THE TIME OF THE TRIBES

The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society

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THE EMOTIONAL COMMUNITY: RESEARCH ARGUMENTS

1. The aesthetic aura

At the risk of sounding dogmatic, it will be necessary to return regularly to the problem of individualism, if only because it obscures, in a more or less pertinent way, the whole of contemporary thinking. Individualism, either properly speaking or in its derivative form of narcissism, is central to many books, articles and theses which, naturally enough, take a psychological, as well as historical, sociological or political perspective. This is a kind of obligatory rite of passage for those wishing to build a knowledge of modernity. While certainly not without its uses, this approach becomes increasingly questionable when used in countless newspaper articles, political speeches or moral posturings as a kind of magical key to understanding. So-called experts, untroubled by caution or scholarly nuance, disseminate a body of conventional, and somewhat disastrous, wisdom about the withdrawal into the self, the end of collective ideals or, taken in its widest sense, the public sphere. We then find ourselves face to face with a kind of *doxa*, which may perhaps not endure but which is nevertheless widely received, and at the very least, has the potential to mask or deny the developing social forms of today. While some of these new forms are quite obvious, others remain underground; moreover, the spectacular aspect of the former leads one to dismiss them as irrelevant, a criticism that seems to flourish during times of crisis. This of course paves the way for the lazy tendency inherent in any *doxa*.

I don't intend to confront the question of individualism head-on; however I will be regularly addressing it *a contrario*. The main thrust of my arguments will be to show, to describe and to analyse the social configurations that seem to go beyond individualism, in other words, the undefined mass, the faceless crowd and the tribalism consisting of a patchwork of small local entities. These are of course metaphors that aim above all to accentuate the untidy aspect of sociality. Here once again we may turn to the emblematic figure of Dionysus. In the guise of fiction, I intend to assume that the category that has served us well over two centuries of social analysis is completely exhausted. It is often said that truth is stranger than fiction; let us therefore try to measure up to the truth. Perhaps we ought to show, as certain novelists have, that the individual is no longer as central as the great philosophers since the age of the

Enlightenment have maintained. This naturally represents a bias, but one that I will adopt in any case, clarifying it along the way with notations, remarks or anecdotes which, while impertinent, will not be unfounded.

Beckett's plays shatter our illusions of the individual in control of himself and his destiny. In a paroxysmal* and premonitory way, he shows the contingent and ephemeral nature of all individualism and underlines the factitiousness inherent in the process of individuation which can only lead to a prison. Individualism is an outdated bunker and as such deserves abandonment, according to the playwright. This attitude is not without its stimulating originality in an era where the consensus likes its thinking ready-made. Of course, this view must have escaped many of his sycophants; but it is nevertheless in perfect congruence with the ancient wisdom that sees every individual as the single link [*puntum*] in an uninterrupted chain, multifaceted and microcosmic, the *crystallization* and *expression* of the general macrocosm. Here we can recognize the idea of the *persona*, the changeable mask which blends into a variety of scenes and situations whose only value resides in the fact that they are played out by the many.

The multiplicity of the self and the communal ambience it induces will serve as a backcloth to these reflections. I have proposed calling this the 'aesthetic paradigm', in the sense of fellow-feeling. Indeed, whereas the individualist logic is founded on a separate and self-contained identity, the person (persona) can only find fulfilment in his relations with others. Gilbert Durand, in looking at several modern authors (Thomas Mann, William Faulkner) speaks from a sociological perspective in which we exist only in the 'minds of others'.[1] Such a point of view obliges us to go beyond the classical subject/object dichotomy that is fundamental to the entire bourgeois philosophy. The accent is then on that which unites, rather than that which separates. No longer is my personal history based on a contractual arrangement with other rational individuals; rather it is a myth in which I am an active participant. Heroes, saints or emblematic figures may be real, however they exist more or less as ideal types, empty 'forms' , matrices in which we may all recognize ourselves and commune with others. Dionysus, Don Juan, the Christian saint or Greek hero – we could go on and on listing the mythical figures and social types that enable a common 'aesthetic' to serve as a repository of our collective self-expression. The multiplicity inherent in a given symbol inevitably favours the emergence of a strong collective feeling. Peter Brown put his finger on the question when he analysed the cult of the saint of late Antiquity.[2] By creating a chain of intermediaries, this cult allowed one to reach God. The fragmented persona and the specific links represented by the saints are thus the main elements forming the deity and the ecclesiastical collective that serves as its vector.

We may apply this analysis to our research: there are times when the social 'divine' is embodied in a collective emotion that recognizes itself in

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* *Transl. note*: Maffesoli uses this term throughout to mean 'extreme' or 'acute'.

one or another typification. In this scenario, the proletariat and the
bourgeoisie could be 'historical subjects' with a task to accomplish. A
certain scientific, artistic or political genius could deliver a message
indicating the path to follow; however, they could remain abstract and
inaccessible entities, setting a goal to be achieved. In contrast, the mythical
type has the simple role of collector, a pure 'container' . Its sole purpose is
to express, for a precise moment in time, the collective spirit. This is the
main distinction to be drawn between abstract, rational periods and
'empathetic' periods of history. The rational era is built on the principle of
individuation and of separation, whereas the empathetic period is marked
by the lack of differentiation, the 'loss' in a collective subject: in other
words, what I shall call neo-tribalism.

There are many examples in our everyday life to illustrate the emotional
ambience exuded by tribal development. Moreover, it is noteworthy that
such examples are no longer shocking to us: they are a part of the urban
landscape. The many punk or 'paninari'* looks, which are the expressions
of group uniformity and conformity, are like so many punctuations in the
permanent spectacle offered to us by the contemporary megalopolis. With
respect to the tendency to examine the *orientation* of existence evident in
the cities of the West, one may be reminded of Augustine Berque's
analysis of the 'sympathetic' relationship between the self and the other in
Japan. Such a weak demarcation – to the point of indistinguishability, even
– between the self and the other, the subject and the object, gives pause for
reflection. The idea of the extensibility of the self ('a relative and
extensible ego') may be a pertinent methodological tool for understanding
the contemporary scene.[3] It is almost not worth mentioning the fascination
that Japan holds for us today; nor is it necessary to refer to its economic or
technological supremacy in order to underscore the fact that, although
distinction is perhaps applicable to modernity, it is by contrast totally
inadequate in explaining the varied forms of social groupings that are today
at the forefront. Their outlines are ill-defined: sex, appearance, lifestyles –
even ideology – are increasingly qualified in terms ('trans', 'meta') that go
beyond the logic of identity and/or binary logic. Briefly, and taking the
terms in their most accepted sense, we can say that we are witnessing the
tendency for a rationalized 'social' to be replaced by an empathetic
'sociality', which is expressed by a succession of ambiences, feelings and
emotions.

