

or less regular manner, it is necessary to see in these facts only simple relations of *mutualism* having nothing in common with the division of labor.²⁹ For, merely because two different organisms are found to have properties usefully adjusted, it does not follow that there is a division of functions between them.³⁰

²⁹ It is true that mutualism is generally produced among individuals of different species, but the phenomenon remains identical, even when it takes place among individuals of the same species. (See on mutualism, Espinas, *Sociétés animales*, and Giraud, *Les Sociétés chez les animaux*.)

³⁰ We wish to point out at the close that in this chapter we have only studied how it happens that generally the division of labor steadily continues to advance, and we have elucidated the determinant causes of this advance. But it may very well happen that in a particular society a certain division of labor, and notably the division of economic labor, may be greatly developed, although the segmental type may be strongly pronounced there. This seems to be the case with England. Great industry and commerce appear to be as developed there as on the continent, although the cellular system is still very marked, as both the autonomy of local life and the authority of tradition serve to prove. (The symptomatic value of this last fact will be determined in the following chapter.)

That is because the division of labor, being a derived and secondary phenomenon, as we have just seen, passes on the surface of social life, and this is especially true of the division of economic labor. But, in all organisms, the superficial phenomena, by their very situation, are much more accessible to the action of external causes, even when internal causes on which they generally depend are not modified. It is sufficient, then, that some sort of circumstance excite an urgent need of material well-being with a people for the division of economic labor to be developed without the social structure sensibly changing. The spirit of imitation, the contact of a more refined civilization can produce this result. It is thus that understanding, being the culminating part and, consequently, the most superficial part of conscience, can rather easily be modified by external influences, as education, without the seat of psychical life being changed. One thus creates intelligences sufficient to assure success, but which are not deep-rooted. Hence, this kind of talent is not transmitted by heredity.

This comparison shows that one must not judge the place of a society on the social ladder according to its state of civilization, especially of its economic civilization, for the latter can be only an imitation, a copy, and conceal a social structure of inferior species. The case, it is true, is exceptional. It appears, however.

It is only in these instances that the material density of societies does not exactly express the state of moral density. The principle we have posed is then true in a very general manner, and that is sufficient for our proof.

CHAPTER THREE

SECONDARY FACTORS

PROGRESSIVE INDETERMINATION OF THE COMMON CONSCIENCE AND ITS CAUSES

We saw in the first part of this work that the collective conscience became weaker and vaguer as the division of labor developed. It is, indeed, through this progressive indetermination that the division of labor becomes the principal source of solidarity. Since these two phenomena are linked at this point, it will be useful to seek the causes for this regression. Doubtless, having demonstrated with what regularity this regression is produced, we have directly proved its certain dependence upon some fundamental conditions of social evolution. But this conclusion of the preceding book would be still more indisputable if we could find what these conditions are.

This question is, moreover, solidary with the one we are now treating. We have just shown that the advances of the division of labor are due to the stronger pressure exercised by social units upon one another which obliges them to develop in increasingly divergent directions. But this pressure is at each moment neutralized by a contrary pressure that the common conscience exercises on each particular conscience. Whereas one impels us to become a distinct personality, the other, on the contrary, demands our resemblance to everybody else. Whereas the first has us following our personal bent, the second holds us back and prevents us from deviating from the collective type. In other words, for the division of labor to be born and grow, it is not sufficient that there be potentialities for special aptitudes in individuals, nor that they be aroused to specialize in the direction of these aptitudes, but it is very necessary that individual

variations be possible. But they cannot be produced when they are opposed to some strong and defined state of the collective conscience, for the stronger the state, the greater the resistance to all that may weaken it; the more defined, the less place it leaves for changes. It can thus be seen that the progress of the division of labor will be as much more difficult and slow as the common conscience is vital and precise. Inversely, it will be as much more rapid as the individual is enabled to put himself in harmony with his personal environment. But, for that, the existence of the environment is not sufficient; each must be free to adapt himself to it, that is to say, be capable of independent movement even when the whole group does not move with him. But we know that the movements of individuals are proportionately as rare as mechanical solidarity is more developed.

Examples are numerous where this neutralizing influence of the common conscience on the division of labor can be directly observed. As long as law and custom make a strict obligation of the inalienability and communism of real estate, the necessary conditions for the division of labor do not exist. Each family forms a compact mass, and all devote themselves to the same occupation, to the exploitation of the hereditary patrimony. Among the Slavs, the *Zadruga* is often increased to such proportions that great misery becomes prevalent. Nevertheless, as domestic spirit is very strong, they generally continue to live together, instead of taking up special occupations such as mariner and merchant outside. In other societies, where the division of labor is more advanced, each class has determinate functions, always the same, sheltered from all innovation. Elsewhere, there are entire classes of occupations whose cultivation is more or less forbidden to citizens. In Greece,¹ in Rome,² industry and commerce were scorned careers. Among the Kabyles, certain trades like those of butcher, shoemaker,

¹ Büsschenschütz, *Besitz und Erwerb*.

