socially their equals, and lack all ordinary means of domination. They force the acceptance of their ideas and sentiments on those about them, and they are obeyed as is the tamer of wild beasts by the animal that could easily devour him.

The great leaders of crowds, such as Buddha, Jesus, Mahomet, Joan of Arc, and Napoleon, have possessed this form of prestige in a high degree, and to this endowment is more particularly due the position they attained. Gods, heroes, and dogmas win their way in the world of their own inward strength. They are not to be discussed, they disappear, indeed, as soon as discussed.

The great personages I have just cited were in possession of their power of fascination long before they became illustrious, and would never have become so without it. It is evident, for instance, that Napoleon at the zenith of his glory enjoyed an immense prestige by the mere fact of his power, but he was already endowed in part with this prestige when he was without power and completely unknown. When, an obscure general, he was sent, thanks to influential protection, to command the army of Italy, he found himself among rough generals who were of a mind to give a hostile reception to the young intruder dispatched them by the Directory. From the very beginning, from the first interview, without the aid of speeches, gestures, or threats, at the first sight of the man who was to become great they were vanquished. Taine furnishes a curious account of this interview taken from contemporary memoirs.

“The generals of division, amongst others Augereau, a sort of swashbuckler, uncouth and heroic, proud of his height and his bravery, arrive at the staff quarters very badly disposed towards the little upstart dispatched them from Paris. On the strength of the description of him that has been given them, Augereau is inclined to be insolent and insubordinate; a favourite of Barras, a general who owes his rank to the events of Vendemiaire who has won his grade by street-fighting, who is looked upon as bearish, because he is always

thinking in solitude, of poor aspect, and with the reputation of a mathematician and dreamer. They are introduced, and Bonaparte keeps them waiting. At last he appears, girt with his sword; he puts on his hat, explains the measures he has taken, gives his orders, and dismisses them. Augereau has remained silent; it is only when he is outside that he regains his self-possession and is able to deliver himself of his customary oaths. He admits with Massena that this little devil of a general has inspired him with awe; he cannot understand the ascendancy by which from the very first he has felt himself overwhelmed.”

Become a great man, his prestige increased in proportion as his glory grew, and came to be at least equal to that of a divinity in the eyes of those devoted to him. General Vandamme, a rough, typical soldier of the Revolution, even more brutal and energetic than Augereau, said of him to Marshal d’Arnano in 1815, as on one occasion they mounted together the stairs of the Tuileries: “That devil of a man exercises a fascination on me that I cannot explain even to myself, and in such a degree that, though I fear neither God nor devil, when I am in his presence I am ready to tremble like a child, and he could make me go through the eye of a needle to throw myself into the fire.”

Napoleon exercised a like fascination on all who came into contact with him.①

① Thoroughly conscious of his prestige, Napoleon was aware that he added to it by treating rather worse than stable lads the great personages around him, and among whom figured some of those celebrated men of the Convention of whom Europe had stood in dread. The gossip of the period abounds in illustrations of this fact. One day, in the midst of a Council of State, Napoleon grossly insults Beugnot, treating him as one might an unmannerly valet. The effect produced, he goes up to him and says, “Well, stupid, have you found your head again?” Whereupon Beugnot, tall as a drum-major, bows very low, and

the little man raising his hand, takes the tall one by the ear, “an intoxicating sign of favour,” writes Beugnot, “the familiar gesture of the master who waxes gracious.” Such examples give a clear idea of the degree of base platitude that prestige can provoke. They enable us to understand the immense contempt of the great despot for the men surrounding him—men whom he merely looked upon as “food for powder.”

Davoust used to say, talking of Maret’s devotion and of his own, “Had the Emperor said to us, ‘It is important in the interest of my policy that Paris should be destroyed without a single person leaving it or escaping,’ Maret I am sure would have kept the secret, but he could not have abstained from compromising himself by seeing that his family got clear of the city. On the other hand, I, for fear of letting the truth leak out, would have let my wife and children stay.”

It is necessary to bear in mind the astounding power exerted by fascination of this order to understand that marvellous return from the Isle of Elba, that lightning-like conquest of France by an isolated man confronted by all the organised forces of a great country that might have been supposed weary of his tyranny. He had merely to cast a look at the generals sent to lay hands on him, and who had sworn to accomplish their mission. All of them submitted without discussion.

“Napoleon,” writes the English General Wolseley, “lands in France almost alone, a fugitive from the small island of Elba which was his kingdom, and succeeded in a few weeks, without bloodshed, in upsetting all organised authority in France under its legitimate king; is it possible for the personal ascendancy of a man to affirm itself in a more astonishing manner? But from the beginning to the end of this campaign, which was his last, how remarkable too is the ascendancy he exercised over the Allies, obliging them to follow his initiative, and how near he came to crushing them!”

His prestige outlived him and continued to grow. It is his prestige that made an emperor of his obscure nephew. How powerful is his memory still is seen in the resurrection of his legend in progress at the present day. Ill-treat men as you will, massacre them by millions, be the cause of invasion upon invasion, all is permitted you if you possess prestige in a sufficient degree and the talent necessary to uphold it.

I have invoked, no doubt, in this case a quite exceptional example of prestige, but one it was useful to cite to make clear the genesis of great religions, great doctrines, and great empires. Were it not for the power exerted on the crowd by prestige, such growths would be incomprehensible.

Prestige, however, is not based solely on personal ascendancy, military glory, and religious terror; it may have a more modest origin and still be considerable. Our century furnishes several examples. One of the most striking ones that posterity will recall from age to age will be supplied by the history of the illustrious man who modified the face of the globe and the commercial relations of the nations by separating two continents. He succeeded in his enterprise owing to his immense strength of will, but also owing to the fascination he exercised on those surrounding him. To overcome the unanimous opposition he met with, he had only to show himself. He would speak briefly, and in face of the charm he exerted his opponents became his friends. The English in particular strenuously opposed his scheme; he had only to put in an appearance in England to rally all suffrages. In later years, when he passed Southampton, the bells were rung on his passage; and at the present day a movement is on foot in England to raise a statue in his honour.

“Having vanquished whatever there is to vanquish, men and things, marshes, rocks, and sandy wastes,” he had ceased to believe in obstacles, and wished to begin Suez over again at Panama. He began again with the same methods as of old; but he had aged, and, besides, the faith that moves mountains does not move them if they are too lofty. The mountains resisted, and the catastrophe that ensued destroyed the glittering aureole of glory that enveloped the hero. His life teaches how prestige can grow and how it can vanish. After rivaling in greatness the most famous heroes of history, he was

lowered by the magistrates of his country to the ranks of the vilest criminals. When he died his coffin, unattended, traversed an indifferent crowd. Foreign sovereigns are alone in rendering homage to his memory as to that of one of the greatest men that history has known.<sup>①</sup>

① An Austrian paper, the Neue Freie Presse, of Vienna, has indulged on the subject of the destiny of de Lesseps in reflections marked by a most judicious psychological insight. I therefore reproduce them here:-

“After the condemnation of Ferdinand de Lesseps one has no longer the right to be astonished at the sad end of Christopher Columbus. If Ferdinand de Lesseps were a rogue every noble illusion is a crime. Antiquity would have crowned the memory of de Lesseps with an aureole of glory, and would have made him drink from the bowl of nectar in the midst of Olympus, for he has altered the face of the earth and accomplished works which make the creation more perfect. The President of the Court of Appeal has immortalised himself by condemning Ferdinand de Lesseps, for the nations will always demand the name of the man who was not afraid to debase his century by investing with the convict’s cap an aged man, whose life redounded to the glory of his contemporaries.

“Let there be no more talk in the future of inflexible justice, there where reigns a bureaucratic hatred of audacious feats. The nations have need of audacious men who believe in themselves and overcome every obstacle without concern for their personal safety. Genius cannot be prudent; by dint of

prudence it could never enlarge the sphere of human activity.

“ . . . Ferdinand de Lesseps has known the intoxication of triumph and the bitterness of disappointment—Suez and Panama. At this point the heart revolts at the morality of success. When de Lesseps had succeeded in joining two seas princes and nations rendered him their homage; today, when he meets with failure among the rocks of the Cordilleras, he is nothing but a vulgar rogue. . . In this result we see a war between the classes of society, the discontent of bureaucrats and employees, who take their revenge with the aid of the criminal code on those who would raise themselves above their fellows. . . . Modern legislators are filled with embarrassment when confronted by the lofty ideas due to human genius; the public comprehends such ideas still less, and it is easy for an advocate-general to prove that Stanley is a murderer and de Lesseps a deceiver.”

Still, the various examples that have just been cited represent extreme cases. To fix in detail the psychology of prestige, it would be necessary to place them at the extremity of a series, which would range from the founders of religions and empires to the private individual who endeavours to dazzle his neighbours by a new coat or a decoration.

Between the extreme limits of this series would find a place all the forms of prestige resulting from the different elements composing a civilisation—sciences, arts, literature, it would be seen that prestige constitutes the fundamental element of persuasion. Consciously or not, the being, the idea, or the thing possessing prestige is immediately imitated in consequence of contagion, and forces an entire generation to adopt certain modes of feeling and of giving expression to its thought. This imitation, moreover, is, as a rule,

unconscious, which accounts for the fact that it is perfect. The modern painters who copy the pale colouring and the stiff attitudes of some of the Primitives are scarcely alive to the source of their inspiration. They believe in their own sincerity, whereas, if an eminent master had not revived this form of art, people would have continued blind to all but its naive and inferior sides. Those artists who, after the manner of another illustrious master, inundate their canvasses with violet shades do not see in nature more violet than was detected there fifty years ago; but they are influenced, "suggested," by the personal and special impressions of a painter who, in spite of this eccentricity, was successful in acquiring great prestige. Similar examples might be brought forward in connection with all the elements of civilisation.

It is seen from what precedes that a number of factors may be concerned in the genesis of prestige; among them success was always one of the most important. Every successful man, every idea that forces itself into recognition, ceases, ipso facto, to be called in question. The proof that success is one of the principal stepping-stones to prestige is that the disappearance of the one is almost always followed by the disappearance of the other. The hero whom the crowd acclaimed yesterday is insulted today should he have been overtaken by failure. The reaction, indeed, will be the stronger in proportion as the prestige has been great. The crowd in this case considers the fallen hero as an equal, and takes its revenge for having bowed to a superiority whose existence it no longer admits. While Robespierre was causing the execution of his colleagues and of a great number of his contemporaries, he possessed an immense prestige. When the transposition of a few votes deprived him of power, he immediately lost his prestige, and the crowd followed him to the guillotine with the self-same imprecations with which shortly before it had pursued his victims. Believers always break the statues of their former gods with every symptom of fury.

Prestige lost by want of success disappears in a brief space of time. It can also be worn away, but more slowly by being subjected to discussion. This latter power, however, is exceedingly sure. From the moment prestige is called in question it ceases to be prestige. The gods and men who have kept their prestige for long have never tolerated discussion. For the crowd to admire, it must be kept at a distance.

## **CHAPTER IV LIMITATIONS OF THE VARIABILITY OF THE BELIEFS AND OPINIONS OF CROWDS**

### **§1. Fixed beliefs.**

The invariability of certain general beliefs—They shape the course of a civilisation—The difficulty of uprooting them—In what respect intolerance is a virtue in a people—The philosophic absurdity of a belief cannot interfere with its spreading.

### **§2. The changeable opinions of crowds.**

The extreme mobility of opinions which do not arise from general beliefs—Apparent variations of ideas and beliefs in less than a century—The real limits of these variations—The matters effected by the variation—The disappearance at present in progress of general beliefs, and the extreme diffusion of the newspaper press, have for result that opinions are nowadays more and more changeable—Why the opinions of crowds tend on the majority of subjects towards indifference—Governments now powerless to direct opinion as they formerly did—Opinions prevented today from being tyrannical on account of their exceeding divergency.