For example, it is interesting to note that the German Romantic idea of
Stimmung (atmosphere) is more and more often used on the one hand to
describe relations between social micro-groups, and on the other to show
the way these groups are situated in spatial terms (ecology, habitat,
neighbourhood). The same holds true for the constant use of the term
'feeling'** to describe interpersonal relationships. It will be a useful

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* *Transl. note*: A kind of Italian preppy, or as the French would say, 'bon chic, bon genre'.
** *Transl. note*: This word appears in English in the text.

criterion for measuring the quality of the exchanges, for deciding on how far and how deep they go. If we are referring to a rational organizational model, the most unstable notion we can employ is sentiment. In fact, it seems necessary to make a change in the way we consider social groupings; in this respect, Max Weber's socio-historical analysis of the 'emotional community' (*Gemeinde*) can be put to good use. He specifies that this emotional community is in fact a 'category', that is, something that has never existed in its own right but that can shed light on present situations. The major characteristics attributed to these emotional communities are their ephemeral aspect; 'changeable composition'; 'ill-defined nature'; local flavour; their 'lack of organization' and routinization (*Veralltäglichung*). Weber also points out that we find these groupings under many different names, in all religions and in general, alongside the rigidity of institutions.[4] In the eternal riddle of the chicken and the egg, it is difficult to determine which comes first; however, his analysis makes clear that the link between shared emotion and open communal relationships leads to this multiplicity of groups which manage, at the end of the day, to form a rather solid social arrangement. This adjustment, like a common thread through the social fabric, is no less permanent for all that. Permanency and instability are the two poles around which the emotional will navigate.

It should be pointed out right away that the emotion in question is not to be confused with any common or garden pathos. It seems to me a mistake to interpret the Dionysian values, to which this thematic refers, as the ultimate manifestation of a collective bourgeois activism. According to this interpretation, the common march towards the Enlightenment came first, followed by the attempt to master nature and technology, and culminating in the coordinated orchestration of social affects. But this perspective is far too closed or dialectical; of course, certain examples, such as the paradigm represented by 'Club Med', may lead to this conclusion. Nevertheless, this analysis must be careful to consider the fact that the key characteristics of the group attitude are its expenditure, the notion of chance and disindividuation.

This does not allow us to regard the emotional community as yet another stop along the pathetic and linear march of the history of humanity. I was much drawn to this point through conversations I had with the Italian philosopher Mario Perniola.[5] To extend his work from a sociological point of view, I would say that the aesthetic of the 'we' is a mixture of indifference and periodic bursts of energy. In a paradoxical way, we exhibit singular disdain for any projectivist attitude, and experience an undeniable intensity in whatever action we take. Thus can be characterized the impersonal nature of proxemics.

Durkheim underlined this fact also, and although he retains his wonted caution, he still speaks of the 'social nature of sentiments' and shows its effectiveness. 'We are indignant together,' he writes, referring to the proximity of the neighbourhood and its mysterious, formative 'force of attraction'. It is within this framework that passion is expressed, common

beliefs are developed and the search for 'those who *feel and think as we do*' takes place.[6] These remarks, ordinary as they may appear, are applicable to many objects, and reinforce the insurmountable nature of the everyday substrate. This is the matrix from which all representations are crystallized: the exchange of feelings, conversation in the restaurant or shop, popular beliefs, world views and other insubstantial chit-chat which constitute the solidarity of the community's existence. Contrary to what has been previously considered good form, we can agree on the fact that reason plays only a small part in the formation and expression of opinions. Their expression, whether by the early Christians or the socialist workers of the nineteenth century, owes considerably more to the mechanisms responsible for the spread of commonly held feelings or emotions. Whether in the context of the network of tiny convivial cells or at a favourite local pub, the collective emotion becomes concrete, playing on the multiple facets of what Montaigne called the 'hommerie': that blend of greatness and turpitude, generous ideas and venal thoughts, of idealism and convinced worldliness – in a word: man.

Nevertheless, it is precisely this mixture that assures a form of solidarity, of continuity across the various histories of humanity. I have previously mentioned the community of destiny that sometimes may find expression within the framework of a rational and/or political project but that at others takes the more hazy and ill-defined path of the collective sensibility. In this latter case, the emphasis is placed on the disordered aspect of the small group which, in interaction with other forms of organisation, guarantees the perdurability of the species. The first case produces what Halbwachs calls the 'view from without', which is History, and the second, the 'view from within', or collective memory.[7]

To stretch this paradox even further, the collective memory is on the one hand tied to the immediate surroundings and, on the other, transcends the group itself, which is located in a long 'line' that we can take either *stricto sensu* or from an imaginary perspective. In any case, whatever we call it (emotion, sentiment, mythology, ideology) the collective sensibility, by superseding the atomization of the individual, creates the conditions necessary for a sort of aura that characterizes a certain period: the theological aura of the Middle Ages, the political aura of the eighteenth century or the progressive aura of the nineteenth. We might possibly be witnessing the development of an *aesthetic* aura containing varying proportions of elements related to the communal drive, mystical propensity or an ecological perspective. However it should appear, there is a strong link between these various terms; each in its own way takes into account the organicity of things, the *glutinum mundi* from which, despite (or because of) such diversity, a whole emerges. This organic sense of solidarity expresses itself in a multitude of ways, and it is surely from this angle that we must interpret the resurgence of the occult, syncretism and, more commonly, a heightened appreciation of the spiritual or astrological. This latter phenomenon especially is no longer the exclusive preserve of the

credulous or naive. Researchers are now finding a double layer of meaning attached to astrology, both cultural and natural. Gilbert Durand has shown how individually centred astrology is of relatively recent origin, for classical astrology 'concerned itself above all with the *destiny of the group*, of the earthly domain'.[8] Astrology can be placed in an ecological perspective, represented by the 'houses' which predispose all of us to live in a natural and social environment. Without going too deeply into the matter, we may note that it has something of the aesthetic aura (*aisthétikos*) which is found in the union, however tenuous, of the macrocosm and the microcosms, and the union between these microcosms. What should be remembered from this and related examples is that they serve to reveal the holistic climate underlying the resurgence of solidarity and the organicity of all things. Thus, despite the connotation all too often attributed to them, emotion or sensibility must in some way be treated as a blend of objectivity and subjectivity. In my examination of the question of proxemics (cf. Chapter 6), I propose calling this a material spirituality, a somewhat Gothic expression that refers to what Berque termed, in referring to the effectiveness of the milieu, the 'transubjective' (subjective and objective) relationship. It is indeed time to note that the *binary logic of separation* that once predominated in all domains is no longer applicable as such. The soul and the body, mind and matter, the imagination and economics, ideology and production – the list could go on – are no longer seen as complete opposites. In fact, these entities, and the minuscule concrete situations they represent, come together to produce a day-to-day life that more and more resists the simplistic taxonomy to which we had been accustomed by a certain reductionist positivism. Their synergy produces the complex society that is deserving of its own complex analysis. The 'multidimensional and the inseparable', to borrow Morin's phrase,[9] take us into a 'continuous loop' which will render out of date the tranquil and terribly boring practices of the accountants of knowledge.

With the necessary precautions and clarifications out of the way, it becomes possible to attribute to the metaphor of sensibility or collective emotion a function of knowledge. This methodological tool allows us to travel to the heart of the organicity that so characterizes the contemporary urban scene. Thus, the following apologia becomes possible: 'Imagine for a moment that the Lord wishes to call up to heaven a typical house from Naples. Before his amazed eyes would amass a column of all the houses of Naples, one behind the other, trailing their laundry, complete with singing women and noisy children.'[10] This is the emotion that cements the whole. This whole may be made up of a plurality of elements, but there is always a specific ambience uniting them all.