² According to Dionysius of Halicarnassus (IX, 25), during the first years of the Republic, no Roman could become merchant or worker. Cicero even speaks of all mercenary work as a degrading calling. (*De Off.*, I, 42.)

etc. are held in low esteem by public opinion.³ Specialization, thus, cannot move in these various directions. Finally, even with those peoples where economic life has already attained some development, as with us during the days of the old corporations, functions were regulated in such a way that the division of labor could not progress. Where everyone was obliged to manufacture in the same manner, all individual variation was impossible.⁴

The same phenomenon shows itself in the representative life of societies. Religion, the eminent form of the common conscience, originally absorbs all representative functions with practical functions. The first are not dissociated from the second until philosophy appears. But this is possible only when religion has lost something of its hold. This new way of representing things clashes with collective opinion which resists it. It has sometimes been said that free thought makes religious beliefs regress, but that supposes, in its turn, a preliminary regression of these same beliefs. It can arise only if the common faith permits.

The same antagonism breaks out each time a new science is founded. Christianity itself, although it instantly gave individual reflection a larger place than any other religion, could not escape this law. To be sure, the opposition was less acute as long as scholars limited their researches to the material world since it was originally abandoned to the disputes of men. Yet, as this surrender was never complete, as the Christian God does not entirely ignore things of this world, it necessarily happened that, on more than one point, the natural sciences themselves found an obstacle in faith. But it is especially when man became an object of science that the resistance became fierce. The believer, indeed, cannot but find repugnant the idea that man is to be studied as a natural being, analogous to others, and moral facts as facts of nature. It is well known how these collective sentiments, under the different forms they

³ Hanoteau and Letourneux, *La Kabylie*, II, p. 23.

⁴ See Levasseur, *Les Classes ouvrières en France jusqu'à la Révolution*, passim.

have taken, have hindered the development of psychology and sociology.

There has been no complete explanation of the progress of the division of labor when one has shown that it is necessary because of changes in the social environment, but it still depends upon secondary factors, which can either expedite or hinder it, or completely thwart its course. It must not be forgotten that specialization is not the only possible solution to the struggle for existence. There are also emigration, colonization, resignation to a precarious, disputed existence, and, finally, the total elimination of the weakest by suicide or some other means. Since the result is in part contingent, and since the combatants are not necessarily impelled towards one of these issues to the exclusion of others, they tend toward the one closest to their grasp. Of course, if nothing prevents the division of labor from developing, they specialize. But if circumstances make this too difficult or impossible, another means will be necessary.

The first of these factors consists of a greater independence of individuals in relation to the group, permitting them to diversify in freedom. The division of physiological labor is submitted to the same condition. "Even related to one another," says Perrier, "the anatomic elements respectively conserve all their individuality. Whatever may be their number, in the most elevated organisms as in the humblest, they eat, increase, and reproduce with no thought of their neighbors. Herein lies the *law of independence of anatomic elements* become so fertile in the hands of physiologists. This independence must be considered as the necessary condition for the free exercise of a very general faculty of plastids, the variability under the action of external circumstances or even of certain forces immanent in protoplasm. Thanks to their aptitude for varying and their reciprocal independence, the elements, born of one another, and originally all alike, have been able to modify in different directions, to assume diverse forms, to acquire new functions and properties." ⁵

⁵ *Colonies animales*, p. 702.

In contrast to what takes place in organisms, this independence is not a pristine fact in societies, since originally the individual is absorbed in the group. But we have seen that independence later appears and progresses regularly with the division of labor and the regression of the collective conscience. There remains to discover how this useful condition of the division of social labor is realized in proportion to its necessity. Doubtless it depends upon causes which have determined the advances in specialization. But how can this increase of societies in volume and in density have this result?

I

In a small society, since everyone is clearly placed in the same conditions of existence, the collective environment is essentially concrete. It is made up of beings of all sorts who fill the social horizon. The states of conscience representing it then have the same character. First, they are related to precise objects, as this animal, this tree, this plant, this natural force, etc. Then, as everybody is related to these things in the same way, they affect all consciences in the same way. The whole tribe, if it is not too widely extended, enjoys or suffers the same advantages or inconveniences from the sun, rain, heat, or cold, from this river, or that source, etc. The collective impressions resulting from the fusion of all these individual impressions are then determined in form as well as in object, and, consequently, the common conscience has a defined character. But it changes its nature as societies become more voluminous. Because these societies are spread over a vaster surface, the common conscience is itself obliged to rise above all local diversities, to dominate more space, and consequently to become more abstract. For not many general things can be common to all these diverse environments. It is no longer such an animal, but such a species; not this source, but such sources; not this forest, but forest *in abstracto*.