### **§1. Fixed beliefs**

A close parallel exists between the anatomical and psychological characteristics of living beings. In these anatomical characteristics certain invariable, or slightly variable, elements are met with, to change which the lapse is necessary of geological ages. Side by side with these fixed, indestructible features are to be found others extremely changeable, which the art of the breeder or horticulturist may easily modify, and at times to such



an extent as to conceal the fundamental characteristics from an observer at all inattentive.

The same phenomenon is observed in the case of moral characteristics. Alongside the unalterable psychological elements of a race, mobile and changeable elements are to be encountered. For this reason, in studying the beliefs and opinions of a people, the presence is always detected of a fixed groundwork on which are engrafted opinions as changing as the surface sand on a rock.

The opinions and beliefs of crowds may be divided, then, into two very distinct classes. On the one hand we have great permanent beliefs, which endure for several centuries, and on which an entire civilisation may rest. Such, for instance, in the past were feudalism, Christianity, and Protestantism; and such, in our own time, is the nationalist principle and contemporary democratic and social ideas. In the second place, there are the transitory, changing opinions, the outcome, as a rule, of general conceptions, of which every age sees the birth and disappearance; examples in point are the theories which mould literature and the arts—those, for instance, which produced romanticism, naturalism, mysticism. Opinions of this order are as superficial, as a rule, as fashion, and as changeable. They may be compared to the ripples which ceaselessly arise and vanish on the surface of a deep lake. The great generalised beliefs are very restricted in number. Their rise and fall form the culminating points of the history of every historic race. They constitute the real framework of civilisation.

It is easy to imbue the mind of crowds with a passing opinion, but very difficult to implant therein a lasting belief. However, a belief of this latter description once established, it is equally difficult to uproot it. It is usually only to be changed at the cost of violent revolutions. Even revolutions can only avail when the belief has almost entirely lost its sway over men's minds. In that case revolutions serve to finally sweep away what had already been almost cast aside, though the force of habit prevented its complete abandonment. The beginning of a revolution is in reality the end of a belief.

The precise moment at which a great belief is doomed is easily recognizable;

it is the moment when its value begins to be called in question. Every general belief being little else than a fiction, it can only survive on the condition that it be not subjected to examination.

But even when a belief is severely shaken, the institutions to which it has given rise retain their strength and disappear but slowly. Finally, when the belief has completely lost its force, all that rested upon it is soon involved in ruin. As yet a nation has never been able to change its beliefs without being condemned at the same time to transform all the elements of its civilisation. The nation continues this process of transformation until it has alighted on and accepted a new general belief until this juncture it is perforce in a state of anarchy. General beliefs are the indispensable pillars of civilizations; they determine the trend of ideas. They alone are capable of inspiring faith and creating a sense of duty.

Nations have always been conscious of the utility of acquiring general beliefs, and have instinctively understood that their disappearance would be the signal for their own decline. In the case of the Romans, the fanatical cult of Rome was the belief that made them masters of the world, and when the belief had died out Rome was doomed to die. As for the barbarians who destroyed the Roman civilisation, it was only when they had acquired certain commonly accepted beliefs that they attained a measure of cohesion and emerged from anarchy.

Plainly it is not for nothing that nations have always displayed intolerance in the defence of their opinions. This intolerance, open as it is to criticism from the philosophic standpoint, represents in the life of a people the most necessary of virtues. It was to found or uphold general beliefs that so many victims were sent to the stake in the Middle Ages and that so many inventors and innovators have died in despair even if they have escaped martyrdom. It is in defence, too, of such beliefs that the world has been so often the scene of the direst disorder, and that so many millions of men have died on the battlefield, and will yet die there.

There are great difficulties in the way of establishing a general belief, but when it is definitely implanted its power is for a long time to come invincible,

and however false it be philosophically it imposes itself upon the most luminous intelligence. Have not the European peoples regarded as incontrovertible for more than fifteen centuries religious legends which, closely examined, are as barbarous<sup>①</sup> as those of Moloch? The frightful absurdity of the legend of a God who revenges himself for the disobedience of one of his creatures by inflicting horrible tortures on his son remained unperceived during many centuries. Such potent geniuses as a Galileo, a Newton, and a Leibnitz never supposed for an instant that the truth of such dogmas could be called in question. Nothing can be more typical than this fact of the hypnotising effect of general beliefs, but at the same time nothing can mark more decisively the humiliating limitations of our intelligence.

① Barbarous, philosophically speaking, I mean. In practice they have created an entirely new civilisation, and for fifteen centuries have given mankind a glimpse of those enchanted realms of generous dreams and of hope which he will know no more.

As soon as a new dogma is implanted in the mind of crowds it becomes the source of inspiration whence are evolved its institutions, arts, and mode of existence. The sway it exerts over men's minds under these circumstances is absolute. Men of action have no thought beyond realizing the accepted belief, legislators beyond applying it, while philosophers, artists, and men of letters are solely preoccupied with its expression under various shapes.

From the fundamental belief transient accessory ideas may arise, but they always bear the impress of the belief from which they have sprung. The Egyptian civilisation, the European civilisation of the Middle Ages, the Mussulman civilisation of the Arabs are all the outcome of a small number of religious beliefs which have left their mark on the least important elements of

these civilizations and allow of their immediate recognition.

Thus it is that, thanks to general beliefs, the men of every age are enveloped in a network of traditions, opinions, and customs which render them all alike, and from whose yoke they cannot extricate themselves. Men are guided in their conduct above all by their beliefs and by the customs that are the consequence of those beliefs. These beliefs and customs regulate the smallest acts of our existence, and the most independent spirit cannot escape their influence. The tyranny exercised unconsciously on men's minds is the only real tyranny, because it cannot be fought against. Tiberius, Ghengis Khan, and Napoleon were assuredly redoubtable tyrants, but from the depth of their graves Moses, Buddha, Jesus, and Mahomet have exerted on the human soul a far profounder despotism. A conspiracy may overthrow a tyrant, but what can it avail against a firmly established belief? In its violent struggle with Roman Catholicism it is the French Revolution that has been vanquished, and this in spite of the fact that the sympathy of the crowd was apparently on its side, and in spite of recourse to destructive measures as pitiless as those of the Inquisition. The only real tyrants that humanity has known have always been the memories of its dead or the illusions it has forged itself.

The philosophic absurdity that often marks general beliefs has never been an obstacle to their triumph. Indeed the triumph of such beliefs would seem impossible unless on the condition that they offer some mysterious absurdity. In consequence, the evident weakness of the socialist beliefs of today will not prevent them triumphing among the masses. Their real inferiority to all religious beliefs is solely the result of this consideration, that the ideal of happiness offered by the latter being realisable only in a future life, it was beyond the power of anybody to contest it. The socialist ideal of happiness being intended to be realised on earth, the vanity of its promises will at once appear as soon as the first efforts towards their realisation are made, and simultaneously the new belief will entirely lose its prestige. Its strength, in consequence, will only increase until the day when, having triumphed, its practical realisation shall commence. For this reason, while the new religion exerts to begin with, like all those that have preceded it, a destructive influence, it will be unable, in the future, to play a creative part.

## §2. The changeable opinions of crowds

Above the substratum of fixed beliefs, whose power we have just demonstrated, is found an overlying growth of opinions, ideas, and thoughts which are incessantly springing up and dying out. Some of them exist but for a day, and the more important scarcely outlive a generation. We have already noted that the changes which supervene in opinions of this order are at times far more superficial than real, and that they are always affected by racial considerations. When examining, for instance, the political institutions of France we showed that parties to all appearance utterly distinct—royalists, radicals, imperialists, socialists, an ideal absolutely identical, and that this ideal is solely dependent on the mental structure of the French race, since a quite contrary ideal is found under analogous names among other races. Neither the name given to opinions nor deceptive adaptations alter the essence of things. The men of the Great Revolution, saturated with Latin literature, who (their eyes fixed on the Roman Republic), adopted its laws, its fasces, and its togas, did not become Romans because they were under the empire of a powerful historical suggestion. The task of the philosopher is to investigate what it is which subsists of ancient beliefs beneath their apparent changes, and to identify amid the moving flux of opinions the part determined by general beliefs and the genius of the race.

In the absence of this philosophic test it might be supposed that crowds change their political or religious beliefs frequently and at will. All history, whether political, religious, artistic, or literary, seems to prove that such is the case.

As an example, let us take a very short period of French history, merely that from 1790 to 1820, a period of thirty years' duration, that of a generation. In the course of it we see the crowd at first monarchical become very revolutionary, then very imperialist, and again very monarchical. In the matter of religion it gravitates in the same lapse of time from Catholicism to atheism, then towards deism, and then returns to the most pronounced forms of Catholicism. These changes take place not only amongst the masses, but

also amongst those who direct them. We observe with astonishment the prominent men of the Convention, the sworn enemies of kings, men who would have neither gods nor masters, become the humble servants of Napoleon, and afterwards, under Louis XVIII., piously carry candles in religious processions.

Numerous, too, are the changes in the opinions of the crowd in the course of the following seventy years. The “Perfidious Albion” of the opening of the century is the ally of France under Napoleon’s heir; Russia, twice invaded by France, which looked on with satisfaction at French reverses, becomes its friend.

In literature, art, and philosophy the successive evolutions of opinion are more rapid still. Romanticism, naturalism, mysticism, spring up and die out in turn. The artist and the writer applauded yesterday are treated on the morrow with profound contempt.

When, however, we analyse all these changes in appearance so far reaching, what do we find? All those that are in opposition with the general beliefs and sentiments of the race are of transient duration, and the diverted stream soon resumes its course. The opinions which are not linked to any general belief or sentiment of the race, and which in consequence cannot possess stability, are at the mercy of every chance, or, if the expression be preferred, of every change in the surrounding circumstances. Formed by suggestion and contagion, they are always momentary; they crop up and disappear as rapidly on occasion as the sandhills formed by the wind on the sea-coast.

At the present day the changeable opinions of crowds are greater in number than they ever were, and for three different reasons.

The first is that as the old beliefs are losing their influence to a greater and greater extent, they are ceasing to shape the ephemeral opinions of the moment as they did in the past. The weakening of general beliefs clears the ground for a crop of haphazard opinions without a past or a future.

The second reason is that the power of crowds being on the increase, and this power being less and less counterbalanced, the extreme mobility of ideas,

which we have seen to be a peculiarity of crowds, can manifest itself without let or hindrance.

Finally, the third reason is the recent development of the newspaper press, by whose agency the most contrary opinions are being continually brought before the attention of crowds. The suggestions that might result from each individual opinion are soon destroyed by suggestions of an opposite character. The consequence is that no opinion succeeds in becoming widespread, and that the existence of all of them is ephemeral. An opinion nowadays dies out before it has found a sufficiently wide acceptance to become general.

A phenomenon quite new in the world's history, and most characteristic of the present age, has resulted from these different causes; I allude to the powerlessness of governments to direct opinion.

In the past, and in no very distant past, the action of governments and the influence of a few writers and a very small number of newspapers constituted the real reflectors of public opinion. Today the writers have lost all influence, and the newspapers only reflect opinion. As for statesmen, far from directing opinion, their only endeavour is to follow it. They have a dread of opinion, which amounts at times to terror, and causes them to adopt an utterly unstable line of conduct.