At first, experience is lived in its own right and the scholarly observer should realize this. To summarize, it may be said that the aesthetics of sentiment are in no way characterized by an individual or 'interior' experience, but on the contrary, by something essentially open to others, to the Other. This overture connotes the space, the locale, the proxemics

of the common destiny. It is this which allows us to establish a close link between the aesthetic matrix or aura and the ethical experience.

2. The ethical experience

As I have already indicated, particularly when referring to ethical immoralism, this term has nothing to do with the nondescript sort of moralism held in such high regard these days. I will return to this question; however, in a few words, let me say that I would contrast an abstract and overshadowing morality with an ethic that wells up from a specific group; it is fundamentally empathetic and proxemical. History may promote a moral (political) attitude, but space will favour an aesthetics and exude an ethics.

As we have seen, the emotional community is unstable, open, which may render it in many ways anomic with respect to the established moral order. At the same time, it does not fail to elicit a strict conformity among its members. There is a 'law of the milieu' that is difficult to escape. The more paroxysmal elements of this are well known: the Mafia, the underworld; but what is often forgotten is that a similar conformity reigns in the business world, the intellectual realm, and many others. Of course, since in these different milieux the degree of belonging varies, fidelity to the often unstated rules of the group shows just as many signs of variability. However, it is difficult to ignore this conformity altogether. Whatever the case, it is important, in a non-normative way, to appreciate its effects, its richness and perhaps its prospective dimension. Indeed, from the point of view of the individualist *doxa* mentioned earlier, the persistence of a group ethos is very often considered a fading anachronism. It would seem that an evolution is under way today. Thus, from the small productive groups best symbolized by Silicon Valley, up to what we call the 'groupism' operating within Japanese industry, it becomes clear that the communal tendency can go hand-in-hand with advanced technological or economic performance. Drawing on various studies that confirm this, Berque notes that 'groupism differs from the herd instinct in that each member of the group, consciously or otherwise, attempts above all to serve the interests of the group, instead of simply seeking refuge there'.[11] The term 'groupism' may not be particularly sonorous, but it does have the merit of underlining the strength of this process of identification which allows for the attachments that reinforce our common bonds.

It is perhaps premature to extrapolate on the basis of a few isolated examples or from a particular situation such as that of Japan; however, these examples are at least as relevant as those that give greater importance to the current narcissism. What is more, they are related to the economic sphere, which remains, for the moment in any case, the main fetish of the dominant ideology. I see this as one more illustration of the holism taking shape before our eyes: throwing wide the doors of privacy, sentiment takes over, and in certain countries its presence is reinforced in

the public sphere, thus producing a form of solidarity that can no longer be denied. Of course, we must note that this solidarity reinvigorates, quite apart from technological developments, the communal form that seemed to have been left behind.

We may wonder about the community and the nostalgia underlying it or about the political uses to which it is put. For my part, and I reiterate it, this is a 'form' in the sense that I have defined this term.[12] Whether or not it exists independently is of little importance; it is enough that it serves as a backcloth, allowing us to highlight a particular social phenomenon. No matter that it is imperfect or even *ad hoc*, it is no less the expression of a particular crystallization of shared feelings. From this 'formist' perspective, the community is characterized less by a project (*pro-jectum*) oriented towards the future than by the execution *in actu* of the 'being-together'. In everyday language, the communal ethic has the simplest of foundations: warmth, companionship – physical contact with one another. Psychologists have pointed out that there is a *glischomorphic* tendency in all human relationships. Without wishing to judge in any way, it seems to me that it is this viscosity which is expressed in the communal being-together. Thus, and I must stress this rigorously in order to avoid any moralizing digression, it is by force of circumstance; because of proximity (promiscuity); because there is a sharing of the same *territory* (real or symbolic) that the communal idea and its ethical corollary are born.

It is worth remembering that this communal ideal can be seen in the populist and later anarchist ideology whose basis is to be found in the proxemic crowds. For these people, especially Bakunin and Herzen, the village community (*obschina* or *mir*) is at the very heart of working socialism. Supplemented with the artisans' associations (*artels*), it paves the way for a civilization built on solidarity.[13] The interest of such a romantic vision goes well beyond the habitual dichotomy of the latest bourgeois ideal, as much in its capitalist version as its Marxist version. Indeed, human destiny is seen as a whole, giving the *obschina* its prospective aspect. I should reiterate that this social form has, with good reason, been closely identified with Fourierism and the phalanstery. Franco Venturi, in his now classic book on Russian populism of the nineteenth century, points out this connection; moreover, and more to the point in our reflections, he notes the link between these social forms and the search for 'a different system of morality'. He does this with some reticence; for him, especially with regard to the phalanstery, this search lies somewhat in the realm of 'eccentricity'.[14] What the esteemed Italian philosopher failed to notice was that, beyond their apparent functionalism, all social groups include a strong component of shared feeling. It is these feelings that give rise to this 'different morality' which I prefer to call here an ethical experience.

To pick up again on the classic opposition, we might say that society is concerned with history in the making, whereas the community expends its energy in its own creation (or possibly recreation). This allows us to establish a link between the communal ethic and solidarity. One of the

most striking aspects of this relationship is the development of the ritual. As we know, this is not strictly speaking finalized, that is, goal-oriented; it is, on the other hand, repetitive and therefore comforting. Its sole function is to confirm a group's view of itself; Durkheim's example of the 'corroboree' festivities is very helpful in this respect. The ritual perpetuates itself, and through the variety of routine or everyday gestures the community is reminded that it is a whole. Although it does not need putting into words, it serves as an anamnesis of solidarity and, as L.-V. Thomas remarks, 'implies the mobilization of the community'. As I have just stated, the community 'exhausts' its energy in creating itself. In its very repetitiveness, the ritual is the strongest proof of this expenditure and by so doing it guarantees the continued existence of the group. In the anthropological view of death, it is this paradox with regard to the funeral ritual that reintroduces 'the community ideal which attempts to reconcile man to death as well as to life'.[15] As I will explain more fully, there are times when the community of destiny is felt more acutely, and it is through gradual condensation that more attention is focused on uniting factors. This union is a pure one in some ways, with undefined contents; a union for confronting together, in an almost animal way, the presence of death, the presence at death. History, politics and morality *overtake death* in the drama (*dramein*) that evolves as problems arise and are resolved or at least confronted. Destiny, aesthetics and ethics, however, *exhaust death in a tragedy* that is based on the eternal moment and therefore exudes a solidarity all its own.

Experiencing death matter-of-factly may be the outcome of a collective sentiment that occupies a privileged place in social life. This communal sensibility favours a proximity-centred ethos; that is, simply put, a way of being that offers an alternative to both the production and distribution of goods (economic or symbolic). In his occasionally perfunctory but usually rich analysis of crowds, Gustave Le Bon notes that 'it is not with rules based on theories of pure equity' that the crowd is to be led and that, generally speaking, impressions play a considerable role.[16] What can we assume from this other than that justice itself is subordinate to the experience of closeness; that abstract and eternal justice is relativized by the feeling (whether hate or love) experienced in a given territory? Many everyday occurrences, whether examples of carnage or generosity, illustrate this general point. The doctrinally racist shopkeeper will protect the neighbourhood Arab; the contented bourgeois will fail to denounce the petty thief, and all in the most natural way. The code of silence is not confined to the Mafia; police officers who have had occasion to make inquiries in such and such a village or neighbourhood can testify to that. The common denominator of these attitudes (which are deserving of further elaboration) is the solidarity derived from a shared sentiment.