Moreover, because conditions of life are no longer the same

everywhere, these common objects, whatever they may be, can no longer determine perfectly identical sentiments everywhere. The collective resultants then no longer have the same sharpness, and the more so in this respect as their component elements are more unlike. The more differences among individual portraits serving to make a composite portrait, the more indecisive the latter is. True it is that local collective consciences can keep their individuality in the midst of the general collective conscience and that, as they comprise less space, they more easily remain concrete. But we know they slowly tend to vanish from the first, in so far as the social segments to which they correspond are effaced.

The fact which perhaps best manifests this increasing tendency of the common conscience is the parallel transcendence of the most essential of its elements, I mean the idea of divinity. In the beginning, the gods are not distinct from the universe, or rather there are no gods, but only sacred beings, without their sacred character being related to any external entity as their source. The animals or plants of the species which serves as a clan-totem are the objects of worship, but that is not because a principle *sui generis* comes to communicate their divine nature to them from without. This nature is intrinsic with them; they are divine in and of themselves. But little by little religious forces are detached from the things of which they were first only the attributes, and become hypostatized. Thus is formed the notion of spirits or gods who, while residing here or there as preferred, nevertheless exist outside of the particular objects to which they are more specifically attached.⁶ By that very fact they are less concrete. Whether they multiply or have been led back to some certain unity, they are still immanent in the world. If they are in part separated from things, they are always in space. They remain, then, very near us, constantly fused into our life. The Graeco-Latin polytheism, which is a more elevated and better organized form of animism, marks new progress in the direction of transcendence.

⁶ See Réville, *Religions des peuples non civilisés*, I, pp. 67 ff.; II, pp. 230 ff.

The residence of the gods becomes more sharply distinct from that of men. Set upon the mysterious heights of Olympus or dwelling in the recesses of the earth, they personally intervene in human affairs only in somewhat intermittent fashion. But it is only with Christianity that God takes leave of space; his kingdom is no longer of this world. The dissociation of nature and the divine is so complete that it degenerates into antagonism. At the same time, the concept of divinity becomes more general and more abstract, for it is formed, not of sensations, as originally, but of ideas. The God of humanity necessarily is less concrete than the gods of the city or the clan.

Besides, at the same time as religion, the rules of law become universal, as well as those of morality. Linked at first to local circumstances, to particularities, ethnic, climatic, etc., they free themselves little by little, and with the same stroke become more general. What makes this increase of generality obvious is the uninterrupted decline of formalism. In lower societies, the very external form of conduct is predetermined even to the details. The way in which man must eat, dress in every situation, the gestures he must make, the formulae he must pronounce, are precisely fixed. On the contrary, the further one strays from the point of departure, the more moral and juridical prescriptions lose their sharpness and precision. They rule only the most general forms of conduct, and rule them in a very general manner, saying what must be done, not how it must be done. Now, all that is defined is expressed in a definite form. If collective sentiments had the same determination as formerly, they would not be expressed in a less determined manner. If the concrete details of action and thought were as uniform, they would be as obligatory.

It has often been remarked that civilization has a tendency to become more rational and more logical. The cause is now evident. That alone is rational which is universal. What baffles understanding is the particular and the concrete. Only the general is thought well of. Consequently, the nearer the common conscience is to particular things, the more it bears their

imprint, the more unintelligible it also is. That is why primitive civilizations affect us as they do. Being unable to subsume them under logical principles, we succeed in seeing only bizarre and fortuitous combinations of heterogeneous elements. In reality, there is nothing artificial about them. It is necessary only to seek their determining causes in sensations and movements of sensibility, not in concepts. And if this is so, it is because the social environment for which they are made is not sufficiently extended. On the contrary, when civilization is developed over a vaster field of action, when it is applied to more people and things, general ideas necessarily appear and become predominant there. The idea of man, for example, replaces in law, in morality, in religion, that of Roman, which, being more concrete, is more refractory to science. Thus, it is the increase of volume in societies and their greater condensation which explain this great transformation. — EVOLUTION...

But the more general the common conscience becomes, the greater the place it leaves to individual variations. When God is far from things and men, his action is no longer omnipresent, nor ubiquitous. There is nothing fixed save abstract rules which can be freely applied in very different ways. Then they no longer have the same ascendancy nor the same force of resistance. Indeed, if practices and formulae, when they are precise, determine thought and movements with a necessity analogous to that of reflexes, these general principles, on the contrary, can pass into facts only with the aid of intelligence. But, once reflection is awakened, it is not easy to restrain it. When it has taken hold, it develops spontaneously beyond the limits assigned to it. One begins by putting articles of faith beyond discussion; then discussion extends to them. One wishes an explanation of them; one asks their reasons for existing, and, as they submit to this search, they lose a part of their force. For reflective ideas never have the same constraining force as instincts. It is thus that deliberated movements have not the spontaneity of involuntary movements. Because it becomes more rational, the collective conscience becomes less

imperative, and for this very reason, it wields less restraint over the free development of individual varieties.