The opinion of crowds tends, then, more and more to become the supreme guiding principle in politics. It goes so far today as to force on alliances, as has been seen recently in the case of the Franco-Russian alliance, which is solely the outcome of a popular movement. A curious symptom of the present time is to observe popes, kings, and emperors consent to be interviewed as a means of submitting their views on a given subject to the judgment of crowds. Formerly it might have been correct to say that politics were not a matter of sentiment. Can the same be said today, when politics are more and more swayed by the impulse of changeable crowds, who are uninfluenced by reason and can only be guided by sentiment?

As to the press, which formerly directed opinion, it has had, like

governments, to humble itself before the power of crowds. It wields, no doubt, a considerable influence, but only because it is exclusively the reflection of the opinions of crowds and of their incessant variations. Become a mere agency for the supply of information, the press has renounced all endeavour to enforce an idea or a doctrine. It follows all the changes of public thought, obliged to do so by the necessities of competition under pain of losing its readers. The old staid and influential organs of the past, such as the *Constitutionnel*, the *Debats*, or the *Siecle*, which were accepted as oracles by the preceding generation, have disappeared or have become typical modern papers, in which a maximum of news is sandwiched in between light articles, society gossip, and financial puffs. There can be no question today of a paper rich enough to allow its contributors to air their personal opinions, and such opinions would be of slight weight with readers who only ask to be kept informed or to be amused, and who suspect every affirmation of being prompted by motives of speculation. Even the critics have ceased to be able to assure the success of a book or a play. They are capable of doing harm, but not of doing a service. The papers are so conscious of the uselessness of everything in the shape of criticism or personal opinion, that they have reached the point of suppressing literary criticism, confining themselves to citing the title of a book, and appending a “puff” of two or three lines.<sup>①</sup> In twenty years’ time the same fate will probably have overtaken theatrical criticism.

① These remarks refer to the French newspaper press.-  
Note of the Translator.

The close watching of the course of opinion has become today the principal preoccupation of the press and of governments. The effect produced by an event, a legislative proposal, a speech, is without intermission what they require to know, and the task is not easy, for nothing is more mobile and



changeable than the thought of crowds, and nothing more frequent than to see them execrate today what they applauded yesterday.

This total absence of any sort of direction of opinion, and at the same time the destruction of general beliefs, have had for final result an extreme divergency of convictions of every order, and a growing indifference on the part of crowds to everything that does not plainly touch their immediate interests. Questions of doctrine, such as socialism, only recruit champions boasting genuine convictions among the quite illiterate classes, among the workers in mines and factories, for instance. Members of the lower middle class, and working men possessing some degree of instruction, have either become utterly sceptical or extremely unstable in their opinions.

The evolution which has been effected in this direction in the last twenty-five years is striking. During the preceding period, comparatively near us though it is, opinions still had a certain general trend; they had their origin in the acceptance of some fundamental belief. By the mere fact that an individual was a monarchist, he possessed inevitably certain clearly defined ideas in history as well as in science, while by the mere fact that he was a republican, his ideas were quite contrary. A monarchist was well aware that men are not descended from monkeys, and a republican was not less well aware that such is in truth their descent. It was the duty of the monarchist to speak with horror, and of the republican to speak with veneration, of the great Revolution.

There were certain names, such as those of Robespierre and Marat, that had to be uttered with an air of religious devotion, and other names, such as those of Caesar, Augustus, or Napoleon, that ought never to be mentioned unaccompanied by a torrent of invective. Even in the French Sorbonne this ingenuous fashion of conceiving history was general.<sup>①</sup>

<sup>①</sup> There are pages in the books of the French official professors of history that are very curious from this point of

view. They prove too how little the critical spirit is developed by the system of university education in vogue in France. I cite as an example the following extracts from the “French Revolution” of M. Rambaud, professor of history at the Sorbonne:

“The taking of the Bastille was a culminating event in the history not only of France, but of all Europe; and inaugurated a new epoch in the history of the world!”

With respect to Robespierre, we learn with stupefaction that “his dictatorship was based more especially on opinion, persuasion, and moral authority; it was a sort of pontificate in the hands of a virtuous man!” (pp. 91 and 220.)

At the present day, as the result of discussion and analysis, all opinions are losing their prestige; their distinctive features are rapidly worn away, and few survive capable of arousing our enthusiasm. The man of modern times is more and more a prey to indifference.

The general wearing away of opinions should not be too greatly deplored. That it is a symptom of decadence in the life of a people cannot be contested. It is certain that men of immense, of almost supernatural insight, that apostles, leaders of crowds—men, in a word, of genuine and strong convictions—exert a far greater force than men who deny, who criticise, or who are indifferent, but it must not be forgotten that, given the power possessed at present by crowds, were a single opinion to acquire sufficient prestige to enforce its general acceptance, it would soon be endowed with so tyrannical a strength that everything would have to bend before it, and the era

of free discussion would be closed for a long time. Crowds are occasionally easy-going masters, as were Heliogabalus and Tiberius, but they are also violently capricious. A civilisation, when the moment has come for crowds to acquire a high hand over it, is at the mercy of too many chances to endure for long. Could anything postpone for a while the hour of its ruin, it would be precisely the extreme instability of the opinions of crowds and their growing indifference with respect to all general beliefs.

# **BOOK III THE CLASSIFICATION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF CROWDS**

## **CHAPTER I THE CLASSIFICATION OF CROWDS**

The general divisions of crowds—Their classification.

### **§1. Heterogeneous crowds.**

Different varieties of them—The influence of race—The spirit of the crowd is weak in proportion as the spirit of the race is strong—The spirit of the race represents the civilized state and the spirit of the crowd the barbarian state.

### **§2. Homogeneous crowds.**

Their different varieties—Sects, castes, and classes.

We have sketched in this work the general characteristics common to psychological crowds. It remains to point out the particular characteristics which accompany those of a general order in the different categories of collectivities, when they are transformed into a crowd under the influences of the proper exciting causes. We will, first of all, set forth in a few words a classification of crowds.

Our starting-point will be the simple multitude. Its most inferior form is met with when the multitude is composed of individuals belonging to different races. In this case its only common bond of union is the will, more or less respected of a chief. The barbarians of very diverse origin who during several centuries invaded the Roman Empire, may be cited as a specimen of multitudes of this kind.

On a higher level than these multitudes composed of different races are those which under certain influences have acquired common characteristics, and have ended by forming a single race. They present at times characteristics peculiar to crowds, but these characteristics are overruled to a greater or less extent by racial considerations.

These two kinds of multitudes may, under certain influences investigated in this work, be transformed into organised or psychological crowds. We shall break up these organised crowds into the following divisions:

A. Heterogeneous crowds: 1. Anonymous crowds (street crowds, for example).

2. Crowds not anonymous (juries, parliamentary assemblies, etc.)

B. Homogeneous crowds: 1. Sects (political sects, religious sects, etc)

2. Castes (the military caste, the priestly caste, the working caste, etc.)

3. Classes (the middle classes, the peasant classes, etc.)

We will point out briefly the distinguishing characteristics of these different categories of crowds.

## §1. Heterogeneous crowds

It is these collectivities whose characteristics have been studied in this volume. They are composed of individuals of any description, of any profession, and any degree of intelligence.

We are now aware that by the mere fact that men form part of a crowd engaged in action, their collective psychology differs essentially from their individual psychology, and their intelligence is affected by this differentiation. We have seen that intelligence is without influence in collectivities, they being solely under the sway of unconscious sentiments.

A fundamental factor, that of race, allows of a tolerably thorough differentiation of the various heterogeneous crowds.

We have often referred already to the part played by race, and have shown it to be the most powerful of the factors capable of determining men's actions. Its action is also to be traced in the character of crowds. A crowd composed of individuals assembled at haphazard, but all of them, Englishmen or Chinamen, will differ widely from another crowd also composed of individuals of any and every description, but of other races-Russians, Frenchmen, or Spaniards, for example.

The wide divergences which their inherited mental constitution creates in men's modes of feeling and thinking at once come into prominence when, which rarely happens, circumstances gather together in the same crowd and in fairly equal proportions individuals of different nationality, and this occurs, however identical in appearance be the interests which provoked the gathering. The efforts made by the socialists to assemble in great congresses the representatives of the working-class populations of different countries, have always ended in the most pronounced discord. A Latin crowd, however revolutionary or however conservative it be supposed, will invariably appeal to the intervention of the State to realise its demands. It is always distinguished by a marked tendency towards centralisation and by a leaning, more or less pronounced, in favour of a dictatorship. An English or an American crowd, on the contrary, sets no store on the State, and only appeals to private initiative. A French crowd lays particular weight on equality and an English crowd on liberty. These differences of race explain how it is that there are almost as many different forms of socialism and democracy as there are nations.

The genius of the race, then, exerts a paramount influence upon the dispositions of a crowd. It is the powerful underlying force that limits its changes of humour. It should be considered as an essential law that THE INFERIOR CHARACTERISTICS OF CROWDS ARE THE LESS ACCENTUATED IN PROPORTION AS THE SPIRIT OF THE RACE IS STRONG. The crowd state and the domination of crowds is equivalent to the barbarian state, or to a return to it. It is by the acquisition of a solidly

constituted collective spirit that the race frees itself to a greater and greater extent from the unreflecting power of crowds, and emerges from the barbarian state. The only important classification to be made of heterogeneous crowds, apart from that based on racial considerations, is to separate them into anonymous crowds, such as street crowds, and crowds not anonymous—deliberative assemblies and juries, for example. The sentiment of responsibility absent from crowds of the first description and developed in those of the second often gives a very different tendency to their respective acts.

## §2. Homogeneous crowds

Homogeneous crowds include: 1. Sects; 2. Castes; 3. Classes.

The SECT represents the first step in the process of organisation of homogeneous crowds. A sect includes individuals differing greatly as to their education, their professions, and the class of society to which they belong, and with their common beliefs as the connecting link. Examples in point are religious and political sects.

The CASTE represents the highest degree of organisation of which the crowd is susceptible. While the sect includes individuals of very different professions, degrees of education and social surrounding, who are only linked together by the beliefs they hold in common, the caste is composed of individuals of the same profession, and in consequence similarly educated and of much the same social status. Examples in point are the military and priestly castes.

The CLASS is formed of individuals of diverse origin, linked together not by a community of beliefs, as are the members of a sect, or by common professional occupations, as are the members of a caste, but by certain interests and certain habits of life and education almost identical. The middle class and the agricultural class are examples.

Being only concerned in this work with heterogeneous crowds, and reserving

the study of homogeneous crowds (sects, castes, and classes) for another volume, I shall not insist here on the characteristics of crowds of this latter kind. I shall conclude this study of heterogeneous crowds by the examination of a few typical and distinct categories of crowds.

## **CHAPTER II CROWDS TERMED CRIMINAL CROWDS**

Crowds termed criminal crowds—A crowd may be legally yet not psychologically criminal—The absolute unconsciousness of the acts of crowds—Various examples—Psychology of the authors of the September massacres—Their reasoning, their sensibility, their ferocity, and their morality.

Owing to the fact that crowds, after a period of excitement, enter upon a purely automatic and unconscious state, in which they are guided by suggestion, it seems difficult to qualify them in any case as criminal. I only retain this erroneous qualification because it has been definitely brought into vogue by recent psychological investigations. Certain acts of crowds are assuredly criminal, if considered merely in themselves, but criminal in that case in the same way as the act of a tiger devouring a Hindoo, after allowing its young to maul him for their amusement.

The usual motive of the crimes of crowds is a powerful suggestion, and the individuals who take part in such crimes are afterwards convinced that they have acted in obedience to duty, which is far from being the case with the ordinary criminal.

The history of the crimes committed by crowds illustrates what precedes.