If we were to expand the field somewhat, with help from the media, we would find similar reactions throughout the 'global village'. It is not an abstract sense of justice that gives rise to soup kitchens, leads us to help the

unemployed or other charitable endeavours. We could even say that, from a linear and rational view of justice, these activities appear somewhat anachronistic or even reactionary. In a very *ad hoc* and haphazard way, without attacking a given problem head-on, they risk serving as an excuse and being nothing more than a Band-Aid solution. While no doubt true, such activities nevertheless accomplish their aim, as well as mobilize the collective emotions. We may wonder about the significance or the political repercussions of these actions; we may also note – and this is the point of these remarks – how we no longer expect the all-pervasive state to remedy by itself the problems whose effects we see around us, as well as how the synergy of these activities brought home to us through the medium of television can exert its own influence. In both cases, that which I see around me, or which is brought closer to me through an image, strikes a chord in all of us, thus constituting a collective emotion. The mechanism in question is far from being of minor importance, which brings us back to the holistic principle underlying these reflections: the common sensibility at the heart of the examples cited is derived from the fact that we *participate in* or *correspond to*, in the strictest and possibly most mystical sense of these words, a common ethos. In formulating a sociological 'law', I will state as a leitmotif that less weight shall be given to what each individual will *voluntarily adhere to* (contractually or mechanically) than to that which is *emotionally common to all* (sentimentally and organically).

This is the ethical experience that had been abandoned by the rationalization of existence; it is also what the renewed moral order falsely portrays, since it tries to rationalize and universalize *ad hoc* reactions or situations and present them as new *a priori*, whereas their strength is derived from the fact that they are grounded in a local sensibility: it is only *a posteriori* that they can be linked in an overall structure. The community ideal of the neighbourhood or the village acts more by permeating the collective imagination than by persuading the social reason. To employ a term Walter Benjamin used in his reflections on art, I would say that we are in the presence of a specific aura, which in a process of feedback comes out of the social body and determines it in return. I will summarize this process in the following way: *the collective sensibility which issues from the aesthetic form results in an ethical connection.*

It would be useful to insist on that fact, if only to relativize the positivist ukases which insist that the collective imagination is superfluous and can be dispensed with in times of crisis. In fact, it can be shown that it assumes the most varied guises: at times it is manifested on the macroscopic level, spurring on great mass movements, varied crusades, occasional revolts or political or economic revolutions. At other times, the collective imagination is crystallized in a microscopic way, providing deep nourishment to social groups. Finally, there is on occasion a continuum between this latter process (esoteric) and the just-mentioned general manifestations (exoteric). Whatever the case, there is a wide-ranging aura which serves as a matrix to the always and freshly astonishing reality that is sociality.

It is from this perspective that the community ethos must be considered. What I here call *aura* spares us from deciding on its existence or non-existence; it so happens that it functions 'as if' it existed. It is in this way that we can understand the ideal type of the 'emotional community' (Max Weber), the 'orgiastic-ecstatic' (Karl Mannheim), or that which I have termed the dionysiac form. Each of these examples caricatures, in the simplest sense of the term, this exit from the self, ex-stasis, which is part of the social logic.[17] This 'ecstasy' is much more effective in smaller groups, when it becomes more perceptible to the social observer. In order to account for this complex entity, I propose to use, in the metaphorical sense, the terms 'tribe' and 'tribalism'. While refraining from overuse of quotation marks, I will insist on the 'cohesive' aspect of the social sharing of values, places or ideals which are entirely circumscribed (localism) and which can be found, in varied forms, at the heart of numerous social experiences. It is this constant interplay of the static (spatial) and the dynamic (becoming), the anecdotal and the ontological, the ordinary and the anthropological, that makes the analysis of the collective sensibility such a potent tool. To illustrate this epistemological remark, I will give but one example: the Jewish people.

Without wishing, nor indeed being able, to make a specific analysis, and confining ourselves to indicating a course of research, we can show that the Jewish people are particularly representative of the antinomy I mentioned. On the one hand, they have an intense experience of the tribe's collective sentiment which, on the other hand, has not prevented them throughout the centuries from assuring the existence of general and (without any pejorative connotations) cosmopolitan values. This sentiment includes a tribal religion that has enabled them to resist assimilation; tribal customs, which are the very basis of the community of destiny; and of course, tribal sexuality which assured the survival of the race through the carnage and vicissitudes of the ages. The flow of words, goods and sex: these are the three anthropological pivots around which social life generally turns. In essence, they have a strong tribal component. Many historians and sociologists have highlighted the vitality, the ambience and strong cohesiveness, in many countries, of the 'ghetto', the shtetl, the synagogue. And like a reserve of energy, these places were the source of a good portion of what was to become the medieval city, the modern metropolis and, perhaps, the megalopolis of today. Thus, the ethos of the Gemeinschaft, of the tribe, regularly permeates the evolution of Western civilization.[18] As I have said, this is but a course of inquiry; indeed, many domains, whether intellectual, economic or spiritual, have been influenced, in a prospective way, by what came out of the stockpot of the Jewish emotional culture.

There is no better way of expressing this 'concrete universal', which was one of the principal tenets of nineteenth-century philosophy. By extrapolating, in a heuristic manner, the aforementioned example, it is possible to state that, paradoxically, it is the tribal values which on occasion characterize an epoch. Indeed, a significant portion of those characteristics

which will later be diffracted throughout the social body may be crystal-
lized in these values. The tribal moment may be compared to a period of
gestation: something that is perfected, tested and tried out, before taking
flight into the great beyond. In this way, everyday life could be, to use the
words of Benjamin, 'the most extreme concrete'. This short description
lets us see the shared lives and experiences as the purifying fires of the
alchemical process in which the transmutation takes place. The nothing or
near-nothing becomes a totality. The minuscule rituals are inverted until
they become the basis of sociality – *multum in parvo*. Of course, it is
difficult to predict what will be transformed from minuscule to macro-
scopic, as long as there are so many extraneous elements. However, this is
not the essential factor; it is enough, as I have said, to indicate the 'form' in
which the growth of social values is born. We may then say that the ethic is
in some way the glue that holds together the diverse elements of a given
whole.

Nevertheless, if one is to understand what I have just said, it is necessary
to lend this term 'ethic' its simplest meaning: not an indifferent *a priori*
theorizing but one which on a daily basis serves as a vessel for the
collectivity's emotions and feelings. In this manner, with varying degrees of
success and in a given territory, we all adjust to one another and to the
natural environment. This accommodation is of course relative; carried out
in happiness and sadness, the product of often conflictual relationships, it
exhibits a certain necessary flexibility, but nevertheless is astonishingly
long-lived. This is certainly the most characteristic expression of the social
'will to live'. It is therefore necessary to take the time to consider, if only
for an instant, several manifestations of this ethic of the everyday, since as
an expression of the collective sensibility it gives us wide access to the life
of these tribes that, *en masse*, constitute contemporary society.