II

But this is not the greatest contributing cause in producing this result.

What gives force to collective states is not only that they are common to the present generation, but especially that they are, for the most part, a legacy of previous generations. The common conscience is constituted very slowly and is modified in the same way. Time is necessary for a form of conduct or a belief to arrive at that degree of generality and crystallization; time is also necessary for it to lose it. It is, then, almost entirely a product of the past. But what comes from the past is generally the object of a very special respect. A practice to which everybody conforms has, without doubt, a great prestige, but if it is, in addition, strong because of the assent of ancestors, it is still less liable to derogation. The authority of the collective conscience is, then, in large part composed of the authority of tradition. We shall see that the latter necessarily diminishes as the segmental type is effaced.

Indeed, when the type is very pronounced, the segments form very small societies more or less closed in. Where they have a familial base, it is as difficult to change from them as to change families, and if, when they have only a territorial base, the barriers separating them are not as insurmountable, they nevertheless persist. In the middle ages, it was still difficult for a workman to find work in a city other than his own.⁷ The internal customs, moreover, formed an enclosure around each social division protecting it from the infiltration of foreign elements. Under these conditions, the individual is held to the soil where he was born by ties attaching him to it, and because he is repulsed elsewhere. The rarity of means of communication and transportation is a proof of this exclusion of each segment.

⁷ Levasseur, *op. cit.*, I, p. 239.

By repercussion, the causes maintaining man in his native land fix him in his domestic life. In the beginning the two are confounded and if, later, they are distinguished, one cannot draw far away from the second when the first cannot be passed. The force of attraction resulting from consanguinity exercises its action with a maximum of intensity, since each remains throughout life very near the source of this force. It is, indeed, a law without exception that the more the social structure is by nature segmental, the more families form great, compact, undivided masses, gathered up in themselves.⁸

On the other hand, in so far as the lines of demarcation separating the different segments are obliterated, this equilibrium is inevitably broken. As individuals are no longer held together in the places of their origin, and as these free spaces, opening before them, attract them, they cannot fail to expand there. Children no longer remain immutably attached to the land of their parents, but leave to seek their fortune in all directions. Populations are mingled, and, because of this, their original differences are lost. Statistics, unfortunately, do not permit our following the march of these interior migrations in history, but a fact sufficient to establish their growing importance is the formation and development of cities. Cities, indeed, are not formed by a sort of spontaneous growth, but by immigration. Far from owing their existence and progress to the normal preponderance of births over deaths, they present, from this point of view, a general deficiency. It is, then, from without that they receive the elements to which they owe their daily increase. According to Dunant,⁹ the annual increase in the total population of thirty-one large cities of Europe owes 784.6 out of every thousand to immigration. In France, the census of 1881 presented an increase of 766,000 over that of 1876; the *departement* of the Seine and the forty-five cities having more than 30,000 inhabitants "absorbed more than

⁸ The reader himself sees facts verifying this law whose express proof we cannot present here. It results from researches we have made on the family, and that we hope to publish soon.

⁹ Cited by Layet, *Hygiène des paysans*, last chapter.

661,000 inhabitants of the quinquennial increase, leaving only 105,000 to be distributed among the average towns, the small towns, and the country."¹⁰ It is not only toward the great cities that these great migratory movements tend; they radiate into neighboring regions. Bertillon has calculated that during the year 1886, while on the average in France 11.25 out of 100 were born outside the *departement*, in the *departement* of the Seine there were 34.67. This proportion of strangers is so much greater as *departements* of cities are more populous. It is 31.47 in the *Rhone*, 26.29 in the *Bouches-du-Rhone*, 26.41 in the *Seine-et-Oise*,¹¹ 19.46 in the *Nord*, 17.62 in the *Gironde*.¹² This phenomenon is not peculiar to great cities. It is equally produced, although with less intensity, in small towns and market-towns. "All these agglomerations increase constantly at the expense of the smaller townships, so that one sees with each census the number of cities of each category increased by some units."¹³

But the greater mobility of social units which these phenomena of migration suppose causes a weakening of all traditions.

In fact, what especially gives force to tradition is the character of the persons who transmit it and inculcate it, the old people. They are its living expression. They alone have been witnesses of the acts of their ancestors. They are the unique intermediary between the present and the past. Moreover, they enjoy a prestige with generations reared under their eyes and their direction which nothing can replace. The child, indeed, is aware of his inferiority before the older persons surrounding him, and he feels he depends upon them. The reverential respect he has for them is naturally communicated to all that comes from them, to all they say, and all they do. Thus, it is the authority of age which gives tradition its authority. Consequently, all that can contribute to prolonging this influence beyond infancy can only fortify traditional beliefs

¹⁰ Dumont, *Dépopulation et Civilisation*, p. 175.