The murder of M. de Launay, the governor of the Bastille, may be cited as a typical example. After the taking of the fortress the governor, surrounded by a very excited crowd, was dealt blows from every direction. It was proposed to hang him, to cut off his head, to tie him to a horse's tail. While struggling, he accidentally kicked one of those present. Some one proposed, and his



suggestion was at once received with acclamation by the crowd, that the individual who had been kicked should cut the governor's throat.

“The individual in question, a cook out of work, whose chief reason for being at the Bastille was idle curiosity as to what was going on, esteems, that since such is the general opinion, the action is patriotic and even believes he deserves a medal for having destroyed a monster. With a sword that is lent him he strikes the bared neck, but the weapon being somewhat blunt and not cutting, he takes from his pocket a small black-handled knife and (in his capacity of cook he would be experienced in cutting up meat) successfully effects the operation.”

The working of the process indicated above is clearly seen in this example. We have obedience to a suggestion, which is all the stronger because of its collective origin, and the murderer's conviction that he has committed a very meritorious act, a conviction the more natural seeing that he enjoys the unanimous approval of his fellow-citizens. An act of this kind may be considered crime legally but not psychologically.

The general characteristics of criminal crowds are precisely the same as those we have met with in all crowds: openness to suggestion, credulity, mobility, the exaggeration of the sentiments good or bad, the manifestation of certain forms of morality,

We shall find all these characteristics present in a crowd which has left behind it in French history the most sinister memories-the crowd which perpetrated the September massacres. In point of fact it offers much similarity with the crowd that committed the Saint Bartholomew massacres. I borrow the details from the narration of M. Taine, who took them from contemporary sources.

It is not known exactly who gave the order or made the suggestion to empty the prisons by massacring the prisoners. Whether it was Danton, as is probable, or another does not matter; the one interesting fact for us is the powerful suggestion received by the crowd charged with the massacre.

The crowd of murderers numbered some three hundred persons, and was a

perfectly typical heterogeneous crowd. With the exception of a very small number of professional scoundrels, it was composed in the main of shopkeepers and artisans of every trade: bookmakers, locksmiths, hairdressers, masons, clerks, messengers. Under the influence of the suggestion received they are perfectly convinced, as was the cook referred to above, that they are accomplishing a patriotic duty. They fill a double office, being at once judge and executioner, but they do not for a moment regard themselves as criminals.

Deeply conscious of the importance of their duty, they begin by forming a sort of tribunal, and in connection with this act the ingenuousness of crowds and their rudimentary conception of justice are seen immediately. In consideration of the large number of the accused, it is decided that, to begin with, the nobles, priests, officers, and members of the king's household—in a word, all the individuals whose mere profession is proof of their guilt in the eyes of a good patriot—shall be slaughtered in a body, there being no need for a special decision in their case. The remainder shall be judged on their personal appearance and their reputation. In this way the rudimentary conscience of the crowd is satisfied. It will now be able to proceed legally with the massacre, and to give free scope to those instincts of ferocity whose genesis I have set forth elsewhere, they being instincts which collectivities always have it in them to develop to a high degree. These instincts, however—as is regularly the case in crowds—will not prevent the manifestation of other and contrary sentiments, such as a tender-heartedness often as extreme as the ferocity.

“They have the expansive sympathy and prompt sensibility of the Parisian working man. At the Abbaye, one of the federates, learning that the prisoners had been left without water for twenty-six hours, was bent on putting the gaoler to death, and would have done so but for the prayers of the prisoners themselves. When a prisoner is acquitted (by the improvised tribunal) every one, guards and slaughterers included, embraces him with transports of joy and applauds frantically,” after which the wholesale massacre is recommenced. During its progress a pleasant gaiety never ceases to reign. There is dancing and singing around the corpses, and benches are arranged “for the ladies,” delighted to witness the killing of aristocrats. The exhibition

continues, moreover, of a special description of justice.

A slaughterer at the Abbaye having complained that the ladies placed at a little distance saw badly, and that only a few of those present had the pleasure of striking the aristocrats, the justice of the observation is admitted, and it is decided that the victims shall be made to pass slowly between two rows of slaughterers, who shall be under the obligation to strike with the back of the sword only so as to prolong the agony. At the prison de la Force the victims are stripped stark naked and literally “carved” for half an hour, after which, when every one has had a good view, they are finished off by a blow that lays bare their entrails.

The slaughterers, too, have their scruples and exhibit that moral sense whose existence in crowds we have already pointed out. They refuse to appropriate the money and jewels of the victims, taking them to the table of the committees.

Those rudimentary forms of reasoning, characteristic of the mind of crowds, are always to be traced in all their acts. Thus, after the slaughter of the 1,200 or 1,500 enemies of the nation, some one makes the remark, and his suggestion is at once adopted, that the other prisons, those containing aged beggars, vagabonds, and young prisoners, hold in reality useless mouths, of which it would be well on that account to get rid. Besides, among them there should certainly be enemies of the people, a woman of the name of Delarue, for instance, the widow of a prisoner, “She must be furious at being in prison, if she could she would set fire to Paris: she must have said so, she has said so. Another good riddance.” The demonstration appears convincing, and the prisoners are massacred without exception, included in the number being some fifty children of from twelve to seventeen years of age, who, of course, might themselves have become enemies of the nation, and of whom in consequence it was clearly well to be rid.

At the end of a week’s work, all these operations being brought to an end, the slaughterers can think of reposing themselves. Profoundly convinced that they have deserved well of their country, they went to the authorities and demanded a recompense. The most zealous went so far as to claim a medal.

The history of the Commune of 1871 affords several facts analogous to those which precede. Given the growing influence of crowds and the successive capitulations before them of those in authority, we are destined to witness many others of a like nature.

## **CHAPTER III CRIMINAL JURIES**

Criminal juries—General characteristics of juries—statistics show that their decisions are independent of their composition—The manner in which an impression may be made on juries—The style and influence of argument—The methods of persuasion of celebrated counsel—The nature of those crimes for which juries are respectively indulgent or severe—The utility of the jury as an institution, and the danger that would result from its place being taken by magistrates.

Being unable to study here every category of jury, I shall only examine the most important—that of the juries of the Court of Assize. These juries afford an excellent example of the heterogeneous crowd that is not anonymous. We shall find them display suggestibility and but slight capacity for reasoning, while they are open to the influence of the leaders of crowds, and they are guided in the main by unconscious sentiments. In the course of this investigation we shall have occasion to observe some interesting examples of the errors that may be made by persons not versed in the psychology of crowds.

Juries, in the first place, furnish us a good example of the slight importance of the mental level of the different elements composing a crowd, so far as the decisions it comes to are concerned. We have seen that when a deliberative assembly is called upon to give its opinion on a question of a character not entirely technical, intelligence stands for nothing. For instance, a gathering of scientific men or of artists, owing to the mere fact that they form an assemblage, will not deliver judgments on general subjects sensibly different

from those rendered by a gathering of masons or grocers. At various periods, and in particular previous to 1848, the French administration instituted a careful choice among the persons summoned to form a jury, picking the jurors from among the enlightened classes; choosing professors, functionaries, men of letters, At the present day jurors are recruited for the most part from among small tradesmen, petty capitalists, and employees. Yet, to the great astonishment of specialist writers, whatever the composition of the jury has been, its decisions have been identical. Even the magistrates, hostile as they are to the institution of the jury, have had to recognise the exactness of the assertion. M. Berard des Glajeux, a former President of the Court of Assizes, expresses himself on the subject in his “Memoirs” in the following terms:

“The selection of jurymen is today in reality in the hands of the municipal councilors, who put people down on the list or eliminate them from it in accordance with the political and electoral preoccupations inherent in their situation.... The majority of the jurors chosen are persons engaged in trade, but persons of less importance than formerly, and employees belonging to certain branches of the administration. . . . Both opinions and professions counting for nothing once the role of judge assumed, many of the jurymen having the ardour of neophytes, and men of the best intentions being similarly disposed in humble situations, the spirit of the jury has not changed: ITS VERDICTS HAVE REMAINED THE SAME.”

Of the passage just cited the conclusions, which are just, are to be borne in mind and not the explanations, which are weak. Too much astonishment should not be felt at this weakness, for, as a rule, counsel equally with magistrates seem to be ignorant of the psychology of crowds and, in consequence, of juries. I find a proof of this statement in a fact related by the author just quoted. He remarks that Lachaud, one of the most illustrious barristers practising in the Court of Assize, made systematic use of his right to object to a juror in the case of all individuals of intelligence on the list. Yet

experience—and experience alone—has ended by acquainting us with the utter uselessness of these objections. This is proved by the fact that at the present day public prosecutors and barristers, at any rate those belonging to the Parisian bar, have entirely renounced their right to object to a juror; still, as M. des Glajeux remarks, the verdicts have not changed, “they are neither better nor worse.”

Like all crowds, juries are very strongly impressed by sentimental considerations, and very slightly by argument. “They cannot resist the sight,” writes a barrister, “of a mother giving its child the breast, or of orphans.” “It is sufficient that a woman should be of agreeable appearance,” says M. des Glajeux, “to win the benevolence of the jury.”

Without pity for crimes of which it appears possible they might themselves be the victims—such crimes, moreover, are the most dangerous for society—juries, on the contrary, are very indulgent in the case of breaches of the law whose motive is passion. They are rarely severe on infanticide by girl-mothers, or hard on the young woman who throws vitriol at the man who has seduced and deserted her, for the reason that they feel instinctively that society runs but slight danger from such crimes,<sup>①</sup> and that in a country in which the law does not protect deserted girls the crime of the girl who avenges herself is rather useful than harmful, inasmuch as it frightens future seducers in advance.

① It is to be remarked, in passing, that this division of crimes into those dangerous and those not dangerous for society, which is well and instinctively made by juries is far from being unjust. The object of criminal laws is evidently to protect society against dangerous criminals and not to avenge it. On the other hand, the French code, and above all the minds of the French magistrates, are still deeply imbued with the spirit of vengeance characteristic of the old primitive law, and the term “vindicta” (prosecution, from the Latin *vindicta*, vengeance) is

still in daily use. A proof of this tendency on the part of the magistrates is found in the refusal by many of them to apply Berenger's law, which allows of a condemned person not undergoing his sentence unless he repeats his crime. Yet no magistrate can be ignorant, for the fact is proved by statistics, that the application of a punishment inflicted for the first time infallibly leads to further crime on the part of the person punished. When judges set free a sentenced person it always seems to them that society has not been avenged. Rather than not avenge it they prefer to create a dangerous, confirmed criminal.

Juries, like all crowds, are profoundly impressed by prestige, and President des Glajeux very properly remarks that, very democratic as juries are in their composition, they are very aristocratic in their likes and dislikes, "Name, birth, great wealth, celebrity, the assistance of an illustrious counsel, everything in the nature of distinction or that lends brilliancy to the accused, stands him in extremely good stead."

The chief concern of a good counsel should be to work upon the feelings of the jury, and, as with all crowds, to argue but little, or only to employ rudimentary modes of reasoning. An English barrister, famous for his successes in the assize courts, has well set forth the line of action to be followed:

"While pleading he would attentively observe the jury. The most favourable opportunity has been reached. By dint of insight and experience the counsel reads the effect of each phrase on the faces of the jurymen, and draws his conclusions in consequence. His first step is to be sure which members of the jury are already favourable to his cause. It is short work to definitely gain their adhesion, and having done so he turns his attention to the members who

seem, on the contrary, ill-disposed, and endeavours to discover why they are hostile to the accused. This is the delicate part of his task, for there may be an infinity of reasons for condemning a man, apart from the sentiment of justice.”