3. Custom

From Aristotle to Mauss, by way of Thomas Aquinas, many have
examined the importance of the *habitus* (*exis*), a term which has since
passed into the sociological *doxa*.[19] This is all to the good, for this thematic
is of primary importance. It is related to the common aspects of everyday
life, in a word the customs, which are, according to Simmel, 'one of the
most typical forms of everyday life'. Since we know the importance and
effectiveness he attached to 'form', it becomes possible to imagine that we
are dealing with more than the empty word. Further on, he is more
specific: 'custom determines the social life as would an ideal power'.[20] We
are led back to a persistent action that instills in beings and things their way
of seeing the world; it is practically a matter of genetic coding, limiting and
delineating, in a much more profound manner than the economic or
political situation, their way of being with others. Thus, together with the
aesthetic (the shared sentiment) and the *ethic* (the collective bond), *custom*

is surely a good way of characterizing the everyday life of contemporary groups.

I will adopt the following concern of Mallarmé: 'to give a purer sense to the words of the tribe'. And like all other 'mini-concepts' used previously, I will use the term 'custom' in its most widely held sense, one that is also closest to its etymological roots (*consuetudo*): the collection of common usages that allow a social entity to recognize itself for what it is. This link is a mysterious one, only rarely and indirectly put into so many words (for example in the treatises on manners and customs). Nevertheless, it is at work in the deepest layers of any society. Custom, in this way, is the unspoken, the 'residue' underlying the 'being-together'. I have proposed calling it the *underground centrality* or the social *puissance* (as opposed to power), an idea found in Goffman (*The Underlife*) and later on in Halbwachs (*La Société silencieuse*).[21] These expressions emphasize the fact that a large part of social existence cannot be accounted for by instrumental rationality; nor does it let itself be finalized or reduced to a simple logic of domination. Duplicity, subterfuge and the will to live are all expressed through a multitude of rituals, situations, gestures and experiences that delineate an area of liberty. A tendency to see life as alienation or to hope for a perfect or authentic existence makes us forget that daily routine is stubbornly founded on a series of interstitial and relative freedoms. As has been seen in economics, it is possible to demonstrate the existence of a *black-market sociality*, which is easily tracked through its diverse and minuscule manifestations.

I am adopting the perspective of Durkheim and his followers, who always placed the greatest weight on the sacredness of social relationships. As I have often said: I consider that any given entity, from the micro-group to the structure of the state, is an expression of the social divine, of a specific, even immanent, transcendence. But as we know, and many religious historians have shown, the sacred is mysterious, frightening, disturbing; it needs to be coaxed and cajoled, and customs fulfil this function. They are to everyday life what the ritual is to religious life, strictly speaking.[22] Moreover, it is striking that in popular religion especially it is very difficult, as the ecclesiastical hierarchy was obliged to do, to draw the distinction between customs and canonical rituals. Thus, just as the liturgical ritual renders the Church visible, custom makes a community exist as such. Furthermore, at a time when the division was not yet firmly established, according to Peter Brown, it was by ritually exchanging relics that the various local churches were constituted as a network. These relics are the bond that held a small community together, allowing them to unite and, in so doing, to transmute 'the distance from the holy into the deep joy of proximity'.[23]

Any organization *in statu nascendi* is fascinating to the sociologist; relations between individuals are not yet fixed and social structures retain the suppleness of youth. At the same time, it is useful to find points of comparison in order to formalize our observations. In this respect, the

analysis carried out by the scholars of Christianity is very apposite. It is certainly possible, if only as a working hypothesis, to apply the double process of social *reliance* and of negotiation with the holy characteristic of the early Christian communities to the various tribes that are made and unmade *in praesenti*. In more than one respect, the comparison is illuminating: the organization, grouping around an eponymous hero; the role of the image; the common sensibility, and so on. But it is fundamentally the local membership, the spatial emphasis and the mechanisms of solidarity which are their corollaries that creates the whole. This, moreover, characterizes what I previously termed the increased sacredness of social relationships: the complex mechanism of give and take that develops between various persons, on the one hand, and between the entity thus created and the milieu on the other. Whether these are real or symbolic exchanges is of little importance; indeed, communication, in its widest sense, takes the most varied routes.

The term 'proxemics' proposed by the Palo Alto School appears to me a good way of accounting for both the cultural and natural elements of the communication under consideration. For his part, Berque emphasizes the 'transubjective' (subjective *and* objective) aspect of such a relationship. Perhaps we should just resort to the old spatial notion of the neighbourhood and its affective connotation. It is an old-fashioned term, but one that is making a reappearance today in the writings of many observers of the social scene – a sure sign that it is at the forefront of many minds.[24] This 'neighbourhood' can be manifested in many diverse ways: it can be delineated by a collection of streets, it may be invested with a libidinal dimension (a 'red-light district', for example), refer to a commercial entity or a public transit hub. The detail is unimportant; what matters is that it represents the overlapping of a certain functionality with an undeniable symbolic weight. An integral part of the collective imagination, the neighbourhood is nevertheless only constituted by the intersection of ordinary situations, moments, spaces and individuals; moreover, it is most often expressed by the most common stereotypes. The town square, the street, the corner tobacconist, the bar at the PMU,* the newsagent, centres of interest or necessity – just so many trivial examples of sociality. Nevertheless, it is precisely these instances that give rise to the specific aura of a given neighbourhood. I use this term deliberately, as it translates beautifully the complex movement of an atmosphere emitted by places and activities, giving them in return a unique colouring and odour. And so it may be for spiritual materialism. Morin speaks poetically of a certain New York neighbourhood that shines with brilliance while at the same it is founded on the 'lack of brilliance of the individual'. In widening his scope, the whole city becomes a *chef-d'oeuvre* whereas its 'lives remain pitiful'. However, he continues, 'if you allow yourself to be possessed by the city, if you really get into its sense of energy, if the forces of death which exist only

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* *Transl. note*: PMU = *parimutuel urbain* (race-track betting).

to crush you instead awaken in you an intense will to live, then New York will dazzle you'.[25]

This metaphor is an effective expression of the constant interplay of the customary stereotype and the founding archetype. It is this process of constant reversibility which seems to me to constitute what Durand calls the 'anthropological course'; in essence, the close connection that exists between the great works of culture and this 'culture' experienced on an everyday level constitutes the critical bond in any society's life. This 'culture', to the amazement of many, is made up of the varied 'nothings' which, through sedimentation, form a meaningful system. It is impossible to give a complete list, although such a project would have much merit for us today. It would range from the culinary fact to the fantasy world of home appliances, without forgetting advertising, mass tourism and the resurgence and multiplication of festive occasions: in other words, all those things that describe a collective sensibility which no longer has much connection with the politico-economic domination characteristic of modernity.[26] This sensibility is no longer part and parcel of a finalized, directed rationality (Weber's *Zweckrationalität*), but is rather experienced in the present tense, inscribed in a defined space – *hic et nunc*. Thus we have everyday 'culture'; it permits the emergence of true values, surprising or shocking as they may be, expressive of an irrefutable dynamic (perhaps closely paralleling what Weber calls the *Wertrationalität*).