¹¹ This increased number is an effect of the neighborhood of Paris.

¹² *Dictionnaire encyclop. des Sciences medic.*, art. *Migration*

¹³ Dumont, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

and practices. That is what happens when a man continues to live in the environment where he was reared, for he then remains in relation with people who have known him as a child, and he submits to their action. The feeling he has for them lasts, and, consequently, it produces the same effects, that is to say, restrains the desire for innovation. To produce novelties in social life, it is not sufficient for a new generation to appear. It is still necessary for them not to be strongly impelled towards following in the footsteps of their forefathers. The more profound the influence of these latter — and it is as much more profound as it lasts longer — the more obstacles there are to change. Auguste Comte was right in saying that if human life was increased tenfold, without the respective proportion of ages being changed, there would result “an inevitable slowing up of our social development, although it would be impossible to measure.”¹⁴

But it is the reverse that is produced when man, while emerging from adolescence, is transplanted into a new environment. To be sure, he finds there men older than himself as well, but they are not the same as those he obeyed in his infancy. The respect he has for them is then less, and by nature more conventional, for it corresponds to no reality, present or past. He does not depend upon and never has depended upon them; he can then respect them only by analogy. It is, moreover, a known fact that the worship of age is steadily weakening with civilization. Though formerly developed, it is today reduced to some few polite practices, inspired by a sort of pity. One pities old men more than one fears them. Ages are leveled off. All men who have reached maturity are treated almost as equals. As a consequence of this, the ancestral customs lose their predominance, for they no longer have authorized representatives among adults. One is freer in contact with them because one is freer with those who incarnate them. The solidarity of time is less perceptible because it no longer has its material expression in the continuous contact of successive

¹⁴ *Cours de Philosophie positive*, IV, p. 451.

generations. To be sure, effects of primary education continue to be felt, but with less force, because they are not held together.

The prime of youth, moreover, is the time when men are most impatient with all restraint and most eager for change. The life circulating in them has not yet had time to congeal, or definitely to take determined forms, and it is too intense to be disciplined without resistance. This need will, then, be satisfied so much more easily as it is less restrained from without, and it can be satisfied only at the expense of tradition. The latter is most battered at the very moment when it loses its strength. Once given, this germ of weakness can only be developed with each generation, for one transmits with less authority principles whose authority is felt less.

A characteristic example shows the influence of age on the force of tradition.

Precisely because the population of great cities is recruited especially through immigration, it is essentially composed of people who, on becoming adult, have left their homes and been freed from the action of the old. Moreover, the number of old men there is small, whereas that of men in the prime of life, on the contrary, is very high. Cheysson has shown that the curves of population at each age group, for Paris and for the province, meet only at the ages of 15 to 20 and from 50 to 55. Between 20 and 50, the Parisian curve is a great deal higher; beyond that it is lower.¹⁵ In 1881, there were in Paris 1,118 individuals from 20 to 25 to 874 in the rest of the country.¹⁶ For the entire *departement* of the Seine, there is found in 1,000 inhabitants 731 from 15 to 60 and only 76 beyond that age, whereas the province has 618 of the first and 106 of the second. In Norway, according to Jacques Bertillon, the relations are the following in 1,000 inhabitants:

	Cities	Country
From 15 to 30	278	239
From 30 to 45	205	183
From 45 to 60	110	120
From 60 and above	59	87

¹⁵ *La Question de la population*, in *Annales d'Hygiène*, 1884.

¹⁶ *Annales de la ville de Paris*.

Thus, it is in the great cities that the moderating influence of age is at its minimum. At the same time, one observes that nowhere have the traditions less sway over minds. Indeed, great cities are the uncontested homes of progress; it is in them that ideas, fashions, customs, new needs are elaborated and then spread over the rest of the country. When society changes, it is generally after them and in imitation. Temperaments are so mobile that everything that comes from the past is somewhat suspect. On the contrary, innovations, whatever they may be, enjoy a prestige there almost equal to the one the customs of ancestors formerly enjoyed. Minds naturally are there oriented to the future. Consequently, life is there transformed with extraordinary rapidity; beliefs, tastes, passions, are in perpetual evolution. No ground is more favorable to evolutions of all sorts. That is because the collective life cannot have continuity there, where different layers of social units, summoned to replace one another, are discontinuous.