These few lines resume the entire mechanism of the art of oratory, and we see why the speech prepared in advance has so slight an effect, it being necessary to be able to modify the terms employed from moment to moment in accordance with the impression produced.

The orator does not require to convert to his views all the members of a jury, but only the leading spirits among it who will determine the general opinion. As in all crowds, so in juries there are a small number of individuals who serve as guides to the rest. “I have found by experience,” says the counsel cited above, “that one or two energetic men suffice to carry the rest of the jury with them.” It is those two or three whom it is necessary to convince by skilful suggestions. First of all, and above all, it is necessary to please them. The man forming part of a crowd whom one has succeeded in pleasing is on the point of being convinced, and is quite disposed to accept as excellent any arguments that may be offered him. I detach the following anecdote from an interesting account of M. Lachaud, alluded to above:

“It is well known that during all the speeches he would deliver in the course of an assize sessions, Lachaud never lost sight of the two or three jurymen whom he knew or felt to be influential but obstinate. As a rule he was successful in winning over these refractory jurors. On one occasion, however, in the provinces, he had to deal with a jurymen whom he plied in vain for three-quarters of an hour with his most cunning arguments; the man was the seventh jurymen, the first on the second bench. The case was desperate. Suddenly, in the middle of a passionate demonstration, Lachaud stopped short, and addressing the President of the court said, ‘Would you give instructions for the curtain there in front to be drawn? The seventh jurymen is



blinded by the sun.' The juryman in question reddened, smiled, and expressed his thanks. He was won over for the defence."

Many writers, some of them most distinguished, have started of late a strong campaign against the institution of the jury, although it is the only protection we have against the errors, really very frequent, of a caste that is under no control.① A portion of these writers advocate a jury recruited solely from the ranks of the enlightened classes; but we have already proved that even in this case the verdicts would be identical with those returned under the present system. Other writers, taking their stand on the errors committed by juries, would abolish the jury and replace it by judges. It is difficult to see how these would-be reformers can forget that the errors for which the jury is blamed were committed in the first instance by judges, and that when the accused person comes before a jury he has already been held to be guilty by several magistrates, by the juge d'instruction, the public prosecutor, and the Court of Arraignment. It should thus be clear that were the accused to be definitely judged by magistrates instead of by jurymen, he would lose his only chance of being admitted innocent. The errors of juries have always been first of all the errors of magistrates. It is solely the magistrates, then, who should be blamed when particularly monstrous judicial errors crop up, such, for instance, as the quite recent condemnation of Dr. L—who, prosecuted by a juge d'instruction, of excessive stupidity, on the strength of the denunciation of a half-idiot girl, who accused the doctor of having performed an illegal operation upon her for thirty francs, would have been sent to penal servitude but for an explosion of public indignation, which had for result that he was immediately set at liberty by the Chief of the State. The honourable character given the condemned man by all his fellow-citizens made the grossness of the blunder self-evident. The magistrates themselves admitted it, and yet out of caste considerations they did all they could to prevent the pardon being signed. In all similar affairs the jury, confronted with technical details it is unable to understand, naturally hearkens to the public prosecutor, arguing that, after all, the affair has been investigated by magistrates trained to unravel the most intricate situations. Who, then, are the real authors of the error—the jurymen or the magistrates? We should cling vigorously to the

jury. It constitutes, perhaps, the only category of crowd that cannot be replaced by any individuality. It alone can temper the severity of the law, which, equal for all, ought in principle to be blind and to take no cognisance of particular cases. Inaccessible to pity, and heeding nothing but the text of the law, the judge in his professional severity would visit with the same penalty the burglar guilty of murder and the wretched girl whom poverty and her abandonment by her seducer have driven to infanticide. The jury, on the other hand, instinctively feels that the seduced girl is much less guilty than the seducer, who, however, is not touched by the law, and that she deserves every indulgence.

① The magistracy is, in point of fact, the only administration whose acts are under no control. In spite of all its revolutions, democratic France does not possess that right of habeas corpus of which England is so proud. We have banished all the tyrants, but have set up a magistrate in each city who disposes at will of the honour and liberty of the citizens. An insignificant juge d'instruction (an examining magistrate who has no exact counterpart in England.-Trans.), fresh from the university, possesses the revolting power of sending to prison at will persons of the most considerable standing, on a simple supposition on his part of their guilt, and without being obliged investigation he can keep these persons in prison for six months or even a year, and free them at last without owing them either an indemnity or excuses. The warrant in France is the exact equivalent of the lettre de cachet, with this difference, that the latter, with the use of which the monarchy was so justly reproached, could only be resorted to by persons occupying a very high position, while the warrant is an instrument in the hands of a whole class of citizens which is far from passing for being very enlightened or very independent.

Being well acquainted with the psychology of castes, and also with the psychology of other categories of crowds, I do not perceive a single case in which, wrongly accused of a crime, I should not prefer to have to deal with a jury rather than with magistrates. I should have some chance that my innocence would be recognized by the former and not the slightest chance that it would be admitted by the latter. The power of crowds is to be dreaded, but the power of certain castes is to be dreaded yet more. Crowds are open to conviction; castes never are.

## **CHAPTER IV ELECTORAL CROWDS**

General characteristics of electoral crowds—The manner of persuading them—The qualities that should be possessed by a candidate—Necessity of prestige—Why working men and peasants so rarely choose candidates from their own class—The influence of words and formulas on the elector—The general aspect of election oratory—How the opinions of the elector are formed—The power of political committees—They represent the most redoubtable form of tyranny—The committees of the Revolution—Universal suffrage cannot be replaced in spite of its slight psychological value—Why it is that the votes recorded would remain the same even if the right of voting were restricted to a limited class of citizens—What universal suffrage expresses in all countries.

Electoral crowds—that is to say, collectivities invested with the power of electing the holders of certain functions—constitute heterogeneous crowds, but as their action is confined to a single clearly determined matter, namely, to choosing between different candidates, they present only a few of the characteristics previously described. Of the characteristics peculiar to crowds, they display in particular but slight aptitude for reasoning, the absence of the critical spirit, irritability, credulity, and simplicity. In their decision,

moreover, is to be traced the influence of the leaders of crowds and the part played by the factors we have enumerated: affirmation, repetition, prestige, and contagion.

Let us examine by what methods electoral crowds are to be persuaded. It will be easy to deduce their psychology from the methods that are most successful.

It is of primary importance that the candidate should possess prestige. Personal prestige can only be replaced by that resulting from wealth. Talent and even genius are not elements of success of serious importance.

Of capital importance, on the other hand, is the necessity for the candidate of possessing prestige, of being able, that is, to force himself upon the electorate without discussion. The reason why the electors, of whom a majority are working men or peasants, so rarely choose a man from their own ranks to represent them is that such a person enjoys no prestige among them. When, by chance, they do elect a man who is their equal, it is as a rule for subsidiary reasons—for instance, to spite an eminent man, or an influential employer of labour on whom the elector is in daily dependence, and whose master he has the illusion he becomes in this way for a moment.

The possession of prestige does not suffice, however, to assure the success of a candidate. The elector stickles in particular for the flattery of his greed and vanity. He must be overwhelmed with the most extravagant blandishments, and there must be no hesitation in making him the most fantastic promises.

If he is a working man it is impossible to go too far in insulting and stigmatising employers of labour. As for the rival candidate, an effort must be made to destroy his chance by establishing by dint of affirmation, repetition, and contagion that he is an arrant scoundrel, and that it is a matter of common knowledge that he has been guilty of several crimes. It is, of course, useless to trouble about any semblance of proof. Should the adversary be ill-acquainted with the psychology of crowds he will try to justify himself by arguments instead of confining himself to replying to one set of affirmations by another; and he will have no chance whatever of being successful.

The candidate's written programme should not be too categorical, since later on his adversaries might bring it up against him; in his verbal programme, however, there cannot be too much exaggeration. The most important reforms may be fearlessly promised. At the moment they are made these exaggerations produce a great effect, and they are not binding for the future, it being a matter of constant observation that the elector never troubles himself to know how far the candidate he has returned has followed out the electoral programme he applauded, and in virtue of which the election was supposed to have been secured. In what precedes, all the factors of persuasion which we have described are to be recognized. We shall come across them again in the action exerted by words and formulas, whose magical sway we have already insisted upon. An orator who knows how to make use of these means of persuasion can do what he will with a crowd. Expressions such as infamous capital, vile exploiters, the admirable working man, the socialization of wealth, always produce the same effect, although already somewhat worn by use. But the candidate who hits on a new formula as devoid as possible of precise meaning, and apt in consequence to flatter the most varied aspirations, infallibly obtains a success. The sanguinary Spanish revolution of 1873 was brought about by one of these magical phrases of complex meaning on which everybody can put his own interpretation. A contemporary writer has described the launching of this phrase in terms that deserve to be quoted:

“The radicals have made the discovery that a centralized republic is a monarchy in disguise, and to humour them the Cortes had unanimously proclaimed a **FEDERAL REPUBLIC**, though none of the voters could have explained what it was he had just voted for. This formula, however, delighted everybody; the joy was intoxicating, delirious. The reign of virtue and happiness had just been inaugurated on earth. A republican whose opponent refused him the title of federalist considered himself to be mortally insulted. People addressed each other in the streets with the words, ‘Long live the federal republic!’ After which the praises were sung of the mystic virtue of the absence of discipline in the army, and of the autonomy of the soldiers.

What was understood by the ‘federal republic?’ There were those who took it to mean the emancipation of the provinces, institutions akin to those of the United States and administrative decentralisation; others had in view the abolition of all authority and the speedy commencement of the great social liquidation. The socialists of Barcelona and Andalusia stood out for the absolute sovereignty of the communes; they proposed to endow Spain with ten thousand independent municipalities, to legislate on their own account, and their creation to be accompanied by the suppression of the police and the army. In the southern provinces the insurrection was soon seen to spread from town to town and village to village. Directly a village had made its pronunciamiento its first care was to destroy the telegraph wires and the railway lines so as to cut off all communication with its neighbours and Madrid. The sorriest hamlet was determined to stand on its own bottom. Federation had given place to cantonalism, marked by massacres, incendiarism, and every description of brutality, and bloody saturnalia were celebrated throughout the length and breadth of the land.”

With respect to the influence that may be exerted by reasoning on the minds of electors, to harbour the least doubt on this subject can only be the result of never having read the reports of an electioneering meeting. In such a gathering affirmations, invectives, and sometimes blows are exchanged, but never arguments. Should silence be established for a moment it is because some one present, having the reputation of a “tough customer,” has announced that he is about to heckle the candidate by putting him one of those embarrassing questions which are always the joy of the audience. The satisfaction, however, of the opposition party is short-lived, for the voice of the questioner is soon drowned in the uproar made by his adversaries. The following reports of public meetings, chosen from hundreds of similar examples, and taken from the daily papers, may be considered as typical:

“One of the organizers of the meeting having asked the assembly to elect a president, the storm bursts. The anarchists leap on to the platform to take the committee table by storm. The socialists make an energetic defence; blows are exchanged, and each party accuses the other of being spies in the pay of

the Government, etc... A citizen leaves the hall with a black eye.

”The committee is at length installed as best it may be in the midst of the tumult, and the right to speak devolves upon ‘Comrade’ X.

“The orator starts a vigorous attack on the socialists, who interrupt him with shouts of ‘Idiot, scoundrel, blackguard!’ epithets to which Comrade X. replies by setting forth a theory according to which the socialists are ‘idiots’ or ‘jokers.’”

“The Allemanist party had organised yesterday evening, in the Hall of Commerce, in the Rue du Faubourg-du-Temple, a great meeting, preliminary to the workers’ fete of the 1st of May. The watchword of the meeting was ‘Calm and Tranquillity!’