In understanding custom as a cultural fact we may appreciate the vitality of the metropolitan tribes. They are responsible for that aura (informal culture) which surrounds, *volens nolens*, each of us. There are many instances one could cite as an example; however they all possess the common trait of being derived from proxemics. Thus, it is possible to explain all those friendship networks which have no other goal than of congregating, with no fixed purpose, and which more and more cut across the everyday lives of all collectivities. Some studies have shown that these networks are rendering associative structures obsolete.[27] These structures are supposedly flexible, easily accessible to the users, giving them a direct line on their problems; however, they are too finalized, organized, founded for the most part on a political or religious ideology, in the abstract (remote) sense of the term. In the friendship networks, *reliance* (the link) is experienced *for its own sake*, without any projection; moreover, it may be *ad hoc* in nature. With the help of technology, as in the groups fostered by the 'Minitel', an ephemeral framework for a specific occasion is provided, so that a certain number of individuals can (re)connect. Such an occasion may lead to continuing relationships or it may not. In any case, it is certain to create friendship 'chains' which, following the formal model of networks studied by American sociology, give rise to multiple relationships based solely on the device of proxemics: so-and-so introduces me to so-and-so who knows someone else, and so on.

Such a proxemical concatenation, without a project, is bound to produce offspring: mutual aid, for example. This is a product of ancient wisdom, a

wisdom it is no longer considered trendy to heed and which holds that 'life is hardest on the poor . . . money is difficult to come by and therefore we have an obligation to pull together and help one another'.[28] Poulat thus sums up the popular substrate of the 'democratic-Christian' ideology. In many respects, this is a model that merits a further look, for beyond the Christian democracies *stricto sensu*, there is an echo of what for years was the Thomist social doctrine and which was a significant factor in the development of a common symbolism. Therefore, alongside a socio-political analysis, we can also underline the socio-anthropological dimension and emphasize the close links between proxemics and solidarity. In some ways, such mutual aid exists by force of circumstance, not out of purely disinterested motives: the help given can always be redeemed whenever I need it. However, in so doing, we are all part of a larger process of correspondence and participation that favours the collective body.

This close connection is also discreet; indeed, we give veiled accounts of our personal, family and professional successes and failures and this orality works as a rumour with an essentially intrinsic function: it delineates the territory where the partaking takes place. There is no place here for the stranger, and if necessary, we may remind the press, the public authorities or the merely curious that 'dirty laundry does not get washed in public'. This survival mechanism works just as well for happy news as for unsavoury information. Indeed, in various ways, the customary word or the shared secret are the primordial glue of all sociality. Simmel showed the example of secret societies, but it can also be found in studies on traditional medicine which show that the individual body can be healed only with the help of the collective body.[29] This is an interesting metaphor since we know that this approach to medicine considers each body as a whole that must be treated as such. But we must also note that this overall vision is often augmented by the fact that the individual body is but an offshoot of the community. This observation allows us to give full weight to the term 'mutual aid' as it refers not only to the mechanical actions that constitute neighbourly relations; indeed, mutual aid as we understand it here is part of an organic perspective in which all the elements through their synergy reinforce life as a whole. Mutual aid could thus be said to be the 'unconscious' animal response of the social 'will to live'; a sort of vitalism that 'knows' implicitly that '*unicity*' is the best response to the onslaught of death – a challenge laid down, in a sense. Let us leave such thoughts to the poet:

> To be one with all living things! On hearing these words . . . Virtue abdicates, death leaves the realm of creatures and the world, relieved of separation and old age, shines with new light. (Hölderlin, *Hyperion*)

This collective feeling of shared *puissance*, this mystical sensibility that assures continuity, is expressed through rather trivial vectors. Without being able to go into detail here, these are found in all the places where

chit-chat and conviviality are present. Nightclubs, cafés and other public spheres are 'open areas', in other words those places where it is possible to speak to others and, in so doing, address alterity in general. I took as a point of departure the idea of the sacredness of social relationships. This can best be seen in the transmission of the word that in general accompanies the flow of food and drink. Let us not forget that the Christian eucharist which underlies the union of the faithful is just one of the developed commensal forms found in all word religions. Thus, in a stylized way, when I am sitting in the café, eating a meal or addressing the other, I am really addressing the deity. This leads back to the confirmation, expressed countless times, of the link between the divine, the social whole and proximity.[30] Commensality, in its various forms, is only the most visible evidence of this complex relationship. However, it is worth remembering that the divine issues forth from daily realities and develops gradually through the sharing of simple and routine gestures. The *habitus* or custom thus serves to concretize or *actualize* the ethical dimension of any sociality.

One need only remember that custom, as an expression of the collective sensibility, permits, strictly speaking, an ex-stasis within everyday life. Having a few drinks; chatting with friends; the anodyne conversations punctuating everyday life enable an exteriorization of the self and thus create the specific aura which binds us together within tribalism. As we can see, it is important not to reduce this ecstasy to a few highly stereotyped and extreme situations. The dionysiac refers of course to sexual promiscuity, as well as to other affectual or festive outbursts; but it also allows us to understand the development of shared opinions, collective beliefs or common *doxas*: briefly, those 'collective frameworks of memory', to borrow Halbwachs' expression, which allow one to emphasize what is lived, the 'tides of experience'.[31]

Alongside a purely intellectual knowledge, there is a knowledge [*connaissance*] which encompasses the feeling dimension, an awareness that, taken to its etymological origins, we are 'born with' ['*co-naissance*'].* This embodied knowledge is rooted in a corpus of customs deserving of analysis in its own right. We would then be able to appreciate the contemporary formulation of the 'palaver' whose varied rituals played an important role in the social equilibrium of the traditional village or community. It is not impossible to imagine that, correlatively with technological developments, the growth in urban tribes has encouraged a 'computerized palaver' that assumes the rituals of the ancient agora. We would no longer face the dangers, as was first believed, of the macroscopic computer disconnected from reality, but on the contrary, thanks to the personal computer and cable TV, we are confronted with the infinite diffraction of an orality disseminated by degrees; the success in France of

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* *Transl. note*: This etymological observation is not really translatable. The French for knowledge is 'connaissance' and birth 'naissance', hence 'co-naissance' = 'born with'.

the Minitel should be interpreted in this light. In a number of domains –
education, leisure time, job-sharing and culture – the close communication
engendered by this process forms a network with all the attendant social
effects imaginable.[32]

At first, the growth and multiplication of the mass media led to the
disintegration of the bourgeois culture founded on the universality and the
valuing of a few privileged objects and attitudes. We may well ask
ourselves whether this pursuit of growth and the generalization to which it
leads may bring the mass media closer to everyday life. In this way, they
could be said to reinvest a certain traditional culture whose orality is an
essential vector. In so doing, the contemporary media, by presenting
images of everyday life rather than visualizing the great works of culture,
would be playing the role that used to fall to the various forms of public
discourse: to ensure by means of myth the cohesion of a given social entity.
This myth, as we know, may be of several types; for my part, I believe that
there is a mythic function which runs transversely through the whole of
social life. A political event or harmless, trivial fact, the life of a star or a
local guru, can all take on mythic proportions. In his study of these mass
media, Fernant Dumont subtly underlines that these myths, whatever their
precise contents, serve mainly to 'nourish, as in days gone by, gossip and
normal conversation . . . what we used to say about the parish priest or the
notary, we now say about such and such a film star or politician'.[33] It is
impossible not to be struck by the appropriateness of this remark, at least
to those of us who have had the experience of overhearing office, factory or
playground conversations; even the notorious café conversations can be
instructive for the observer of the social scene. I would go even further and
say that it is within the logic of the media to set themselves up as a *simple
pretext* to communication, as may have been the case with the ancient
philosophical diatribe, the medieval religious sermon or the political
speech of the modern era.