Observing that during the youth of societies and especially at the moment of their maturity the respect for traditions is much greater than during old age, Tarde believed he could present the decline of traditionalism as simply a transitory phase, a passing crisis of all social evolution. "Man," he says, "escapes the chains of custom only to be captured again, that is to say, to fix and consolidate, again falling a prey after his temporary emancipation."¹⁷ This error results, we believe, from the method of comparison followed by the author, the objections to which we have several times pointed out. Doubtless, if one compares the end of a society to the beginnings of a succeeding one, a return to traditionalism can be seen. But this phase in which every social type begins is always a great deal less violent than it had been with the immediately anterior type. With us, the customs of ancestors have never been the object of the superstitious worship which was accorded to them at Rome. Never was there at Rome an institution analogous

¹⁷ *Lois de l'imitation*, p. 271.

to the *γραφὴ παρανόμων* of the Athenian law, opposing all innovation.¹⁸ Even at the time of Aristotle in Greece, it was still a question of whether it was good to change established laws in order to improve them, and the philosopher answers in the affirmative only with the greatest circumspection.¹⁹ Finally, with the Jews all deviation from traditional rule was still more completely impossible, since it was an impiety. But, to judge the march of social events, one must not put, end to end, the societies which succeed each other, but one must compare them at the corresponding period of their life. If, then, it is quite true that all social life tends to be fixed and to become habitual, the form it takes always becomes less resistant, more accessible to changes. In other words, the authority of custom diminishes in a continuous manner. It is, moreover, impossible for it to be otherwise, since this weakening depends upon the very conditions which dominate historical development.

Moreover, since common beliefs and practices, in large part, extract their strength from the strength of tradition, it is evident that they are less and less able to prevent the free expansion of individual variations.

III

Finally, in so far as society is extended and concentrated, it envelops the individual less, and, consequently, cannot as well restrain the divergent tendencies coming up.

To assure ourselves of this it is sufficient to compare great cities with small. In the latter, whoever seeks to free himself from accepted customs meets with resistance which is sometimes very acute. Every attempt at independence is an object of public scandal, and the general reprobation attached is of such a nature as to discourage all imitators. On the contrary, in large cities, the individual is a great deal freer of collective

¹⁸ See concerning this *γραφὴ* Meier and Schoemann, *Der attische Process*.

¹⁹ Aristotle, *Politics*, II, 8, 1268b, 26.

bonds. This fact of experience cannot be denied. It is because we depend so much more closely on common opinion the more it watches over conduct. When the attention of all is constantly fixed on what each does, the least misstep is perceived and immediately condemned. Inversely, each has as many more facilities to follow his own path as he is better able to escape this control. And, as the proverb has it, one is nowhere better hidden than in a crowd. The greater the extension and the greater the density of a group, the greater the dispersion of collective attention over a wide area. Thus, it is incapable of following the movements of each individual, for it does not become stronger as they become more numerous. It has to consider too many points at once to be able to concentrate on any. The watch is less piercing because there are too many people and too many things to watch.

Moreover, the great source of attention, that of interest, is more or less completely wanting. We wish to know the facts about, and movements of a person only if his image awakens in us memories and emotions which are linked to him, and this desire is more acute as the states of conscience thus awakened are more numerous and strong.²⁰ If, on the contrary, we look upon someone from afar, having no interest in his concerns, we are not aroused either to learn what happens to him or to observe what he does. Collective curiosity is, then, keener as personal relations between individuals are more continuous and more frequent. Moreover, it is clear that they are proportionately rarer and shorter as each individual is in contact with a greater number of persons.

That is why the pressure of opinion is felt with less force in great centres. It is because the attention of each is distracted in too many directions, and because, moreover, one is known less. Even neighbors and members of the same family are less often and less regularly in contact, separated as they

²⁰ It is true that, in a small city, the stranger, the unknown, is no less the object of curiosity than the inhabitant, but it is because of contrast, because he is the exception. It is not the same in a great city, where it is the rule, as it were, for everybody to be unknown.

are by the mass of affairs and intercurrent persons. Doubtless, if population is more numerous than it is dense, it may be that life, spread over a larger area, is less at each point. The great city is resolved, then, into a certain number of little cities, and, consequently, the preceding observations do not exactly apply.²¹ But wherever the density of the agglomeration is related to the volume, personal bonds are rare and weak. One more easily loses others from sight; in the same way one loses interest even in those close by. As this mutual indifference results in losing collective surveillance, the sphere of free action of each individual is extended in fact, and, little by little, the fact becomes a right. We know, indeed, that the common conscience keeps its strength only on condition of not tolerating contradictions. But, by reason of this diminution of social control, acts are committed daily which confute it, without, however, any reaction. If, then, there are some repeated with frequency and uniformity, they end by enervating the collective sentiment they shock. A rule no longer appears respectable when it ceases to be respected, and that with impunity. One no longer finds the same conviction in an article of faith too often denied. Moreover, once we have availed ourselves of some liberty, we feel the need for it. It becomes as necessary and appears as sacred to us as others. We judge a control intolerable when we have lost the habit of complying. An acquired right to greater autonomy is founded. It is thus that the encroachments the individual personality makes, when it is less strongly restrained from without, end by receiving the consecration of custom.