“Comrade G—alludes to the socialists as ‘idiots’ and ‘humbugs.’

“At these words there is an exchange of invectives and orators and audience come to blows. Chairs, tables, and benches are converted into weapons,”

It is not to be imagined for a moment that this description of discussion is peculiar to a determined class of electors and dependent on their social position. In every anonymous assembly whatever, though it be composed exclusively of highly educated persons, discussion always assumes the same shape. I have shown that when men are collected in a crowd there is a tendency towards their mental levelling at work, and proof of this is to be found at every turn. Take, for example, the following extract from a report of a meeting composed exclusively of students, which I borrow from the Temps of 13th of February, 1895:

“The tumult only increased as the evening went on; I do not believe that a single orator succeeded in uttering two sentences without being interrupted. At every instant there came shouts from this or that direction or from every

direction at once. Applause was intermingled with hissing, violent discussions were in progress between individual members of the audience, sticks were brandished threateningly, others beat a tattoo on the floor, and the interrupters were greeted with yells of 'Put him out!' or 'Let him speak!'

"M. C—lavished such epithets as odious and cowardly, monstrous, vile, venal and vindictive, on the Association, which he declared he wanted to destroy," etc. etc.

How, it may be asked, can an elector form an opinion under such conditions? To put such a question is to harbour a strange delusion as to the measure of liberty that may be enjoyed by a collectivity. Crowds have opinions that have been imposed upon them, but they never boast reasoned opinions. In the case under consideration the opinions and votes of the electors are in the hands of the election committees, whose leading spirits are, as a rule, publicans, their influence over the working men, to whom they allow credit, being great. "Do you know what an election committee is?" writes M. Scherer, one of the most valiant champions of present-day democracy. "It is neither more nor less than the cornerstone of our institutions, the masterpiece of the political machine. France is governed today by the election committees." ①

① Committees under whatever name, clubs, syndicates, constitute perhaps the most redoubtable danger resulting from the power of crowds. They represent in reality the most impersonal and, in consequence, the most oppressive form of tyranny. The leaders who direct the committees being supposed to speak and act in the name of a collectivity, are freed from all responsibility, and are in a position to do just as they choose. The most savage tyrant has never ventured even to dream of such proscriptions as those ordained by the committees of the Revolution. Barras has declared that they decimated the convention, picking off its members at their pleasure. So long as he was able to speak in their name, Robespierre wielded



absolute power. The moment this frightful dictator separated himself from them, for reasons of personal pride, he was lost. The reign of crowds is the reign of committees, that is, of the leaders of crowds. A severer despotism cannot be imagined.

To exert an influence over them is not difficult, provided the candidate be in himself acceptable and possess adequate financial resources. According to the admissions of the donors, three millions of francs sufficed to secure the repeated elections of General Boulanger.

Such is the psychology of electoral crowds. It is identical with that of other crowds: neither better nor worse.

In consequence I draw no conclusion against universal suffrage from what precedes. Had I to settle its fate, I should preserve it as it is for practical reasons, which are to be deduced in point of fact from our investigation of the psychology of crowds. On this account I shall proceed to set them forth.

No doubt the weak side of universal suffrage is too obvious to be overlooked. It cannot be gainsaid that civilisation has been the work of a small minority of superior intelligences constituting the culminating point of a pyramid, whose stages, widening in proportion to the decrease of mental power, represent the masses of a nation. The greatness of a civilisation cannot assuredly depend upon the votes given by inferior elements boasting solely numerical strength. Doubtless, too, the votes recorded by crowds are often very dangerous. They have already cost us several invasions, and in view of the triumph of socialism, for which they are preparing the way, it is probable that the vagaries of popular sovereignty will cost us still more dearly.

Excellent, however, as these objections are in theory, in practice they lose all force, as will be admitted if the invincible strength be remembered of ideas transformed into dogmas. The dogma of the sovereignty of crowds is as little defensible, from the philosophical point of view, as the religious dogmas of

the Middle Ages, but it enjoys at present the same absolute power they formerly enjoyed. It is as unattackable in consequence as in the past were our religious ideas. Imagine a modern freethinker miraculously transported into the midst of the Middle Ages. Do you suppose that, after having ascertained the sovereign power of the religious ideas that were then in force, he would have been tempted to attack them? Having fallen into the hands of a judge disposed to send him to the stake, under the imputation of having concluded a pact with the devil, or of having been present at the witches sabbath, would it have occurred to him to call in question the existence of the devil or of the sabbath? It were as wise to oppose cyclones with discussion as the beliefs of crowds. The dogma of universal suffrage possesses today the power the Christian dogmas formerly possessed. Orators and writers allude to it with a respect and adulation that never fell to the share of Louis XIV. In consequence the same position must be taken up with regard to it as with regard to all religious dogmas. Time alone can act upon them.

Besides, it would be the more useless to attempt to undermine this dogma, inasmuch as it has an appearance of reasonableness in its favour. "In an era of equality," Tocqueville justly remarks, "men have no faith in each other on account of their being all alike; yet this same similitude gives them an almost limitless confidence in the judgment of the public, the reason being that it does not appear probable that, all men being equally enlightened, truth and numerical superiority should not go hand in hand."

Must it be believed that with a restricted suffrage—a suffrage restricted to those intellectually capable if it be desired—an improvement would be effected in the votes of crowds? I cannot admit for a moment that this would be the case, and that for the reasons I have already given touching the mental inferiority of all collectivities, whatever their composition. In a crowd men always tend to the same level, and, on general questions, a vote, recorded by forty academicians is no better than that of forty water-carriers. I do not in the least believe that any of the votes for which universal suffrage is blamed—the re-establishment of the Empire, for instance—would have fallen out differently had the voters been exclusively recruited among learned and liberally educated men. It does not follow because an individual knows Greek or mathematics, is an architect, a veterinary surgeon, a doctor, or a barrister,

that he is endowed with a special intelligence of social questions. All our political economists are highly educated, being for the most part professors or academicians, yet is there a single general question—protection, bimetallism, which they have succeeded in agreeing? The explanation is that their science is only a very attenuated form of our universal ignorance. With regard to social problems, owing to the number of unknown quantities they offer, men are substantially, equally ignorant.

In consequence, were the electorate solely composed of persons stuffed with sciences their votes would be no better than those emitted at present. They would be guided in the main by their sentiments and by party spirit. We should be spared none of the difficulties we now have to contend with, and we should certainly be subjected to the oppressive tyranny of castes.

Whether the suffrage of crowds be restricted or general, whether it be exercised under a republic or a monarchy, in France, in Belgium, in Greece, in Portugal, or in Spain, it is everywhere identical; and, when all is said and done, it is the expression of the unconscious aspirations and needs of the race. In each country the average opinions of those elected represent the genius of the race, and they will be found not to alter sensibly from one generation to another.

It is seen, then, that we are confronted once more by the fundamental notion of race, which we have come across so often, and on this other notion, which is the outcome of the first, that institutions and governments play but a small part in the life of a people. Peoples are guided in the main by the genius of their race, that is, by that inherited residue of qualities of which the genius is the sum total. Race and the slavery of our daily necessities are the mysterious master-causes that rule our destiny.

## **CHAPTER V PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLIES**

Parliamentary crowds present most of the characteristics common to heterogeneous crowds that are not anonymous—The simplicity of their opinions—Their suggestibility and its limits—Their indestructible, fixed opinions and their changed opinions—The reason of the predominance of indecision—The role of the leaders—The reason of their prestige—They are the true masters of an assembly whose votes, on that account, are merely those of a small minority—The absolute power they exercise—The elements of their oratorical art—Phrases and images—The psychological necessity the leaders are under of being in a general way of stubborn convictions and narrow-minded—It is impossible for a speaker without prestige to obtain recognition for his arguments—The exaggeration of the sentiments, whether good or bad, of assemblies—At certain moments they become automatic—The sittings of the Convention—Cases in which an assembly loses the characteristics of crowds—The influence of specialists when technical questions arise—The advantages and dangers of a parliamentary system in all countries—It is adapted to modern needs; but it involves financial waste and the progressive curtailment of all liberty—Conclusion.

In parliamentary assemblies we have an example of heterogeneous crowds that are not anonymous. Although the mode of election of their members varies from epoch to epoch, and from nation to nation, they present very similar characteristics. In this case the influence of the race makes itself felt to weaken or exaggerate the characteristics common to crowds, but not to prevent their manifestation. The parliamentary assemblies of the most widely different countries, of Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, France, and America present great analogies in their debates and votes, and leave the respective governments face to face with identical difficulties.

Moreover, the parliamentary system represents the ideal of all modern civilized peoples. The system is the expression of the idea, psychologically erroneous, but generally admitted, that a large gathering of men is much more capable than a small number of coming to a wise and independent decision

on a given subject.

The general characteristics of crowds are to be met with in parliamentary assemblies: intellectual simplicity, irritability, suggestibility, the exaggeration of the sentiments and the preponderating influence of a few leaders. In consequence, however, of their special composition parliamentary crowds offer some distinctive features, which we shall point out shortly.

Simplicity in their opinions is one of their most important characteristics. In the case of all parties, and more especially so far as the Latin peoples are concerned, an invariable tendency is met with in crowds of this kind to solve the most complicated social problems by the simplest abstract principles and general laws applicable to all cases. Naturally the principles vary with the party; but owing to the mere fact that the individual members are a part of a crowd, they are always inclined to exaggerate the worth of their principles, and to push them to their extreme consequences. In consequence parliaments are more especially representative of extreme opinions.

The most perfect example of the ingenuous simplification of opinions peculiar to assemblies is offered by the Jacobins of the French Revolution. Dogmatic and logical to a man, and their brains full of vague generalities, they busied themselves with the application of fixed-principles without concerning themselves with events. It has been said of them, with reason, that they went through the Revolution without witnessing it. With the aid of the very simple dogmas that served them as guide, they imagined they could recast society from top to bottom, and cause a highly refined civilisation to return to a very anterior phase of the social evolution. The methods they resorted to to realise their dream wore the same stamp of absolute ingenuousness. They confined themselves, in reality, to destroying what stood in their way. All of them, moreover—Girondists, the Men of the Mountain, the Thermidorians, alike animated by the same spirit.

Parliamentary crowds are very open to suggestion; and, as in the case of all crowds, the suggestion comes from leaders possessing prestige; but the suggestibility of parliamentary assemblies has very clearly defined limits, which it is important to point out.

On all questions of local or regional interest every member of an assembly has fixed, unalterable opinions, which no amount of argument can shake. The talent of a Demosthenes would be powerless to change the vote of a Deputy on such questions as protection or the privilege of distilling alcohol, questions in which the interests of influential electors are involved. The suggestion emanating from these electors and undergone before the time to vote arrives, sufficiently outweighs suggestions from any other source to annul them and to maintain an absolute fixity of opinion.<sup>①</sup>

① The following reflection of an English parliamentarian of long experience doubtless applies to these opinions, fixed beforehand, and rendered unalterable by electioneering necessities, “During the fifty years that I have sat at Westminster, I have listened to thousands of speeches; but few of them have changed my opinion, not one of them has changed my vote.”

On general questions—the overthrow of a Cabinet, the imposition of a tax, is no longer any fixity of opinion, and the suggestions of leaders can exert an influence, though not in quite the same way as in an ordinary crowd. Every party has its leaders, who possess occasionally an equal influence. The result is that the Deputy finds himself placed between two contrary suggestions, and is inevitably made to hesitate. This explains how it is that he is often seen to vote in contrary fashion in an interval of a quarter of an hour or to add to a law an article which nullifies it; for instance, to withdraw from employers of labour the right of choosing and dismissing their workmen, and then to very nearly annul this measure by an amendment.