In some cases, the content of these varied forms is not inconsiderable.
But it is because they reaffirm the feeling of belonging to a larger group, of
getting out of oneself, that they apply to the greatest number. Thus, we pay
more attention to the form that serves as a backcloth; which creates an
ambience and therefore unites. In any case, it is a question, above all, of
allowing for the expression of a common emotion, which causes us to
recognize ourselves in communion with others. It would be worth examin-
ing whether the expansion of local television or radio has had any effect in
this regard. This is at least a possible hypothesis, one which does not
completely deprive custom of its important role. By revealing our near
neighbours, custom secretes a 'glue' holding a given community together.
Neighbourhoods or even buildings with access to cable TV will perhaps
experience values not so far removed from those which guided the clans or
tribes of traditional societies.

Consequently, and taking the term 'communication' in its narrowest
sense – that which structures social reality and which is not an offshoot – we

can see custom in the light of one of its particular manifestations, a manifestation that takes on increased importance when, as a consequence of the saturation* of organizations and overarching social representations, proxemic values (re)surface. One might even say that at this stage of the game, the scale tilts more towards the communications mode, since it is experienced for its own sake, without any sort of finalization as a pretext. There is a direct link between this emphasis on communication for its own sake and the surpassing of the critical attitude that is tied to a more instrumental, mechanical and operational approach to society. With the communications mode predominant, the world is accepted as it is. I have already proposed calling this 'the social given', to explain the link that can be made between custom and communication. The world accepted for what it is lies of course within the realm of the natural 'given', part of a two-way flow common to the ecological perspective. But it is also part of the social 'given', in whose structure each of us fits and which leads to an organic sense of commitment between individuals, in other words, tribalism. This is certainly where the theme of custom leads us; the *individual* counts for less than the *person* who is called upon to play his or her role on the global scene, according to some very precise rules. Can we thus speak of regression? Perhaps, if we consider individual autonomy as the base-line of any existence in society. But, aside from the fact that anthropology has shown us that this is a value which is immutable neither in time nor in space, then we may grant that the *principium individuationis* has become increasingly contested in the very heart of Western civilization. The poet's or novelist's sensibility can serve as a barometer (cf. Beckett's plays, for example) of this tendency or, more empirically, we can see evidence of it in the various group attitudes that colour the life of our societies.

Finally, it is worth noting that certain countries which have not developed from a tradition of individualism nevertheless are currently exhibiting signs of an undeniable *vitality* that, moreover, seems to exert a lasting fascination for us. Japan is just such a country and so, paradoxically, is Brazil. We must take both these countries to be prototypes whose auras are essentially ritualistic, whose inner structures are the 'tribe' (or the organic grouping, to be less blunt), and which are, for at least one if not both, poles of attraction for the collective imagination, whether from the existential, economic, cultural or religious point of view.

Of course, it is not a matter of presenting them as finished models, but rather of demonstrating that, as an alternative to the *principle of autonomy*, or however we wish to call it (self-direction, autopoeïsis, etc.), we can posit a principle of allonomy** which is based on adjustment, accommodation, on the organic union with social and natural alterity.[34] This principle goes against the activist model built by modernity. Under the present hypothesis,

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* *Transl. note*: here and elsewhere, Maffesoli uses the term 'saturation' to describe the worn-out nature of institutional power, just as a sponge saturated with water can absorb no more.

** The law as an external force.

this principle is a customary one, and it reinvests, in a prospective way, the traditional values long since thought to be surpassed. In fact, after the period of 'disenchantment with the world' (Weber's *Entzauberung*), I am suggesting that we are witnessing a veritable re-enchantment with the world, whose logic I will try to make clear. For the sake of brevity, let us say that, in the case of the masses which are diffracted into tribes, and the tribes which coalesce into masses, the common ingredient is a shared sensibility or emotion. I think back to the beginning of this discussion and the prophetic meditations of Hölderlin on the peaceful banks of the Neckar, where he made the connection between the 'nationel',* the shared sentiment which holds a community together, and the 'shades of the Greek gods [who] are returning to earth just as they were'. Upon revisiting this oasis of calm, he found it imbued in these gods. It is also in the solitude of that footpath in Eze that the other 'madman' Nietzsche experienced the dionysian irruption. His vision was no less premonitory:

> Now solitary, living in isolation from one another, some day you will be one people. Those who have chosen themselves will one day form a chosen people from whom will emerge an existence which surpasses man.

Our own *Philosophenweg* passes over beaches crammed with holiday-makers, department stores thronged with howling consumers, riotous sporting events and the anodyne crowds milling about with no apparent purpose. In many respects, it would seem that Dionysus has overwhelmed them all. The tribes he inspires demonstrate a troublesome ambiguity: although not disdaining the most sophisticated technology, they remain nonetheless somewhat barbaric. Perhaps this is a sign of postmodernity. Be that as it may, the principle of reality, on the one hand, forces us to accept these hordes, since they are there, and on the other, urges us to remember that time and again throughout history it was barbarity that brought many moribund civilizations back to life.

Notes

1. Cf. G. Durand, 'Le Retour des immortels' in *Le Temps de la réflexion*, Paris, Gallimard, pp. 207, 219. On the 'aesthetic paradigm', cf. my article in *G. Simmel*, Paris, Méridiens Klincksieck, 1986. Cf. also T. Adorno, *Notes to Literature*, trans. Sherry, Weber and Nicholson, New York, Columbia University Press, 1992, p. 249, on the question of the 'outdated bunker' of individualism.

2. P. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1981, p. 51.

3. A. Berque, *Vivre l'espace au Japon*, Paris, PUF, 1982, p. 54. For an example of the uniform, cf. F. Valente, 'Les Paninari' in *Sociétés*, Paris, Masson, no. 10 (Sept. 1986).

4. M. Weber, *Economy and Society*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1978, for example vol. 2, pp. 452–456.

5. M. Perniola, *Transiti*, Bologna, Cappeli, 1985; or in French, *L'Instant éternel*, Paris, Librairie des Méridiens, 1982.

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* Referring to the popular substrate.

6. E. Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society*, New York, Free Press, 1964, p. 102 (my emphasis).

7. M. Halbwachs, *La Mémoire collective*, Paris, PUF, 1968, p.78, on the trans-individualist ideology; cf. also J. Freund, *Sociologie du conflit*, Paris, PUF, 1983, p. 204.

8. G. Durand, *La Foi du cordonnier*, Paris, Denoël, 1983, p. 222; cf. also the theses under way on astrology by B. Glowczewski and S. Joubert (Paris V – Centre d'études sur l'actuel et le quotidien). It would also have been possible to speak of the 'transmigration' of souls in the cabbala, which fits in with the present holistic perspective. Cf. G. Scholem, *La Mystique juive*, Paris, Cerf, 1985, pp. 215, 253, *et seq.*

9. A. Berque, 'Expressing Korean mediance', from the colloquium The Conditions and Visions of Korea's Becoming an Advanced Country, Seoul, Sept. 1986. We must also refer here to the remarkable analysis by E. Morin which should be a cause for worry among the more honest of his detractors: *La Méthode,*vol. 3, *La Connaissance de la connaissance/1*, Paris, Seuil, 1986. On the 'notion of milieu', cf. J. F. Bernard-Bechariès, in *Revue Française du marketing*, vol. 1, no. 80 (1980), pp. 9–48.