But if this fact is more marked in great cities, it is not special to them; it is also produced in others according to their importance. Since, then, the obliteration of the segmental type entails a steadily increasing development of urban centres, there is a primary reason for this phenomenon having to continue to become general. But, moreover, in so far as the moral

²¹ This is a question to be studied. We believe we have noticed that in populous cities, which are not dense, collective opinion keeps its strength.

↳ differentiation of spaces / spheres of activity ...

Wick
Loren
(Lorenz)

↳

density of society is increased, it itself becomes similar to a great city which contains an entire people within its walls.

In effect, as material and moral distance between different regions tend to vanish, they are, with relation to one another, steadily more analogous to that of different quarters of the same city. The cause which in great cities determines a weakening of the common conscience must then produce its effect throughout society. So long as divers segments, keeping their individuality, remain closed to one another, each of them narrowly limits the social horizon of individuals. Separated from the rest of society by barriers more or less difficult to clear, nothing turns us from local life, and, therefore, all our action is concentrated there. But as the fusion of segments becomes more complete, the vistas enlarge, and the more so as society itself becomes more generally extended at the same time. From then on, even the inhabitant of a small city lives the life of the little group immediately surrounding him less exclusively. He joins in relations with distant localities which are more numerous as the movement of concentration is more advanced. His more frequent journeys, the more active correspondence he exchanges, the affairs occupying him outside, etc., turn his attention from what is passing around him. He no longer finds the centre of his life and preoccupations so completely in the place where he lives. He is then less interested in his neighbors, since they take a smaller place in his life. Besides, the small city has less hold upon him for the very reason that his life is bursting that small shell, and his interests and affections are extending beyond it. For all these reasons, local public opinion weighs less heavily on each of us, and as the general opinion of society cannot replace its predecessor, not being able to watch closely the conduct of all its citizens, the collective surveillance is irretrievably loosened, the common conscience loses its authority, individual variability grows. In short, for social control to be rigorous and for the common conscience to be maintained, society must be divided into rather small compartments completely enclosing the

individual. Both weaken as these divisions are done away with.²²

But, it will be said, the crimes and delicts to which organized punishments are attached never leave the organs charged with suppressing them indifferent. Whether the city be great or small, whether society be dense or not, magistrates do not leave the criminal or delinquent go unpunished. It would seem, then, that the special weakening whose cause we have just indicated must be localized in that part of the collective conscience which determines only diffuse reactions, without being able to extend beyond. But, in reality, this localization is impossible; for these two regions are so strictly solidary that one cannot be attacked without the other feeling it. The acts which custom alone must repress are not different in nature from those the law punishes; they are only less serious. If, then, there are some among them which lose their weight, the corresponding graduation of the others is upset by the same stroke. They sink one or several degrees, and appear less revolting. When one is no longer at all sensible to small faults, one is less sensible to great ones. When one no longer attaches great importance to simple neglect of religious practices, one is no longer as indignant about blasphemies or sacrileges. When one is accustomed complacently to tolerate free love, adultery is less scandalous. When the weakest sentiments lose their energy, the strongest sentiments, even those which are of the same sort and have the same objects, cannot keep theirs intact. It is thus that, little by little, the movement is communicated to the whole common conscience.

IV

It is now manifest how it happens that mechanical solidarity is linked to the existence of the segmental type, as we have

²² To this fundamental cause must be added the contagious influence of great cities upon small, and of small upon the country. But this influence is only secondary, and, besides, assumes importance only to the extent that social density grows.

shown in the preceding book. It is because this special structure allows society to enclose the individual more tightly, holding him strongly attached to his domestic environment and, consequently, to traditions, and finally contributing to the limitation of his social horizon, it also contributes²³ to make it concrete and defined. Wholly mechanical causes, then, bring it about that the individual is absorbed into the collective personality, and they are causes of the same nature as those which bring about the individual's freedom. To be sure, this emancipation is found to be useful, or, at least, it is utilized. It makes the progress of the division of labor possible; more generally, it gives more suppleness and elasticity to the social organism. But it is not because it is useful that it is produced. It is because it cannot be otherwise. Experience with the service it renders can only consolidate it once it exists.

One can, nevertheless, ask oneself if, in organized societies, the organ does not play the same role as the segment; if it is not probable that the corporative and occupational mind replaces the mind of the native village, and exercises the same influence as it did. In this case they would not gain anything by the change. Doubt is permitted to a great extent, as the caste-mind has certainly had this effect, and the caste is a social organ. We also know how the organization of bodies of trades has, for a long time, hindered the development of individual variations; we have cited examples of this above.

It is certain that organized societies are not possible without a developed system of rules which predetermine the functions of each organ. In so far as labor is divided, there arises a multitude of occupational moralities and laws.²⁴ But this regulation, none the less, does not contract the sphere of action of the individual.