It is for the same reason that every Chamber that is returned has some very stable opinions, and other opinions that are very shifting. On the whole, the

general questions being the more numerous, indecision is predominant in the Chamber—the indecision which results from the ever? present fear of the elector, the suggestion received from whom is always latent, and tends to counterbalance the influence of the leaders.

Still, it is the leaders who are definitely the masters in those numerous discussions, with regard to the subject-matter of which the members of an assembly are without strong preconceived opinions.

The necessity for these leaders is evident, since, under the name of heads of groups, they are met with in the assemblies of every country. They are the real rulers of an assembly. Men forming a crowd cannot do without a master, whence it results that the votes of an assembly only represent, as a rule, the opinions of a small minority.

The influence of the leaders is due in very small measure to the arguments they employ, but in a large degree to their prestige. The best proof of this is that, should they by any circumstance lose their prestige, their influence disappears.

The prestige of these political leaders is individual, and independent of name or celebrity: a fact of which M. Jules Simon gives us some very curious examples in his remarks on the prominent men of the Assembly of 1848, of which he was a member:

“Two months before he was all-powerful, Louis Napoleon was entirely without the least importance.

“Victor Hugo mounted the tribune. He failed to achieve success. He was listened to as Felix Pyat was listened to, but he did not obtain as much applause. ‘I don’t like his ideas,’ Vaulabelle said to me, speaking of Felix Pyat, ‘ut he is one of the greatest writers and the greatest orator of France.’ Edgar Quinet, in spite of his exceptional and powerful intelligence, was held in no esteem whatever. He had been popular for awhile before the opening of the Assembly; in the Assembly he had no popularity.

“The splendour of genius makes itself less felt in political assemblies than

anywhere else. They only give heed to eloquence appropriate to the time and place and to party services, not to services rendered the country. For homage to be rendered Lamartine in 1848 and Thiers in 1871, the stimulant was needed of urgent, inexorable interest. As soon as the danger was passed the parliamentary world forgot in the same instant its gratitude and its fright.”

I have quoted the preceding passage for the sake of the facts it contains, not of the explanations it offers, their psychology being somewhat poor. A crowd would at once lose its character of a crowd were it to credit its leaders with their services, whether of a party nature or rendered their country. The crowd that obeys a leader is under the influence of his prestige, and its submission is not dictated by any sentiment of interest or gratitude.

In consequence the leader endowed with sufficient prestige wields almost absolute power. The immense influence exerted during a long series of years, thanks to his prestige, by a celebrated Deputy,<sup>①</sup> beaten at the last general election in consequence of certain financial events, is well known. He had only to give the signal and Cabinets were overthrown. A writer has clearly indicated the scope of his action in the following lines:

① M. Clemenceau.-Note of the Translator.

“It is due, in the main, to M. X—that we paid three times as dearly as we should have done for Tonkin, that we remained so long on a precarious footing in Madagascar, that we were defrauded of an empire in the region of the Lower Niger, and that we have lost the preponderating situation we used to occupy in Egypt. The theories of M. X—have cost us more territories than the disasters of Napoleon I.”



We must not harbour too bitter a grudge against the leader in question. It is plain that he has cost us very dear; but a great part of his influence was due to the fact that he followed public opinion, which, in colonial matters, was far from being at the time what it has since become. A leader is seldom in advance of public opinion; almost always all he does is to follow it and to espouse all its errors. The means of persuasion of the leaders we are dealing with, apart from their prestige, consist in the factors we have already enumerated several times. To make a skilful use of these resources a leader must have arrived at a comprehension, at least in an unconscious manner, of the psychology of crowds, and must know how to address them. He should be aware, in particular, of the fascinating influence of words, phrases, and images. He should possess a special description of eloquence, composed of energetic affirmations-unburdened with proofs- and impressive images, accompanied by very summary arguments. This is a kind of eloquence that is met with in all assemblies, the English Parliament included, the most serious though it is of all.

“Debates in the House of Commons,” says the English philosopher Maine, “may be constantly read in which the entire discussion is confined to an exchange of rather weak generalities and rather violent personalities. General formulas of this description exercise a prodigious influence on the imagination of a pure democracy. It will always be easy to make a crowd accept general assertions, presented in striking terms, although they have never been verified, and are perhaps not susceptible of verification.”

Too much importance cannot be attached to the “striking terms” alluded to in the above quotation. We have already insisted, on several occasions, on the special power of words and formulas. They must be chosen in such a way as to evoke very vivid images. The following phrase, taken from a speech by one of the leaders of our assemblies, affords an excellent example:

“When the same vessel shall bear away to the fever-haunted lands of our penitentiary settlements the politician of shady reputation and the anarchist guilty of murder, the pair will be able to converse together, and they will appear to each other as the two complementary aspects of one and the same state of society.”

The image thus evoked is very vivid, and all the adversaries of the speaker felt themselves threatened by it. They conjured up a double vision of the fever-haunted country and the vessel that may carry them away; for is it not possible that they are included in the somewhat ill-defined category of the politicians menaced? They experienced the lurking fear that the men of the Convention must have felt whom the vague speeches of Robespierre threatened with the guillotine, and who, under the influence of this fear, invariably yielded to him.

It is all to the interest of the leaders to indulge in the most improbable exaggerations. The speaker of whom I have just cited a sentence was able to affirm, without arousing violent protestations, that bankers and priests had subsidised the throwers of bombs, and that the directors of the great financial companies deserve the same punishment as anarchists. Affirmations of this kind are always effective with crowds. The affirmation is never too violent, the declamation never too threatening. Nothing intimidates the audience more than this sort of eloquence. Those present are afraid that if they protest they will be put down as traitors or accomplices.

As I have said, this peculiar style of eloquence has ever been of sovereign effect in all assemblies. In times of crisis its power is still further accentuated. The speeches of the great orators of the assemblies of the French Revolution are very interesting reading from this point of view. At every instant they thought themselves obliged to pause in order to denounce crime and exalt virtue, after which they would burst forth into imprecations against tyrants, and swear to live free men or perish. Those present rose to their feet, applauded furiously, and then, calmed, took their seats again.

On occasion, the leader may be intelligent and highly educated, but the possession of these qualities does him, as a rule, more harm than good. By showing how complex things are, by allowing of explanation and promoting comprehension, intelligence always renders its owner indulgent, and blunts, in a large measure, that intensity and violence of conviction needful for apostles. The great leaders of crowds of all ages, and those of the Revolution in particular, have been of lamentably narrow intellect; while it is precisely those whose intelligence has been the most restricted who have exercised the greatest influence.

The speeches of the most celebrated of them, of Robespierre, frequently astound one by their incoherence: by merely reading them no plausible explanation is to be found of the great part played by the powerful dictator:

“The commonplaces and redundancies of pedagogic eloquence and Latin culture at the service of a mind childish rather than undistinguished, and limited in its notions of attack and defence to the defiant attitude of schoolboys. Not an idea, not a happy turn of phrase, or a telling hit: a storm of declamation that leaves us bored. After a dose of this unexhilarating reading one is attempted to exclaim ‘Oh!’ with the amiable Camille Desmoulins.”

It is terrible at times to think of the power that strong conviction combined with extreme narrowness of mind gives a man possessing prestige. It is none the less necessary that these conditions should be satisfied for a man to ignore obstacles and display strength of will in a high measure. Crowds instinctively recognise in men of energy and conviction the masters they are always in need of.

In a parliamentary assembly the success of a speech depends almost solely on the prestige possessed by the speaker, and not at all on the arguments he brings forward. The best proof of this is that when for one cause or another a speaker loses his prestige, he loses simultaneously all his influence, that is, his power of influencing votes at will.

When an unknown speaker comes forward with a speech containing good arguments, but only arguments, the chances are that he will only obtain a hearing. A Deputy who is a psychologist of insight, M. Desaubes, has recently traced in the following lines the portrait of the Deputy who lacks prestige:

“When he takes his place in the tribune he draws a document from his portfolio, spreads it out methodically before him, and makes a start with assurance.

“He flatters himself that he will implant in the minds of his audience the conviction by which he is himself animated. He has weighed and reweighed his arguments; he is well primed with figures and proofs; he is certain he will convince his hearers. In the face of the evidence he is to adduce all resistance would be futile. He begins, confident in the justice of his cause, and relying upon the attention of his colleagues, whose only anxiety, of course, is to subscribe to the truth.

“He speaks, and is at once surprised at the restlessness of the House, and a little annoyed by the noise that is being made.

“How is it silence is not kept? Why this general inattention? What are those Deputies thinking about who are engaged in conversation? What urgent motive has induced this or that Deputy to quit his seat?

“An expression of uneasiness crosses his face; he frowns and stops. Encouraged by the President, he begins again, raising his voice. He is only listened to all the less. He lends emphasis to his words, and gesticulates: the noise around him increases. He can no longer hear himself, and again stops; finally, afraid that his silence may provoke the dreaded cry, ‘The Closure!’ he starts off again. The clamour becomes unbearable.”

When parliamentary assemblies reach a certain pitch of excitement they

become identical with ordinary heterogeneous crowds, and their sentiments in consequence present the peculiarity of being always extreme. They will be seen to commit acts of the greatest heroism or the worst excesses. The individual is no longer himself, and so entirely is this the case that he will vote measures most adverse to his personal interests.

The history of the French Revolution shows to what an extent assemblies are capable of losing their self-consciousness, and of obeying suggestions most contrary to their interests. It was an enormous sacrifice for the nobility to renounce its privileges, yet it did so without hesitation on a famous night during the sittings of the Constituents Assembly. By renouncing their inviolability the men of the Convention placed themselves under a perpetual menace of death and yet they took this step, and were not afraid to decimate their own ranks, though perfectly aware that the scaffold to which they were sending their colleagues today might be their own fate tomorrow. The truth is they had attained to that completely automatic state which I have described elsewhere, and no consideration would hinder them from yielding to the suggestions by which they were hypnotised. The following passage from the memoirs of one of them, Billaud-Varennes, is absolutely typical on this score, "The decisions with which we have been so reproached," he says, "Were not desired by us two days, a single day before they were taken: it was the crisis and nothing else that gave rise to them." Nothing can be more accurate.

The same phenomena of unconsciousness were to be witnessed during all the stormy sittings of the Convention.

"They approved and decreed measures," says Taine, "which they held in horror—measures which were not only stupid and foolish, but measures that were crimes—the murder of innocent men, the murder of their friends. The Left, supported by the Right, unanimously and amid loud applause, sent to the scaffold Danton, its natural chief, and the great promoter and leader of the

Revolution. Unanimously and amid the greatest applause the Right, supported by the Left, votes the worst decrees of the revolutionary government. Unanimously and amid cries of admiration and enthusiasm, amid demonstrations of passionate sympathy for Collot d'Herbois, Couthon, and Robespierre, the Convention by spontaneous and repeated re-elections keeps in office the homicidal government which the Plain detests because it is homicidal, and the Mountain detests because it is decimated by it. The Plain and the Mountain, the majority and the minority, finish by consenting to help on their own suicide. The 22 Prairial the entire Convention offered itself to the executioner; the 8 Thermidor, during the first quarter of an hour that followed Robespierre's speech, it did the same thing again."

This picture may appear sombre. Yet it is accurate. Parliamentary assemblies, sufficiently excited and hypnotised, offer the same characteristics. They become an unstable flock, obedient to every impulsion. The following description of the Assembly of 1848 is due to M. Spuller, a parliamentarian whose faith in democracy is above suspicion. I reproduce it from the *Revue litteraire*, and it is thoroughly typical. It offers an example of all the exaggerated sentiments which I have described as characteristic of crowds, and of that excessive changeableness which permits of assemblies passing, from moment to moment, from one set of sentiments to another entirely opposite.