10. Cited by A. Médam, *Arcanes de Naples*, Paris, Editions des Autres, 1979, p. 202.

11. Berque, *Vivre l'espace*, pp. 167, 169.

12. At the moment of writing, a pointed and rather caustic analysis has just come out: J.L. Nancy, *La Communauté désoeuvrée*, Paris, C. Bourgeois, 1986. On the question of 'formism', cf. my book, M. Maffesoli, *La Connaissance ordinaire. Précis de sociologie compréhensive*, Paris, Librairie des Méridiens, 1985.

13. See the remarkable and erudite analysis of this by B. Souvarine, *Stalin, A Critical History*, London, Secker and Warburg, 1940, p. 22.

14. F. Venturi, *Les intellectuels, le peuple et la révolution. Histoire du populisme russe au XIXe siècle*, Paris, Gallimard, 1972, p. 230.

15. L.-V. Thomas, *Rites de mort*, Paris, Fayard, 1985, pp. 16 and 277. It might also be pointed out that J. L. Nancy, p. 42 *et seq.* makes the link between community and death. On the cyclical and tragic aspect of the ritual, I refer to my book, M. Maffesoli, *La Conquête du présent. Pour une sociologie de la vie quotidienne*, Paris, PUF, 1979.

16. G. Le Bon, *The Crowd*, New York, Viking, 1960, p. 20.

17. However it may appear to hurried minds, the orgiastic-ecstatic thematic is a constant of the sociological tradition, e.g. Weber, *Economy and Society*, p. 554; K. Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, New York, Harcourt Brace, 1954, p. 192. One must also refer to E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, New York, Collier, 1961. I would also refer to my own short synthesis, *L'Ombre de Dionysus, contribution à une sociologie de l'orgie*, Paris, Librairie des Méridiens, 2nd edition, 1985.

18. I must refer of course to the classic book by L. Wirth, *The Ghetto*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1966. On the metropolis in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, cf. W.M. Johnston, *L'Esprit viennois*, transl. Paris, PUF., 1985, pp. 25–28. On the work of the Chicago School, see U. Hannerz, *Exploring the City: Inquiries toward an Urban Anthropology*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1980, pp. 40–44 and 65.

19. Cf. for example the article by G. Rist, 'La Notion médiévale d'*habitus* dans la sociologie de Pierre Bourdieu', *Revue européenne des sciences sociales*, vol. 22 (1984), no. 67, pp. 201–212 and Maffesoli, *La Connaissance ordinaire*, p. 224 and notes 60, 61.

20. G. Simmel, 'Problèmes de la sociologie des religions', *Archives des sciences sociales des religions*, Paris, CNRS, no. 17 (1974), pp. 17 and 20.

21. I have developed this theory of 'underground centrality' in my previously cited works; Halbwachs, *La Mémoire collective*, pp. 130–138; on Goffman's analysis of this question, cf. Hannerz, *Exploring the City*, p. 216, *et seq.*

22. On the *tremendum* [fear], cf. R. Otto, *Le Sacré*, Paris, Payot, 1921; on popular religion, M. Meslin, 'Le phénomène religieux populaire' in *Les Religions populaires*, Presses de l'Université Laval, Québec, 1972.

23. P. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1981, p. 90. On contemporary 'reliance', without sharing many of his pessimistic nor indeed his hopeful analyses, I would refer to the informed book by M.

Bolle de Bal, *La Tentation communautaire, les paradoxes de la reliance et de la contre culture*, Bruxelles, Université de Bruxelles, 1985.

24. The Palo Alto School is now well known in France; the works of Bateson and Watzlawick are generally found in translation published by Seuil, cf. the 'digest' offered by Y. Winkin, *La Nouvelle communication*, Paris, Seuil, 1982; the term 'transubjective' is used by A. Berque in his article 'Expressing Korean Mediance'. On the neighbourhood, cf. K. Noschis, *La Signification affective du quartier*, Paris, Librairie des Méridiens, 1983 and F. Pelletier, 'Lecture anthropologique du quartier' in *Espace et Société*, Paris, Anthropos, 1975, no. 15.

25. E. Morin, and K. Appel, *New York*, Paris, Galilée, 1984, p. 64; On the 'anthropological course', I would refer naturally to the classic work by G. Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire*, Paris, Bordas, 1969.

26. This type of research is a speciality of the Sorbonne's Centre d'Etudes sur l'Actuel et le Quotidien [CEAQ] (Paris V). As an example, I would refer to *Sociétés* issues 8 (tourism), and 7 (cooking), as well as the article by L. Strohl, 'L'électroménager' [household appliances], in *Sociétés*, 9.

27. See J.C. Kaufmann, *Le Repli domestique*, Paris, Méridiens Klincksieck, 1988. On the networks and their formalization cf. Hannerz, *Exploring the City*, pp. 210–252.

28. E. Poulat, *Catholicisme, démocratique et socialisme* (the Catholic movement and Mgr Benigni, from the birth of socialism to the victory of Fascism), Paris, Casterman, 1977, p. 58.

29. Cf. the African example in E. Rosny, *Les Yeux de ma chèvre*, Paris, Plon, 1981, pp. 81 and 111. On rumour and its uses, cf. the research by F. Reumaux, *La Rumeur* (thesis in progress at the time of writing), Université Paris V. Also, cf. Simmel's article 'Les Sociétés secrètes' in *Nouvelle Revue de Psychanalyse*, Paris, Gallimard, 1977.

30. A study on public spheres remains largely to be undertaken. Research on cafés is under way at the CEAQ. One can however refer to C. Bouglé, *Essays on the Caste System*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1971, p. 45; cf. also Hannerz, *Exploring the City*, p. 198, *et seq.*; and J.M. Lacrosse et al. 'Normes spatiales et interactions', *Recherches sociologiques*, Louvain, vol. 6, no. 3 (1975), p. 336, especially with regard to the café as 'open area'.

31. Halbwachs, *La Mémoire collective*, p. 51, *et seq.*

32. Readers are referred to a report by M. de Certeau and L. Giard, *L'Ordinaire de la communication*, Paris, 1984 (Report of the Ministry of Culture) also cf. a more specific area detailed in the thesis by P. Delmas, 'L'Elève terminal, enjeux sociaux et finalité des nouvelles technologies éducatives', Université Paris VIII, 1986 and a work in progress, C. Moricot, 'La Télévision câblée', CEAQ – Paris V.

33. F. Dumont, on the origins of the notion of popular culture in *Cultures populaires et sociétés contemporaines*, Presses de l'Université du Québec, Québec,1982, p. 39. It is also worth consulting Dumont's *L'Anthropologie en l'absence de l'homme*, Paris, PUF, 1981.

34. Berque analysed this principle of allonomy in Japan, in *Vivre l'espace au Japon*, p. 52. On the significance of ritual custom in Brazil, cf. R. Da Matta, *Carnaval, bandit et héros*, Paris, Seuil, 1983.