In the first place, the occupational mind can only have

²³ This third effect results only in part from the segmental nature. The principal cause of it lies in the growth of social volume. It would still be asked why, in general, density increases at the same time as volume. It is a question we pose.

²⁴ See above, Book I, ch. v, especially pp. 215 ff.

influence on occupational life. Beyond this sphere, the individual enjoys a greater liberty whose origin we have just shown. True, the caste extends its action further, but it is not an organ, properly speaking. It is a segment transformed into an organ;²⁵ it has the nature of both. At the same time as it is charged with special functions, it constitutes a distinct society in the midst of the total aggregate. It is a society-organ, analogous to those individual-organs observed in certain organisms.²⁶ That is what makes it enclose the individual in a much more exclusive manner than ordinary corporations.

As these rules have their roots only in a small number of consciences, and leave society in its entirety indifferent, they have less authority by consequence of this lesser universality. They offer, then, less resistance to changes. It is for this reason that, in general, faults properly occupational have not the same degree of gravity as others.

Moreover, the same causes which, in a general manner, lift the collective yoke, produce their liberating effect in the interior of the corporation as well as externally. In so far as segmental organs fuse, each social organ becomes more voluminous, and in proportion as the total volume of society grows at the same time. Common practices of the occupational group thus become more general and more abstract, as those which are common to all society, and, accordingly, they leave more free space for individual divergences. Indeed, the greater independence enjoyed by new generations in comparison with the older cannot fail to weaken traditionalism in the occupation. This leaves the individual even more free to make innovations.

Thus, not only does occupational regulation, because of its very nature, hinder less than any other the play of individual variation, but it also tends to do so less and less.

²⁵ See above, p. 182.

²⁶ See Perrier, *Colonies animales*, p. 764.

contract supposes that all individuals are able to represent in themselves the general conditions of the collective life in order to make a choice with knowledge. But Spencer understands that such a representation goes beyond the bounds of science in its actual state, and, consequently, beyond the bounds of conscience. He is so convinced of the vanity of reflection when it is applied to such matters that he wishes to take them away even from the legislator, to say nothing of submitting them to public opinion. He believes that social life, just as all life in general, can naturally organize itself only by an unconscious, spontaneous adaptation under the immediate pressure of needs, and not according to a rational plan of reflective intelligence. He does not believe that higher societies can be built according to a rigidly drawn program.

Thus, the conception of a social contract is today difficult to defend, for it has no relation to the facts. The observer does not meet it along his road, so to speak. Not only are there no societies which have such an origin, but there is none whose structure presents the least trace of a contractual organization. It is neither a fact acquired through history nor a tendency which grows out of historical development. Hence, to rejuvenate this doctrine and accredit it, it would be necessary to qualify as a contract the adhesion which each individual, as adult, gave to the society when he was born, solely by reason of which he continues to live. But then we would have to term contractual every action of man which is not determined by constraint.⁶ In this light, there is no society, neither present nor past, which is not or has not been contractual, for there is none which could exist solely through pressure. We have given the reason for this above. If it has sometimes been thought that force was greater previously than it is today, that is because of the illusion which attributes to a coercive regime the small place given over to individual liberty in lower societies. In reality, social life, wherever it is normal, is spon-

⁶ This is what Fouillée does in opposing contract to pressure. (*Science sociale*, p. 8.)

taneous, and if it is abnormal, it cannot endure. The individual abdicates spontaneously. In fact, it is unjust to speak of abdication where there is nothing to abdicate. If this large and somewhat warped interpretation is given to this word, no distinction can be made between different social types, and if we understand by type only the very defined juridical tie which the word designates, we can be sure that no tie of this kind has ever existed between individuals and society.

But if higher societies do not rest upon a fundamental contract which sets forth the general principles of political life, they would have, or would be considered to have, according to Spencer, the vast system of particular contracts which link individuals as a unique basis. They would depend upon the group only in proportion to their dependence upon one another, and they would depend upon one another only in proportion to conventions privately entered into and freely concluded. Social solidarity would then be nothing else than the spontaneous accord of individual interests, an accord of which contracts are the natural expression. The typical social relation would be the economic, stripped of all regulation and resulting from the entirely free initiative of the parties. In short, society would be solely the stage where individuals exchanged the products of their labor, without any action properly social coming to regulate this exchange.

Is this the character of societies whose unity is produced by the division of labor? If this were so, we could with justice doubt their stability. For if interest relates men, it is never for more than some few moments. It can create only an external link between them. In the fact of exchange, the various agents remain outside of each other, and when the business has been completed, each one retires and is left entirely on his own. Consciences are only superficially in contact; they neither penetrate each other, nor do they adhere. If we look further into the matter, we shall see that this total harmony of interests conceals a latent or deferred conflict. For where interest is the only ruling force each individual finds him-