"The Republican party was brought to its perdition by its divisions, its jealousies, its suspicions, and, in turn, its blind confidence and its limitless hopes. Its ingenuousness and candour were only equaled by its universal mistrust. An absence of all sense of legality, of all comprehension of discipline, together with boundless terrors and illusions; the peasant and the child are on a level in these respects. Their calm is as great as their impatience; their ferocity is equal to their docility. This condition is the natural consequence of a temperament that is not formed and of the lack of education. Nothing astonishes such persons, and everything disconcerts them.

Trembling with fear or brave to the point of heroism, they would go through fire and water or fly from a shadow.

“They are ignorant of cause and effect and of the connecting links between events. They are as promptly discouraged as they are exalted, they are subject to every description of panic, they are always either too highly strung or too downcast, but never in the mood or the measure the situation would require. More fluid than water they reflect every line and assume every shape. What sort of a foundation for a government can they be expected to supply?”

Fortunately all the characteristics just described as to be met with in parliamentary assemblies are in no wise constantly displayed. Such assemblies only constitute crowds at certain moments. The individuals composing them retain their individuality in a great number of cases, which explains how it is that an assembly is able to turn out excellent technical laws. It is true that the author of these laws is a specialist who has prepared them in the quiet of his study, and that in reality the law voted is the work of an individual and not of an assembly. These laws are naturally the best. They are only liable to have disastrous results when a series of amendments has converted them into the outcome of a collective effort. The work of a crowd is always inferior, whatever its nature, to that of an isolated individual. It is specialists who safeguard assemblies from passing ill-advised or unworkable measures. The specialist in this case is a temporary leader of crowds. The Assembly is without influence on him, but he has influence over the Assembly.

In spite of all the difficulties attending their working, parliamentary assemblies are the best form of government mankind has discovered as yet, and more especially the best means it has found to escape the yoke of personal tyrannies. They constitute assuredly the ideal government at any rate for philosophers, thinkers, writers, artists, and learned men—in a word, for all those who form the cream of a civilisation.

Moreover, in reality they only present two serious dangers, one being

inevitable financial waste, and the other the progressive restriction of the liberty of the individual.

The first of these dangers is the necessary consequence of the exigencies and want of foresight of electoral crowds. Should a member of an assembly propose a measure giving apparent satisfaction to democratic ideas, should he bring in a Bill, for instance, to assure old-age pensions to all workers, and to increase the wages of any class of State employees, the other Deputies, victims of suggestion in their dread of their electors, will not venture to seem to disregard the interests of the latter by rejecting the proposed measure, although well aware they are imposing a fresh strain on the Budget and necessitating the creation of new taxes. It is impossible for them to hesitate to give their votes. The consequences of the increase of expenditure are remote and will not entail disagreeable consequences for them personally, while the consequences of a negative vote might clearly come to light when they next present themselves for re-election.

In addition to this first cause of an exaggerated expenditure there is another not less imperative—the necessity of voting all grants for local purposes. A Deputy is unable to oppose grants of this kind because they represent once more the exigencies of the electors, and because each individual Deputy can only obtain what he requires for his own constituency on the condition of acceding to similar demands on the part of his colleagues.<sup>①</sup>

<sup>①</sup> In its issue of April 6, 1895, the *Economiste* published a curious review of the figures that may be reached by expenditure caused solely by electoral considerations, and notably of the outlay on railways. To put Langayes (a town of 3,000 inhabitants, situated on a mountain) in communication with Puy, a railway is voted that will cost 15 millions of francs. Seven millions are to be spent to put Beaumont (3,500 inhabitants) in communication with Castel-Sarrazin; 7 millions to put Oust (a village of 523 inhabitants) in communication



with Seix (1,200 inhabitants); 6 millions to put Prade in communication with the hamlet of Olette (747 inhabitants). In 1895 alone 90 millions of francs were voted for railways of only local utility. There is other no less important expenditure necessitated also by electioneering considerations. The law instituting workmen's pensions will soon involve a minimum annual outlay of 165 millions, according to the Minister of Finance, and of 800 millions according to the academician M. Leroy-Beaulieu. It is evident that the continued growth of expenditure of this kind must end in bankruptcy. Many European countries—Portugal, Greece, Spain, Turkey—have reached this stage, and others, such as Italy, will soon be reduced to the same extremity. Still too much alarm need not be felt at this state of things, since the public has successively consented to put up with the reduction of four-fifths in the payment of their coupons by these different countries. Bankruptcy under these ingenious conditions allows the equilibrium of Budgets difficult to balance to be instantly restored. Moreover, wars, socialism, and economic conflicts hold in store for us a profusion of other catastrophes in the period of universal disintegration we are traversing, and it is necessary to be resigned to living from hand to mouth without too much concern for a future we cannot control.

The second of the dangers referred to above—the inevitable restrictions on liberty consummated by parliamentary assemblies—is apparently less obvious, but is, nevertheless, very real. It is the result of the innumerable laws—having always a restrictive action—which parliaments consider themselves obliged to vote and to whose consequences, owing to their shortsightedness, they are in a great measure blind.

The danger must indeed be most inevitable, since even England itself, which assuredly offers the most popular type of the parliamentary regime, the type

in which the representative is most independent of his elector, has been unable to escape it. Herbert Spencer has shown, in a work already old, that the increase of apparent liberty must needs be followed by the decrease of real liberty. Returning to this contention in his recent book, "The Individual versus the State," he thus expresses himself with regard to the English Parliament:

"Legislation since this period has followed the course, I pointed out. Rapidly multiplying dictatorial measures have continually tended to restrict individual liberties, and this in two ways. Regulations have been established every year in greater number, imposing a constraint on the citizen in matters in which his acts were formerly completely free, and forcing him to accomplish acts which he was formerly at liberty to accomplish or not to accomplish at will. At the same time heavier and heavier public, and especially local, burdens have still further restricted his liberty by diminishing the portion of his profits he can spend as he chooses, and by augmenting the portion which is taken from him to be spent according to the good pleasure of the public authorities."

This progressive restriction of liberties shows itself in every country in a special shape which Herbert Spencer has not pointed out; it is that the passing of these innumerable series of legislative measures, all of them in a general way of a restrictive order, conduces necessarily to augment the number, the power, and the influence of the functionaries charged with their application. These functionaries tend in this way to become the veritable masters of civilized countries. Their power is all the greater owing to the fact that, amidst the incessant transfer of authority, the administrative caste is alone in being untouched by these changes, is alone in possessing irresponsibility, impersonality, and perpetuity. There is no more oppressive despotism than that which presents itself under this triple form.

This incessant creation of restrictive laws and regulations, surrounding the

pettiest actions of existence with the most complicated formalities, inevitably has for its result the confining within narrower and narrower limits of the sphere in which the citizen may move freely. Victims of the delusion that equality and liberty are the better assured by the multiplication of laws, nations daily consent to put up with trammels increasingly burdensome. They do not accept this legislation with impunity. Accustomed to put up with every yoke, they soon end by desiring servitude, and lose all spontaneousness and energy. They are then no more than vain shadows, passive, unresisting and powerless automata.

Arrived at this point, the individual is bound to seek outside himself the forces he no longer finds within him. The functions of governments necessarily increase in proportion as the indifference and helplessness of the citizens grow. They it is who must necessarily exhibit the initiative, enterprising, and guiding spirit in which private persons are lacking. It falls on them to undertake everything, direct everything, and take everything under their protection. The State becomes an all-powerful god. Still experience shows that the power of such gods was never either very durable or very strong.

This progressive restriction of all liberties in the case of certain peoples, in spite of an outward license that gives them the illusion that these liberties are still in their possession, seems at least as much a consequence of their old age as of any particular system. It constitutes one of the precursory symptoms of that decadent phase which up to now no civilization has escaped.

Judging by the lessons of the past, and by the symptoms that strike the attention on every side, several of our modern civilizations have reached that phase of extreme old age which precedes decadence. It seems inevitable that all peoples should pass through identical phases of existence, since history is so often seen to repeat its course.

It is easy to note briefly these common phases of the evolution of civilisations, and I shall terminate this work with a summary of them. This rapid sketch will perhaps throw some gleams of light on the causes of the power at present wielded by crowds.

If we examine in their main lines the genesis of the greatness and of the fall of the civilisations that preceded our own, what do we see?

At the dawn of civilisation a swarm of men of various origin, brought together by the chances of migrations, invasions, and conquests. Of different blood, and of equally different languages and beliefs, the only common bond of union between these men is the half-recognized law of a chief. The psychological characteristics of crowds are present in an eminent degree in these confused agglomerations. They have the transient cohesion of crowds, their heroism, their weaknesses, their impulsiveness, and their violence. Nothing is stable in connection with them. They are barbarians.

At length time accomplishes its work. The identity of surroundings, the repeated intermingling of races, the necessities of life in common exert their influence. The assemblage of dissimilar units begins to blend into a whole, to form a race; that is, an aggregate possessing common characteristics and sentiments to which heredity will give greater and greater fixity. The crowd has become a people, and this people is able to emerge from its barbarous state. However, it will only entirely emerge therefrom when, after long efforts, struggles necessarily repeated, and innumerable recommencements, it shall have acquired an ideal. The nature of this ideal is of slight importance; whether it be the cult of Rome, the might of Athens, or the triumph of Allah, it will suffice to endow all the individuals of the race that is forming with perfect unity of sentiment and thought.

At this stage a new civilisation, with its institutions, its beliefs, and its arts, may be born. In pursuit of its ideal, the race will acquire in succession the qualities necessary to give it splendour, vigour, and grandeur. At times no doubt it will still be a crowd, but henceforth, beneath the mobile and changing characteristics of crowds, is found a solid substratum, the genius of the race which confines within narrow limits the transformations of a nation and overrules the play of chance.

After having exerted its creative action, time begins that work of destruction

from which neither gods nor men escape. Having reached a certain level of strength and complexity a civilisation ceases to grow, and having ceased to grow it is condemned to a speedy decline. The hour of its old age has struck.

This inevitable hour is always marked by the weakening of the ideal that was the mainstay of the race. In proportion as this ideal pales all the religious, political, and social structures inspired by it begin to be shaken.

With the progressive perishing of its ideal the race loses more and more the qualities that lent it its cohesion, its unity, and its strength. The personality and intelligence of the individual may increase, but at the same time this collective egoism of the race is replaced by an excessive development of the egoism of the individual, accompanied by a weakening of character and a lessening of the capacity for action. What constituted a people, a unity, a whole, becomes in the end an agglomeration of individualities lacking cohesion, and artificially held together for a time by its traditions and institutions. It is at this stage that men, divided by their interests and aspirations, and incapable any longer of self-government, require directing in their pettiest acts, and that the State exerts an absorbing influence.

With the definite loss of its old ideal the genius of the race entirely disappears; it is a mere swarm of isolated individuals and returns to its original state—that of a crowd. Without consistency and without a future, it has all the transitory characteristics of crowds. Its civilisation is now without stability, and at the mercy of every chance. The populace is sovereign, and the tide of barbarism mounts. The civilisation may still seem brilliant because it possesses an outward front, the work of a long past, but it is in reality an edifice crumbling to ruin, which nothing supports, and destined to fall in at the first storm.

To pass in pursuit of an ideal from the barbarous to the civilized state, and then, when this ideal has lost its virtue, to decline and die, such is the cycle of the life of a people.

